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Weakness and Humiliation of the Cross:
Theological Reflection on 'Mission Beyond the Diaspora'

by

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Abstract

This thesis engages in the present debate of diaspora missiology – the proposal and the criticism of diaspora missiology – concerning the missiological significance of the international migration and the growth of diaspora population in the western societies. As a response to the debate, this thesis examines the nature and significance of the missionary initiative of diaspora Christians. The methodology of this study is a theological reflection. This study employs Lesslie Newbigin's theology of the cross as a criterion to assess the diaspora initiatives, with a focus on vulnerability that inheres the life and mission of diaspora Christians. As also reviewing the broader scholarship of missiology to discern how vulnerability is integral to the non-western missionary endeavor, this study explores a perspective that arises from the experience and reality of diaspora. Finally, the investigation of this study leads to its main argument which is that contemporary population movement from the majority world to the west entails the design of God's mission as to how God uses the non-western missionary initiatives: the apparent helplessness of diaspora Christians is the occasion by which God reveals the presence and power of His kingdom. In its missionary encounter with the west, the initiatives of diaspora Christians will prove 'the efficacy of weakness.'

To my father, Young Woong Jung,
who supported my family with so much love and care.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background of Discussion

Global migration is one of the central issues in our world today. The rapid and large-scale movement of populations is bringing pervasive and profound impact on human societies. One of the areas being re-forged by contemporary migration is the religious demography around the world. As people from different culture and religion are brought together, the religious make-up of society changes and the interactions among religions increase greatly. Therefore, it has become a pressing concern for Christian scholarship of mission to understand the influences of migration and also how to shape the life and mission of the church in response to the global population movement.

Diaspora missiology, in this context, has proposed itself as “a missiological framework to understand and participate in God’s redemptive mission among [international migrants.]”¹ Diaspora missiology is focused on how the international migration and subsequent formation of diaspora communities presents the opportunities of evangelism around the globe. Using *diaspora*² as its conceptual basis, diaspora missiology suggests the effective strategy to evangelize diaspora communities and, further, to mobilize them for missionary work; mission in the context of global migration is defined mainly in two ways – (1) the evangelistic outreach to the diaspora (‘mission *to* the diaspora’) and (2) the mobilization of the diaspora for missionary work (‘mission *through* and *beyond* the diaspora’).

¹ Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *Scattered to Gather: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora* (Manila, Life Change Publishing, 2010), 12. Also available from <http://www.jdpayne.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Scattered-to-Gather.pdf>.

² In diaspora missiology ‘diaspora’ generally refers to an ethnic community that is ‘scattered’ by globalization and ‘gathered’ in oversea countries. It is assumed that members of the diaspora group bond with each other based on their ethnic, cultural, and national origins.

However, there has been scholarly criticism on diaspora missiology. In 2015, Krabill and Norton published an article that questioned the validity of diaspora missiology as a missiological framework.³ According to the critics, diaspora missiology holds a narrow and one-sided view of migration in that it primarily emphasizes possibilities of mission flowing from the western church to non-western migrants. As a consequence, diaspora missiology reduces the migrants as the objects of outreach or the passive participants in the western-led programs.⁴ The critics contend that a missiological reflection on contemporary migration should recognize and assess the “non-western missionary initiatives.”⁵

1.2 Purpose of Thesis

In response to the debate of diaspora missiology, this thesis will examine the nature and significance of the missionary initiative of diaspora Christians.⁶ The focus of study will be on human weakness which inheres the life and mission of diaspora Christians. In the context of global migration today diaspora Christians become vulnerable and marginalized in the society they move to and, thus, they engage in mission from a position of weakness.⁷ In this regard, numerous missiologists have noticed that the missionary initiative of diaspora Christians is “most

³ Matthew Krabill and Allison Norton, “New Wine in Old Wineskins: A Critical Appraisal of Diaspora Missiology,” *Missiology* 43, no. 4 (Oct 2015): 442-455.

⁴ Krabill and Norton, “New Wine in Old Wineskins,” 448.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 451.; Krabill and Norton’s criticism on diaspora missiology is formulated in four specific points. The proposal and criticism of diaspora missiology will be reviewed in detail in the chapter three of this thesis.

⁶ It is not the purpose of this thesis to defend diaspora missiology or to fully support the criticism on diaspora missiology. Rather, this thesis engages with the debate of diaspora missiology by studying the missionary initiative of diaspora Christians and also by examining the proposal and the critic of diaspora missiology. The discussion of this study will contribute to understand the limitations as well as the strengths of diaspora missiology. Additionally, the study of the missionary initiative of diaspora Christians suits the interest of the broader circle of missiology. Numerous missiologists have suggested in their research of contemporary migration that non-western Christian migrants will become “the principal agents of mission.”; See for example, Andrew F. Walls, “Mission and Migration: The Diaspora Factor in Christian History,” In *Global Diasporas and Mission*. Edited by Chandler H. Im and Amos Yong, 19-37. (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 35.

⁷ Although today’s globalization includes complex interactions and dynamics, there are ‘dominant processes’ incorporated in it. The missionary initiative of migrants is predominantly ‘from non-west to the west, from the poor to the rich, and from a position of weakness.’ This point will be discussed in detail in the chapter four of this thesis.

clearly stamped by the experience of marginalization, powerlessness, and vulnerability, which are the hallmarks of migration.”⁸

This study suggests that human weakness, accompanied with migration, provides a clue to understand the missionary potential of diaspora Christians. The possibilities of mission in the situation of diaspora depend, not on the capacity and strategy of diaspora Christians themselves, but on how God uses the helplessness of diaspora Christians in carrying out his mission.⁹ As exploring the significance of weakness in diaspora mission, this study will refer to Lesslie Newbigin’s theology of the cross: The weakness of diaspora Christians will be understood in light of the pattern of God’s mission in which the kingdom of God is both hidden and revealed in the cross of Jesus.

Additionally, the scope of discussion will be confined to the non-western Christian migrants’ cross-cultural ministry in the western society. Diaspora missiology refers to this case of ministry as ‘mission *beyond* the diaspora,’ in which Christian migrants go beyond the confines of their culture and reach out to people of host society or other ethnic groups.¹⁰ The restriction of discussion will strengthen the theme of theological reflection since in the cross-cultural missionary encounter, non-western Christian migrants, or diaspora Christians, find themselves deeply foreign and vulnerable.

⁸ Jehu J. Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008), 382.

⁹ As a theological reflection on diaspora mission, this thesis is based on the premise of *missio Dei* that mission primarily is the initiative and the continuing action of God himself. See Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 134-135.

The *missio Dei* concept and its connection to diaspora mission will be discussed more in the chapter three of this thesis.

¹⁰ Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, “Scattered to Gather: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora,” 29.; In diaspora missiology, the term ‘diaspora’ generally implies the immigrant community of non-western migrants.

In sum, *the purpose of this thesis is to examine the manner in which human weakness, inherently combined with migration, is constitutive of the missionary initiative of diaspora Christians in the light of Lesslie Newbigin's theology of the cross.*

1.3 Methodology of Thesis

The examination of the missionary initiative of diaspora Christians requires a shift of focus from the current debate of diaspora missiology. The discussion of diaspora mission is being framed in a *macro* perspective – that is, both the proponents and the critics assess diaspora mission with macro indicators such as demography, strategy, statistics, and dynamics on the international level, or God's overarching purpose for the world. In contrast, this study suggests a *micro* perspective to the debate of diaspora mission. This study examines diaspora mission on the level of individuals – what happens to and through diaspora Christians when they engage in mission in the context of migration and their peripheral life.¹¹ Taking the micro perspective, this study proposes that the essence of 'mission beyond the diaspora' is understood by considering the vulnerability in the life and mission of diaspora Christians.

The approach of this study is *contextual theology*. Contextual theology considers "present human experience" as a valid source of doing theology "along with scripture and tradition."¹² Human experience, by its specificity and depth, contributes to the understanding of the gospel. Donald Senior, in this regard, observes how experience deepens the understanding of scripture and its implication for Christian life:

¹¹ I am taking a motif of the shift in perspective from Miroslav Volf's theological discussion of ethnic conflict. Volf concentrates his discussion on "social agents" (individuals) in contrast to existing discussions around "structures" or "social arrangements"; See Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 20-22.

Additionally, the study of diaspora mission in the micro level does not mean to separate the ministry of individual Christians from the life and mission of the church. This study postulates that the experience of weakness and marginalization is both personal and communal for diaspora Christians.

¹² Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 2002), Revised and Expanded Edition, 4.

Whenever one reflects on the scriptures through the lens of a profound human experience, one discovers a deeper understanding of the biblical text and its meaning, while at the same time bringing the illumination of the scriptures to our human experiences.¹³

From an evangelical perspective, however, the role of experience for theological knowledge must be determined and guided by scripture and tradition. As Orlando Costas maintains, “[Experience] cannot substitute for or contradict the clear teaching of Scripture, or stand over against the confirmed witness of tradition.”¹⁴ Additionally, the emphasis on experience in the theological construction must not place “the aspirations of the people” above the authority and the testimony of scripture.¹⁵ This study regards human experience neither as a variance to the meaning of the gospel nor as an agenda to be attended prior to the message of scripture. Rather, this study takes into account “the experience of the present, the *context*” in order to grasp the fundamental message of scripture.¹⁶

This study is based on a recognition that the particularity of human context enables a fresh and insightful approach into the meaning of the gospel. The understanding of the gospel is conditioned by the context of the interpreter;¹⁷ the cultural context – or the concrete historical situation – “influences,” “affects,” “(shapes),” and “(conditions)” how the interpreter perceives

¹³ Donald Senior, “Beloved Aliens and Exiles: New Testament Perspectives on Migration,” in *Promised Land, a Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, ed. Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 20.

¹⁴ Orlando Costas, *Liberating News: A Theology of Contextual Evangelization* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 6.

¹⁵ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 151.

¹⁶ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 5. Explaining the approach of contextual theology, Stephen Bevans refers to “the context” simply as “the experience of the present.”

Daniel A. Rodriguez, “No Longer Foreigners and Aliens: Toward a Missiological Christology for Hispanics in the United States,” *Missiology* 31 no 1 (Jan 2003): 52, 55. Here, Daniel Rodriguez agrees with other Hispanic theologians in contending that the approach of contextual theology – the focus on the interpreter’s context as well as the essential nature of the gospel – leads to “a return to, and a recovery of, the fundamental message of the Bible.”

¹⁷ Rene C. Padilla, *Mission Between the Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 107, 111

the meaning of the gospel.¹⁸ Culturally specific human context, on the one hand, limits the understanding of the gospel.¹⁹ Because the understanding of the gospel “is conditioned by” and “is always relative to” the context of the interpreter, the meaning of the gospel is never exhausted, or perfectly comprehended, under any given context.²⁰ On the other hand, however, the particularity of the interpreter’s context serves as “an asset” to the understanding of the gospel.²¹ In this respect, Rene Padilla makes a crucial observation that the particulars of culture function as “channels” by which certain aspects of the gospel are grasped and articulated.²² He states: “(Every) culture makes possible a certain approach to the gospel that brings to light certain of its aspects that in other cultures may remain less visible or even hidden.”²³ In other words, the particularity of context becomes an epistemological advantage to the understanding of the gospel:²⁴ the concrete human context “can be a position from which one can ask questions never before asked or entertained in theological reflection,”²⁵ and it “may open up previously undiscovered dimensions of the faith through varied and dynamic events.”²⁶ In the case of this study, the context of contemporary migration provides “a privileged position”²⁷ to understand the gospel and the mission of the church.

¹⁸ See Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 4; Costas, *Liberating News*, 8; Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 153; Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 111.

¹⁹ Charles Van Engen, “The New Covenant: Knowing God in Context,” in *The Word Among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*, ed. Dean S. Gilliland (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989), 75. Regarding the limitation caused by the particularity of human context, Engen states: “Contextualization is most fundamentally a problem of knowing God within the limitations of culturally specific human context.”

²⁰ Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 108. Rene Padilla explains that the particularity of culture limits the understanding of the gospel. He remarks: “No culture completely fulfills the purpose of God; in all cultures there are some elements unfavorable to the understanding of the gospel. For this reason, the gospel never becomes completely incarnate in any given culture.”

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 109.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 151. The epistemological privilege does not come outside the Christian story. Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 109. “an asset to the understanding of the many-sided wisdom of God”

²⁵ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 5.

²⁶ Costas, *Liberating News*, 6.

²⁷ Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 109.

The experience of migration forms a perspective to understand the mission of Jesus and, in turn, the essence of 'mission beyond the diaspora.' Migration is “a profound human experience,” which shapes and deepens one’s reading of scripture.²⁸ The present human experience of uprootedness, powerlessness, and having hope amid uncertainties becomes a position from which to interpret the mission of Jesus in the Gospels:²⁹ from their concrete and vulnerable reality diaspora Christians can deeply understand that God chooses the way of weakness and shame – that is, the way of the cross – in his mission. The renewed perception of the mission of Jesus, in turn, illuminates the meaning of the church’s mission in the situation of diaspora. The weakness and shame of the cross in God’s mission brings to light an aspect of diaspora mission which cannot be explained by the existing framework of diaspora missiology. The logic of diaspora missiology – how to maximize efficiency and productivity in numerical terms – is inadequate to discuss the dimension of mission in which God advances his mission through the apparent weakness and folly of the cross. In the light of the cross of Jesus as well as the vulnerable reality of diaspora Christians, it is inevitable to seek a change of perspective in the study of ‘mission beyond the diaspora.’

This thesis employs Lesslie Newbigin’s theology of the cross as a criterion by which to understand the missionary movement of diaspora Christians. Lesslie Newbigin adopts and develops the theology of the cross as the central logic of his missiology. With the theology of the cross Newbigin articulates how in the mission of God – the redemptive work of God centred in

²⁸ Senior, “Beloved Aliens and Exiles,” 20. Donald Senior states that for Christians in the New Testament period the migration experience yielded “profound insight into the meaning of the gospel.” Ibid, 26.

²⁹ In this regard, Samuel Escobar maintains that the transitional circumstance of Latin America, urbanization and internal migration, is the context of “the rediscovery of the Christ of the Gospels.” Samuel Escobar, “Evangelical Theology in Latin America: The Development of a Missiological Christology,” *Missiology* 19 no 3 (Jul 1991): 315, 316.

Jesus Christ and God's continuing mission through the church³⁰ – vulnerability is used as an instrument of the missionary witness: Newbigin expounds theologically that the secret of God's kingdom is revealed in the weakness and lowliness of the cross. Explicating the importance of vulnerability in the dynamics of God's mission, Newbigin's theology of the cross informs the church's mission in the context of global diaspora. In reference to Newbigin's theology of the cross, the vulnerability as migrants is recognized to be the very substance of the church's missionary task and, at the same time, to be the locus and the occasion of God's intervention in 'mission beyond the diaspora.'

³⁰ Here, I am referring to the mission of God as 1) the triune work of God centred in the life and ministry of Jesus and as 2) God's continuing mission after the ascension of Jesus.

Chapter 2. Lesslie Newbigin's Theology of the Cross

The theology of the cross as a theological tradition has been significantly shaped by the Apostle Paul and Luther.³¹ First, the theology of the cross originates with the Apostle Paul. Paul regards the theology of the cross as a governing principle of the revelation of God, Christian life, and his own apostolic ministry.³² In the book of Corinthians Paul articulates the paradoxical truth of the gospel: the wisdom of God is revealed by foolishness (1 Cor. 1:21; 2:7); the power of God is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9-10); the future glory of resurrection is anticipated in the present status of dishonor (1 Cor. 15:43); the life of God becomes manifest and effective through death (2 Cor. 4:10-12; 1 Cor. 15:36).³³

Second, the theology of the cross was explicitly developed and systemized by Martin Luther.³⁴ As it was for the Apostle Paul, the theology of the cross is the controlling principle of Luther's theological thinking.³⁵ Luther's theology of the cross emphasizes the paradoxical manner by which God reveals himself: the revelation of God is "a *concealed* revelation" in that God makes himself known "in the very things which human wisdom regards as the antithesis of deity," especially "in the humility and shame of the cross."³⁶ Additionally, Luther presents the

³¹ Rosalene Bradbury, *Cross Theology: The Classical Theologia Crucis and Karl Barth's Modern Theology of the Cross* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2012), 6; Here, Rosalene maintains that the theology of the cross has its primary source with the Apostle Paul and was explicitly developed by Luther. Rosalene adds that between the time of Paul and Luther, the theology of the cross "(continued) with a narrow line of theologians."

According to Rosalene, the theology of the cross, between the time of the Apostle Paul and Luther, "continues through a narrow line of theologians," including Athanasius.

³² Walther Von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976), 12.

³³ Also see *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁴ Bradbury, *Cross Theology*, 6, 7.

³⁵ Dennis Ngien, *The Suffering of God According to Martin Luther's Theologia Crucis* (New York: P. Lang, 1995), 43; Dennis Ngien states: "The theology of the cross is a method by which Luther conceives of the whole content of the Christian faith and the task of Christian theology;" Von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 13. Loewenich maintains that Luther's theology of the cross as a principle of theological knowledge "corresponds exactly to" the Apostle Paul's theology of the cross.

³⁶ Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 149; Von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 29.

theology of the cross as a practical guideline of Christian life. According to Luther, the meaning and significance of the cross become evident only to those who follow Christ in the discipleship of suffering.³⁷ Thus, states Luther, “The cross of Christ and the cross of Christian belong together.”³⁸

Lesslie Newbigin applies the theology of the cross to his conception of mission. Though Newbigin does not offer a separate account of his theology of the cross, it is a foundational element ingrained in Newbigin’s missiology. The theology of the cross appears across Newbigin’s work in a consistent and coherent manner, underpinning major themes of Newbigin’s theology of mission.³⁹ For Newbigin the theology of the cross is the underlying principle of God’s mission; Newbigin claims that the mission of God – the trinitarian mission which was centred in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, and which is now continued through the church⁴⁰ – is carried forward according to the logic of the theology of the cross. This chapter will survey Lesslie Newbigin’s theology of the cross from the writings of Newbigin. Key features of Newbigin’s theology of the cross will be identified with regard to how the mission of God advances through the weakness and humiliation of the cross.

³⁷ Von Loewenich, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross*, 113, 118, 119.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 113.

³⁹ Newbigin’s theology of the cross supports and corresponds with Newbigin’s missiological themes such as the universality and centrality of Christ, the Trinitarian dynamics of mission, the doctrine of election, and *missio Dei*. It is beyond the purpose and scope of this thesis to demonstrate how Newbigin’s theology of the cross is connected to the major themes of Newbigin’s missiology.

⁴⁰ Newbigin conceptualizes the mission of God in the trinitarian framework, and with Christological focus; while Newbigin develops the trinitarian understanding of mission, his understanding of mission is developed with Christological focus. In this regard, Michael Goheen observes as follows: “The work of Jesus Christ remained the starting point and controlling criterion for [Newbigin’s] thinking about God’s redemptive work and the church’s mission;” “Newbigin’s understanding of the basis of mission is Christocentric-Trinitarian.” See Michael W. Goheen, “As the Father Has Sent Me, I Am Sending You: J. E. Lesslie Newbigin’s Missionary Ecclesiology.” (PhD Diss., University of Utrecht, 2000), 115, 119.

Further, Newbigin shapes his understanding of the church’s mission within the same ‘Christocentric-Trinitarian’ framework: Newbigin maintains that in the church, the mission of Jesus is continued in the trinitarian dynamics, and it is carried out by the presence and work of the triune God himself. See Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 135, 118. More details of Newbigin’s trinitarian framework of mission will be surveyed in the second section of this chapter – ‘2.2 The Crucified Jesus and the Cross.’

2.1 Kingdom of God: Both Hidden and Revealed

‘The kingdom of God’ is the main motif of Newbigin’s conception of the mission of God: using the motif of God’s kingdom, Newbigin expounds the redemptive work of the triune God and, further, defines the purpose and goal of the church’s mission.⁴¹ Newbigin unfolds his account of mission from the coming of God’s kingdom in the ministry of Jesus. Newbigin maintains that the beginning of mission in the synoptic gospels is Jesus’ announcement of the kingdom of God;⁴² Jesus is described as “the one who announces the coming of the reign of God, the one who is acknowledged as the Son of God and is anointed by the Spirit of God.”⁴³ The kingship of God, “the reign and the sovereignty of God over all that is,”⁴⁴ had been the accepted fact in Israel, even before the coming of Jesus. Yet, what is new and decisive in the mission of Jesus is that the long-awaited kingdom of God has become an imminent reality and that the

⁴¹ Newbigin maintains that it is necessary – in biblical, theological, and historical aspects – to conceive mission with the motif, ‘the kingdom of God.’ First, Newbigin claims that ‘the mission of God portrayed in Scripture’ – especially the description of mission in the New Testament – should be considered with the theme of God’s kingdom. For example, in his work “Sign of the Kingdom,” Newbigin demonstrates that ‘the kingdom of God’ is the primary clue to understand the mission of Jesus and the church’s mission: The central theme in the mission of Jesus is God’s kingdom – Jesus preached the kingdom, and the kingdom was present in Jesus himself. The church’s mission is to be the sign of God’s kingdom by the gift of the Spirit. The Spirit, who is the foretaste of God’s kingdom, is present in the church, and the Spirit himself bears witness to the reality of God’s kingdom. See Lesslie Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 17, 36-40.

Second, in the theological perspective, Newbigin expounds the trinitarian mission with the motif of the kingdom of God. In his writings Newbigin articulates the content and the dynamics of the trinitarian mission “in terms of the Father’s reign, Jesus’ inauguration of this reign, and the Spirit’s witness to its presence.” See Goheen, “As the Father Has Sent Me,” 162.

Third, according to Newbigin, it is a historical necessity, a demand of his time, that mission should be reconsidered with the theme of God’s kingdom. In the situation where the universal authority of the gospel is denied and Christian faith is privatised, argues Newbigin, “[the theme of the kingdom] challenges us to recognise the universal and ‘holistic’ character of the gift and the claim of God in Jesus Christ.” See Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 17. Additionally, Newbigin defines the church’s mission with the motif of God’s kingdom: The essence of the church’s mission is to provide the locus of the trinitarian mission, which means to become the place where the Spirit is present and does missionary work as the foretaste of the kingdom of God. See Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 118-121. Details of Newbigin’s theory of the church’s mission will be reviewed in the third section of this chapter – ‘2.3 Ecclesial Life and the Veiled Form.’

⁴² Lesslie Newbigin, “The Theology of Mission [Lecture 4],” (lecture, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ, 1977), Available from <http://commons.ptsem.edu/id/1253>.

⁴³ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 21.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 30

kingdom is present in Jesus.⁴⁵ In this regard, Newbigin underscores that the mission of Jesus entails both the proclamation and the presence of God's kingdom:

(The) mission of Jesus was not only to proclaim the kingdom of God but also to embody the presence of the kingdom of God in his own person...⁴⁶

What is new is that in Jesus the kingdom is present.... It was that the kingdom, or kingship, of God was no longer a distant hope or a faceless concept. It had now a name and a face – the name and face of the man from Nazareth. In the New Testament we are dealing not just with the proclamation of the kingdom but also with the presence of the kingdom.⁴⁷

Taking the kingdom of God as the main motif to conceptualize mission, and also considering Jesus as the centre of God's kingdom, Lesslie Newbigin distinguishes his missiology from the "two wrong concepts of mission" that were prevalent in his day.⁴⁸ The first erroneous concept, according to Newbigin, is a position which regards personal conversion and church extension as the chief goal of mission;⁴⁹ this position places exclusive emphasis on "the conversion of the greatest possible number of individuals and their incorporation into the Church."⁵⁰ In this view of mission, the priority of missionary work is on evangelistic preaching, whereas the action for social justice and peace is counted marginal to the church's missionary task.⁵¹ Newbigin thinks

⁴⁵ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 25.

⁴⁶ Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 41.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁸ Newbigin mentions the two erroneous views as he discusses mission in terms of the kingdom of God. Newbigin calls these two views, "two wrong concepts of mission which are at present deeply dividing the Christian community." See Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 135.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 121. Newbigin states that this view has originated from "the American 'Church Growth' agencies" and the church growth school of missiology. Newbigin mentions Donald McGavran as the main advocate of this view. See Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 35; Newbigin, "The Theology of Mission [Lecture 1]," Available from <http://commons.ptsem.edu/id/1250>.

Newbigin adds that this view tends to value a program, a campaign or a technique that facilitates the increase in number. See Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 34.

⁵¹ Newbigin explains that the church-growth view considers the good deed only as a means of mission, but not the goal of mission in itself; for the proponents of the church-growth view, "[Good deed] may be a way of drawing people to hear the gospel, but it is not an intrinsic part of the gospel itself." Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 135.

this view, the church-growth concept of mission, is defective in that it reduces mission to the expansion of the church and, moreover, in that it neglects the holistic character of the gospel.⁵² On the other hand, Newbigin maintains, there has widely existed a misconception which defines mission as the process of humanization. This position, which Newbigin refers to as “the concept of mission as humanization,” seeks to provide genuine humanity in different sectors of life;⁵³ it emphasizes activities such as “the humanization of society, the eradication of social ills, the provision of education, healing, and economic development.”⁵⁴ While the humanization concept of mission addresses the theme of the kingdom of God, it separates the kingdom from the person of Jesus; ‘the kingdom’ is advocated as an ideology of earthly betterment, yet the kingdom is seen “as something transcending the Person of Jesus,” not necessarily involving the personal conversion to Jesus as Lord and Saviour.⁵⁵ Newbigin contends that the concept of mission as humanization is a deviation from the message of the gospel.⁵⁶ In contrast to the erroneous ideas of mission in the above, Newbigin discusses the universal and eschatological significance of the kingdom of God.⁵⁷

For Newbigin ‘the Kingdom of God’ is not an open concept into which people can freely project their own causes, nor is the kingdom a vague idea which can be interpreted in various ways.⁵⁸ Rather, Newbigin affirms that the kingdom of God, announced and embodied by Jesus,

⁵² Newbigin emphasizes that the goal of mission is not the prosperity of the church itself, but the witness to the kingdom of God. The church’s missionary witness cannot be limited to evangelistic preaching and personal conversion since the kingdom of God concerns with the whole of reality, not just someone’s personal reality. In this regard, Newbigin states: “(A) Church which exists only for itself and its own enlargement is a witness against the gospel...” See *Ibid.*, 136.

⁵³ Newbigin, “The Theology of Mission [Lecture 1].” Available from <http://commons.ptsem.edu/id/1250>.

⁵⁴ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 121.

⁵⁵ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 7, 18.

⁵⁶ Newbigin argues that the conception of the kingdom which is not centred in the reality of the living God is the deviation from the gospel. See *Ibid.*, 36.

⁵⁷ Newbigin states in this regard, “[The theme of God’s kingdom] challenges us to recognize the universal and ‘holistic’ character of the gift and the claim of God in Jesus Christ.” See *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵⁸ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 134.

has a definite meaning – which is, the Father’s purpose of salvation and the final consummation of all things in Jesus. According to Newbigin, the coming of Jesus into human history, the life and ministry of Jesus, is “the event by which the Father has chosen to bring all things to the point of decision, to the issue of judgment and blessing.”⁵⁹ In Jesus ‘the Day of the Lord’ – “the coming day when God will personally intervene for salvation and judgment” – has dawned, and it is present.⁶⁰ Jesus has an authority to forgive sins, and the authority of Jesus demands a decision of faith.⁶¹ In the presence of Jesus, people are required to make the ultimate decision – which is, either to acknowledge Jesus as Lord or to deny him and denounce him.⁶² The acknowledgement or denial of Jesus decides the person’s final destiny; salvation for humanity is acquired “only by the explicit acceptance of the Name of Jesus Christ,” in other words, by making an affirmation – “I believe that Jesus is Lord.”⁶³ In this respect, Newbigin clarifies that the reign of God is present in Jesus with the reality of God’s salvation and judgment:

So complete is the identification of the presence of Jesus with the presence of the kingdom that a man’s or a woman’s acknowledgement or denial of Jesus settles the question of that person’s acceptance or rejection by God. . . . (The) reality of the reign of God is effectively present in Jesus in its double character of blessing and judgment.⁶⁴

Newbigin explains further that the salvation, offered in the name of Jesus, is cosmic and eschatological in nature. The affirmation of Jesus as Lord is not merely a matter of someone’s private reality, but it concerns the whole of reality.⁶⁵ The lordship and the authority of Jesus embrace all peoples and all things. What is revealed and fulfilled in Jesus is the ultimate meaning

⁵⁹ Lesslie Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine for Today’s Mission* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 40.

⁶⁰ Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 42, 44.

⁶¹ Newbigin, “The Theology of Mission [Lecture 2],” Available from <http://commons.ptsem.edu/id/1251>.

⁶² Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 42.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 17; Newbigin, “The Theology of Mission [Lecture 3],” Available from <http://commons.ptsem.edu/id/1252>.

⁶⁴ Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 42.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

of history; the mission of Jesus is concerned with “the completion of God’s purpose in the creation of the world and of man within the world.”⁶⁶ In this regard, Newbigin maintains that the salvation in the name of Jesus means the restoration and the consummation of all that exists. He states: “The salvation of which the Gospel speaks [is]... a making whole, a healing. It is the summing-up of all things in Christ.”⁶⁷ Whereas the mission of Jesus reveals the end of the world, Newbigin remarks, the coming again of Jesus will be the end itself.⁶⁸ In sum, Newbigin explicates that the presence of the reign of God in Jesus discloses the Father’s purpose of cosmic salvation, confronting all humankind with the need to make decision about their destiny.

The presence of the reign of God in Jesus, however, is not obvious to natural human perception. The reign of God has arrived in the mission of Jesus, and it is present in the person of Jesus himself. Yet, the presence of the reign of God in Jesus, Newbigin stresses, is veiled; “In [Jesus] the kingdom of God has come, but it is hidden.”⁶⁹ Newbigin considers the hiddenness of the reign of God to be an essential character of the mission of Jesus: Jesus announces the coming of the reign of God and performs mighty works that attest to the reality of the reign of God. But the preaching and mighty works of Jesus, although they are signs of God’s reign, do not directly or necessarily manifest the presence of the reign of God.⁷⁰ Further, the presence of the reign of God is hidden in the person of Jesus, under the form of weakness; the presence of the kingdom in Jesus is not evident to the eyes of the world because the kingdom of God and its glory are veiled in the vulnerable and powerless Jesus – in the lowliness of incarnation.⁷¹ Newbigin articulates

⁶⁶ Ibid., 34.

⁶⁷ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church* (London: SCM Press, 1957), 140.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 137.

⁶⁹ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 39.

⁷⁰ Newbigin explains that the preaching and mighty works of Jesus can also be occasions for stumbling and scandal, or even misinterpreted as works of the devil. See Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 27-28; Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 35.

⁷¹ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 106, 108.

that in the mission of Jesus the reign of God is a hidden reality, which is only preached in parables and which remains veiled unless it is disclosed by the action of God:

(The) reign of God is a reality that can only be announced in parables. It is a “mystery,” at once both hidden and revealed: the characteristic language of parable.... The announcement of the kingdom will *not* of itself automatically open their eyes to its presence, for the reign of God is present under the form not of power, but of weakness. It is strictly a mystery, a reality that remains hidden unless it is revealed by the action of God.⁷²

Only by the gift of faith and repentance, Newbigin maintains, the veiled presence of the reign of God can be perceived. The perception of the presence of the reign of God can never be an achievement or a possibility of human. Rather, the eyes of faith – the discernment of the signs of the kingdom of God – are given by an act of God’s sovereign grace:⁷³ “It is to those who are chosen and called, those to whom it is ‘given’, those who are ‘blessed’, that parables and mighty works become pointers to the mystery of the Kingdom.”⁷⁴ Also, it requires repentance – a mental and spiritual U-turn – to receive the gift of faith. Newbigin explains that the gift of faith and repentance enable one to recognize the presence of the reign of God in Jesus:

Without a radical change of mind, the presence of the Kingdom is simply hidden. It cannot be discerned. Faith is not a possibility for the human heart except for those whom God Himself gives it.⁷⁵

They cannot see because they face the wrong way and look for something which is not in truth the power of God. They must make a mental and spiritual U-turn, be converted, in order to believe (not see) that the good news is true: the reign of God is present.⁷⁶

⁷² Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 35.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

⁷⁴ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 28.

⁷⁵ Lesslie Newbigin & Geoffrey Wainwright, *Signs Amid the Rubble: The Purposes of God in Human History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 79.

⁷⁶ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 105.

It is the paradigm in the mission of Jesus, according Newbigin, that the presence of the reign of God is *both hidden and revealed*. In the words and works of Jesus, and especially in the person of Jesus himself, “[the] presence of the Kingdom is both an unveiling and a veiling;”⁷⁷ Newbigin states in this regard: “The presence of the kingdom is a hidden presence... but precisely in its hiddenness it is revealed to those to whom God through his Spirit grants the gift of faith.”⁷⁸

Because the presence of the kingdom of God is revealed in its hiddenness, Newbigin refers to the gospel message as “the revealed secret of the presence of the kingdom”⁷⁹ or ‘The Open Secret.’⁸⁰ “(The) paradox of veiling and unveiling,” Newbigin maintains, “reaches its climax” at the cross of Jesus.⁸¹ The cross of Jesus is “(the) supreme parable, the supreme deed by which the reign of God is both revealed and hidden.”⁸² Newbigin conceptualizes it to be the decisive pattern or the paradigm of God’s mission in Jesus that *the presence of the reign of God is both hidden and revealed in the cross of Jesus*:

(The) cross is the place where to eyes of faith the reign of God is manifested in what seems to be its defeat; the power of God, in weakness; the wisdom of God, in foolishness.⁸³

The cross is either the power of God and the wisdom of God – in fact the reign of God actually present – or else it is scandal and folly. It is to those who are called, called by God not by themselves, that the crucified Lord is the presence of the kingdom of God in wisdom and power (1 Cor. 1:18-25).⁸⁴

⁷⁷ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 28.

⁷⁸ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 53.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁸⁰ Although Newbigin does not give a list of reference in his missiological writings, it is evident that Newbigin’s theology of the cross is significantly influenced by Luther’s theology of the cross. ‘The knowledge of God both hidden and revealed’ is the characteristic thought and language of Luther. Newbigin’s expression, ‘open secret,’ seems almost identical with Luther’s concept, “concealed revelation;” Von Loewenich, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross*, 22.

⁸¹ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 31.

⁸² Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 35.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁸⁴ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 31-32.

‘The veiled presence of the reign of God in the crucified Jesus,’ Newbigin claims, is a continuing paradigm in the mission of God, even after the ascension of Jesus. In the church’s mission – during the time between the ascension of Jesus and his coming – the presence of the reign of God remains both hidden and revealed in the cross of Jesus. In this sense, Newbigin maintains that “In the Church the mission of Jesus is continued in the same veiled form.”⁸⁵ The church, by its own wisdom and power, cannot manifest the presence of the reign of God; the reign of God is a reality beyond the church’s control and management. Rather than to master and prove the presence of the kingdom of God, the church is called to participate in the life and death of Jesus, to be part of the mystery of the presence of the kingdom of God: “The disciples will thus themselves become part of the revealed secret of the presence of the kingdom.”⁸⁶ Additionally, Newbigin explains the rationale for the hiddenness of the reign of God. The presence of the reign of God continues to be veiled in the cross of Jesus “in order that there might be the possibility of repentance and freely given faith.”⁸⁷ Newbigin states:

It is in the mercy of God that the final unveiling of his power is held back so that all the nations may have the same opportunity that was given to the first hearers in Galilee, the opportunity to repent, to be converted, and to believe and recognize the presence of the reign of God in the crucified Jesus.⁸⁸

This hiddenness is what makes possible the conversion of the nations. The unveiling of the glory of God’s kingdom in all its terrible majesty could leave no further room for the free acceptance in faith which Jesus called for. Only when that glory was veiled in the lowliness of the incarnation could it call out freely given repentance and faith.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 118.

⁸⁶ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 46. Newbigin’s understanding of the church’s mission will be reviewed in the third section of this chapter – ‘2.3 Ecclesial Life and the Veiled Form.’

⁸⁷ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 118.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 108.

2.2. The Crucified Jesus and the Cross

Lesslie Newbigin expounds what it means that the presence of the reign of God is veiled in the mission of Jesus: the content of the hiddenness of the reign of God is Jesus' suffering on the cross and his loving obedience to the Father in the trinitarian dynamics. First, Newbigin highlights the suffering and weakness of the cross in the mission of God. The cross of Jesus is at the centre of Lesslie Newbigin's missionary thinking. According to Newbigin, the cross of Jesus is where the secret of the kingdom of God is both hidden and revealed. The cross of Jesus is the culmination of the pattern of God's mission, the veiling and unveiling of the presence of the reign of God:

The King reigns from the tree. The reign of God has indeed come upon us, and its sign is not a golden throne but a wooden cross.⁹⁰

Here is the supreme parable: the reign of God hidden and manifest in the dying of a condemned and excommunicated man; the fullness of God's blessing bestowed in the accursed death of the cross.⁹¹

Newbigin thinks that the cross of Jesus indicates the manner and the pattern of God's mission: the cross of Jesus shows the specific way the reign of God is inaugurated. Jesus brings the reign of God not by overpowering the world and forcing the message of salvation upon people but by making himself vulnerable and helpless; Jesus ushers the reign of the Father not as "the master and manager of the world's affairs on behalf of God"⁹² but as the suffering servant. In the crucified Jesus, "the reign of God is present under the form not of power, but of weakness."⁹³

⁹⁰ Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: the Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 127.

⁹¹ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 36.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 34.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 35.

Discussing the veiled presence of the reign of God, Newbigin underscores that Jesus makes witness to the reign of God by taking the way of the cross:

Certainly the “the powers of the kingdom” are manifest in him. He does mighty works, which to eyes of faith are signs of the presence of the reign of God (Luke 11:14-22). Yet, paradoxically, his calling is to the way of suffering, rejection, and death – to the way of the cross. He bears witness to the presence of the reign of God not by overpowering the forces of evil, but by taking their full weight upon himself. Yet it is in that seeming defeat that victory is won.⁹⁴

In the mission of Jesus, the reign of God is veiled that “his action is hidden within what seems to be its opposite – suffering and tribulation for his people.”⁹⁵ The revealed secret of the kingdom means that Jesus bears in his body the marks of the cross. Referring to Newbigin’s theology of the mission, Michael Goheen maintains, “Jesus ushers in the kingdom by way of the cross.... Suffering is not a by-product of faithful mission but the very mode of Jesus’ mission;”⁹⁶ “the kingdom is present in weakness...;”⁹⁷ Jesus “carried out His calling in suffering and weakness.”⁹⁸

Newbigin sees from the cross the paradoxical way the reign of God is witnessed and established in the mission of Jesus. The secret of the reign of God is revealed by vulnerability and helplessness that Jesus bears on the cross. Jesus challenges and defeats the power of evil, not by apparent power but by making himself vulnerable and mute; Jesus accepts the way of suffering and humility:

In defenseless vulnerability [Jesus] challenged the reign of evil and by doing so took upon himself the full force of its onslaught. In doing so he achieved a victory over the

⁹⁴ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 34-35.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁹⁶ Goheen, “As the Father Has Sent Me,” 145.

⁹⁷ Goheen, “As the Father Has Sent Me,” 146.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 178.

power of evil which was both hidden and revealed – hidden from the perception of the practitioners of *realipotik*, revealed to the faith of those who were committed to him as the foretaste of a total victory promised at the end.⁹⁹

He chose a mount, however that suggested a humble royalty, a kingly meekness, a donkey. He challenged leaders of the nation at the very center of their power, and he accepted in his own self the full onslaught of the powers that reject the reign of God.¹⁰⁰

Next, the veiled presence of the reign of God in the cross of Jesus means, in the trinitarian dynamics, the Son's loving obedience to the Father. It is in the context of the work of the triune God that Newbigin conceives the mission of Jesus and God's continuing mission in the church.¹⁰¹ Newbigin explores the mission of Jesus within the trinitarian dynamics.¹⁰² According to Newbigin, "the mission of Jesus does not stand alone."¹⁰³ As the Son, Jesus is sent by the Father to proclaim the Father's reign and to embody its presence.¹⁰⁴ Jesus as the Son announces and bears the witness to the reign and the sovereignty of the Father and his purpose over all that is.¹⁰⁵ Jesus brings the reign of the Father, as "the obedient Son."¹⁰⁶ The Son's mission is carried on "in communion with the Father."¹⁰⁷ The Son brings and bears the presence of God's reign in the veiled form; the Son appears not as a ruler of worldly affairs but as a servant who goes up to the cross, where the reign of God is both hidden and revealed.¹⁰⁸ Newbigin states that Jesus

⁹⁹ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 55.

¹⁰⁰ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 36.

¹⁰¹ In his major work of theology of mission, *The Open Secret*, Newbigin conceptualizes mission in the trinitarian framework. See Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 19-65; Additionally, concerning his conception of the church's mission Newbigin remarks, "The mission of the Church is to be understood, can only be rightly understood, in terms of the trinitarian model." See Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 118.

¹⁰² Michale Goheen summarizes Newbigin's view of Jesus' mission in the trinitarian framework: "Newbigin unfolds Christ's mission in terms of the Father's reign, Jesus' inauguration of this reign, and the Spirit's witness to its presence;" Goheen, "As the Father Has Sent Me," 162.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 21-22.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁰⁷ Goheen, "As the Father Has Sent Me," 134.

¹⁰⁸ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 34-35.

“speaks of his words and works as not his own but those of the Father. His teaching is the teaching of the Father, and his mighty works are the works of the Father.”¹⁰⁹ Additionally, the mission of the Son is “carried out in the power of the Spirit.”¹¹⁰ “From the very beginning,” Newbigin stresses, “the coming of Jesus, his words and works are connected directly with the power of the Spirit.”¹¹¹ “It is by the Spirit” that Jesus “is conceived,” “is anointed,” and Jesus “enters the ministry of teaching and healing;”¹¹² “(The) mighty works of Jesus are the work of God’s kingly power, of his Spirit.”¹¹³ The hidden reality of God’s reign in the ministry of Jesus is unveiled by the presence and working of the Spirit.

In the trinitarian dynamics of mission, the weakness and suffering of the cross means “the Son’s loving obedience to the Father.”¹¹⁴ As a loving and obedient Son, Jesus accepts the weakness and suffering – the way of the cross – in his mission. Jesus does not take masterful control of his mission. Instead, Jesus accepts “the Father’s ordering of events” as the context of his obedience;¹¹⁵ Jesus commits himself completely to the Father and relies on him. In the mission of Jesus, “The Father alone is in control.”¹¹⁶ Newbigin articulates how Jesus ushers the reign of the Father as the loving and obedient Son:

As the Son, Jesus loves and obeys the Father. He submits himself wholly to the Father’s ordering of events. He does not seek to take control himself of world history. He rejects every temptation to become himself a ruler and director of events. He does not appear among men as a theophany, in the sense of a temporary manifestation of the Ruler of all things; he appears as the Son who lovingly submits himself to the will of him who rules

¹⁰⁹ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 117.

¹¹⁰ Goheen, “As the Father Has Sent Me,” 163.

¹¹¹ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 57.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 117.

¹¹⁴ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 83.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

all things. Nor does he seek to launch a movement which will have power to control world events.¹¹⁷

Newbigin reads from the crucified Christ the pattern of missionary advance. In the mission of God, God's reign remains veiled in the cross of the Son. The Son and those who continue the mission of the Son are called to embrace the weakness and suffering of the cross. Newbigin states, "(The) Son and those whom he has made his brethren are sent into the world not as the agents of the Father's rule, but as the witnesses of it."¹¹⁸ The way of the cross – "the love and obedience of the Son to the Father"¹¹⁹ – is the pattern of missionary advance. The way of the cross as the pattern of God's mission is continued in the mission of the church.

2.3 Ecclesial Life and the Veiled Form

Lesslie Newbigin conceptualizes the purpose and goal of the church's mission – or the nature of the church's mission – with the theology of the cross. According to Newbigin, "In the Church the mission of Jesus is continued in the same veiled form."¹²⁰ The church is called and sent by Jesus to continue the mission of Jesus – that is, to announce the kingdom of God and to embody the presence of the kingdom of God. In this regard, Newbigin states: "[The church] is sent... not only to proclaim the kingdom but to bear in its own life the presence of the kingdom,"¹²¹ The church "is a society in which... [Jesus'] mission continues, not only as the proclamation of the kingdom but as the presence of the kingdom."¹²²

The church's mission is the continuation of the mission of Jesus in the sense that it reveals to the world the ultimate meaning of history, which is "the divine purpose of

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 39.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 40.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 39.

¹²⁰ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 118.

¹²¹ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 48-49.

¹²² Ibid., 52.

salvation.”¹²³ During the time between Jesus’ ascension and his coming again, “the Church is to prosecute its apostolic mission of witness to the world.”¹²⁴ Referring to the missionary nature of the church, Newbigin maintains that “The Church has its existence in relation to the salvation which has been wrought at Christ’s coming into the world and is to be consummated at His coming again... (The) Church’s existence is in the act of being the bearer of that salvation to the whole world.”¹²⁵ Just as Jesus confronted people with the kingdom of God and urged them to make the decision of faith, the church witnesses to the reality of God’s kingdom and summons all people to the commitment to Jesus.¹²⁶ The church, therefore, is “the place where God presses mankind towards decision for or against Christ.”¹²⁷ In this sense, the mission of the church is:

(The) continuing of that which God began to do in Jesus, the confronting of the nations in ever sharper terms with the choice between the true purpose of the Father to sum up all things in him through whom they were created.... It is the Father’s purpose, revealed in Jesus, to lead all mankind to this ultimate decision. The presence of the Church in the midst of mankind is the means by which he does so.¹²⁸

In the church’s mission the proclamation of the kingdom of God means to preach Jesus as the Lord and the savior of the world. The shift of language from preaching ‘the kingdom’ to preaching ‘Jesus’ is natural in the church’s missionary witness. In the mission of Jesus, the kingdom of God is “no longer a distant hope or a faceless concept.”¹²⁹ In the words, the deeds, and the presence of Jesus the kingdom of God has become a concrete reality for humanity. It is by one’s acceptance or rejection of Jesus that the reality of God’s reign is made known and the

¹²³ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 148.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹²⁶ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 49; Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 113.

¹²⁷ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 58.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹²⁹ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 40.

gift of salvation is granted: “the reality of the reign of God is effectively present in Jesus in its double character of blessing and judgment.”¹³⁰ Thus, there occurs naturally in the church’s witness “a switch from proclaiming the kingdom to proclaiming Jesus”¹³¹ or to “make Jesus, rather than the kingdom, the center of the Christian message.”¹³²

Newbigin explores in detail what it means for the church to bear the presence of the kingdom of God. Newbigin discusses two aspects of how the church becomes “the bearer of the presence of the kingdom through history.”¹³³ First, the church bears the presence of the reign of God by its participation in the life of the crucified and risen Jesus. The church is a community called and bound by Jesus to experience “a life that is continuing, the carrying forward of the life of the crucified and risen Jesus.”¹³⁴ The church represents the reality of God’s reign by its participation in the passion of Jesus. Newbigin explains that the church is “a society in which [Jesus’] mission continues not only as the proclamation of the kingdom but as the presence of the kingdom *in the form of death and resurrection*.”¹³⁵ Further, for Newbigin “the Eucharist” is essential to “[the church’s] sharing in the dying and rising of Jesus:”¹³⁶ the church’s repeated sharing in the common meal is “a continually renewed participation in [Jesus’] dying and, therefore, in his victorious life.”¹³⁷ In the life of the church exists “a real participation in the life of God himself.”¹³⁸ Newbigin maintains that by its participation in the passion of Jesus, the church is incorporated into ‘the revealed secret of the presence of the kingdom:’

¹³⁰ Ibid., 42.

¹³¹ Ibid., 41.

¹³² Ibid., 43.

¹³³ Ibid., 53.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 52.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 113.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 46.

¹³⁸ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 147.

[Jesus'] life, his cruel death, his resurrection will not only be a story to be proclaimed, recorded, studied: they will be something to be lived. The disciples will thus themselves become part of the revealed secret of the presence of the kingdom. They will be those who, in Paul's words, are "always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (II Cor 4:10).¹³⁹

The presence of the kingdom, hidden and revealed in the cross of Jesus, is carried through history hidden and revealed in the life of that community which bears in its life the dying and rising of Jesus.¹⁴⁰

The reign of God is present in the life of the church in a 'secondary' and 'derivative' sense; the reign of God in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is now continued in the community which participates in the life and death of Jesus. In this regard, Newbigin states:

(In) a secondary, derivative, but nonetheless real sense the reign of God is present (hidden yet revealed to eyes of faith) in the community that bears [Jesus'] name, lives by faith in his person and work, is anointed by his Spirit, and lives through history the dying and rising of Jesus.... (Because) it is the community that lives by and bears witness to the risen life of the crucified Lord, it is the place where the reign of God is actually present and at work in the midst of history.¹⁴¹

Second, Newbigin contends that the presence of the reign of God in the church essentially means the presence of the Spirit in the church: the Spirit, who is given to and indwells the church, constitutes the presence of God's reign in the church and the witness to the reality of God's reign.¹⁴² The Spirit is given to the church as "the foretaste, the first-fruit, the *arrabon* of the

¹³⁹ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 46; Here, Newbigin specifically speaks of the Eucharist as the participation in the life and death of Jesus, and "in the mystery of [God's] own being." For Newbigin, the celebration of the Eucharist is essential for the church's participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus. See Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 112-113.

¹⁴⁰ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 52.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 53-54.

¹⁴² Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 55; Here, Newbigin refers to "the presence of the Spirit" as "the foretaste of the victory of God's reign and the witness to its reality."

Kingdom.”¹⁴³ Because of the presence of the Spirit, the life of the church here and now becomes “a real foretaste of heaven.”¹⁴⁴ Referring to Jesus’ words concerning the promise of the Spirit to the church (Acts 1:8), Newbigin states:

The promise is about that which is foretaste, the first-fruit, the *arrabon* of the Kingdom – namely the gift of the Spirit.... It is, on the one hand, a real foretaste of the love and joy and peace which are the very substance of God’s rule. But – on the other hand – it’s not yet fullness of these things. It is the solid pledge which gives assurance that the fullness is coming. And this is what constitutes the witness.¹⁴⁵

Newbigin emphasizes that the presence and work of the Spirit Himself constitute the witness to the reality of God’s reign. The presence of the kingdom is not under the church’s control. The church cannot facilitate or prove to the world the reality of God’s kingship. Newbigin states:

“(The) Kingdom is God’s Kingdom. In regard to the time and manner of its coming the Church can exercise no kind of control but must place its trust simply and absolutely in the Father;”¹⁴⁶

“God’s kingship is present in the church; but it must be insisted that it is not the property of the church. It is not domesticated within the church.”¹⁴⁷ Rather, the church is simply a place where

the Spirit is present as the foretaste of God’s reign as well as the pledge of the coming of God’s reign in fullness: “(The) church is a place where the Spirit is present as witness;”¹⁴⁸ “What is

promised to the Church is the *arrabon* of the kingdom, the Spirit whose presence *is* the witness to the kingdom...”¹⁴⁹ In this sense, the missionary witness of the church is not “a burden laid

upon consciences of Christians,”¹⁵⁰ but a gift from above; the missionary task of bearing the

¹⁴³ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 37.

¹⁴⁴ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 148.

¹⁴⁵ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 37.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁴⁷ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 56.

¹⁴⁸ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 38.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

presence of God's kingship is 'a gift, not a burden,' 'a promise, not a command,' and 'the gospel, not part of the law.'¹⁵¹ Regarding the church's witness to the presence of the kingdom, Newbigin states, "It is pure gift. It is not an accomplishment of the one who bears witness but rather a gift which comes from beyond him and so direct men's attention away from the bearer to the source of the gift."¹⁵²

Newbigin considers the theology of the cross as the controlling principle of the church's mission. According to Newbigin, "In the Church the mission of Jesus is continued in the same veiled form."¹⁵³ The church continues the mission of Jesus, which is to proclaim God's kingdom and to embody its presence. Yet, the church cannot demonstrate or prove the kingdom of God to the world. Just as the kingdom of God was both hidden and revealed in Jesus, "in [the church] are both a disclosing and a hiddenness of God's reign."¹⁵⁴ Newbigin clarifies that the mission of the church – the words, the deeds, and the corporate life of the church – cannot not simply demonstrate the reality of the reign of God to the world.¹⁵⁵ Newbigin stresses that the missionary witness and the corporate life of the church do not manifest or realize the kingdom of God in history.

First, Newbigin affirms that the missionary activity of the church – the evangelistic preaching and the good work – are not the manifestation of the reign God. The words and deeds of the church – the missionary activities of the church – are the signs of the reality of the

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 36-37.

¹⁵² Ibid., 38.

¹⁵³ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 118.

¹⁵⁴ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 113.

¹⁵⁵ It is not easy to provide a clear-cut account of how Lesslie Newbigin defines and categorizes the church's missionary activities. Newbigin discusses the church's mission in its various aspects and in depth, engaging in the contemporary theory and practice of mission. In this part of thesis I will categorize Newbigin's understanding of the church's mission first, as the words and the deeds of the church and second, as the corporate life of the church.

kingdom of God.¹⁵⁶ Yet, the church's words and deeds do not simply manifest the kingdom to the world. In this regard, Newbigin affirms: "There is no simple line from the words and deeds of the Church to the manifestation of God's kingdom."¹⁵⁷ As in the case of the words and deeds of Jesus, the church's preaching and good work have 'the character of parable:' The preaching and the good work of the church may be "misinterpreted" by people or even become "the occasion [of stumbling.]"¹⁵⁸ "Yet properly understood," Newbigin continues, "they are a necessary part of the Church's witness to the presence and power of God's Kingdom. They are the witnesses to its present reality."¹⁵⁹ Additionally, concerning the missionary activity of the church, Newbigin holds that the words and the deeds of the church are the signs of the kingdom rather than the instruments of building up or extending the kingdom. Newbigin thinks that "[The missionary works] are not the *means* by which God establishes his Kingdom. They are the witnesses to its present reality."¹⁶⁰ For Newbigin, it is important to understand that the kingdom of God is not built by human, but it is given by the grace and work of God himself:

"We do not establish God's kingdom. That kingdom, that kingly rule, has been given to us in the form of the suffering servant.... God's kingdom is a given fact, and our actions for justice and compassion are at the very best only signs, pointers to help men and women to turn round so that it becomes possible for them also to believe in the reality of that kingdom..."¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Newbigin upholds the holistic nature of the church's mission. Along with the evangelistic preaching, Newbigin considers the good work as the missionary witness of the church. For Newbigin the good work of the church is the witness to the cosmic dimension of God's kingdom and corresponds to the holistic character of Jesus' ministry. He states, "Christians are also called to act. In this they are one with their Lord, who was anointed both to announce good news and also to embody the good news in acts of healing, releasing, quickening. These acts will also have the character of witness. These will be signs..." See Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 47.

¹⁵⁷ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 41.

¹⁵⁸ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 47.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*; Here, Newbigin is discussing the good work of the church.

¹⁶⁰ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 47.

¹⁶¹ Newbigin, *Mission in Christ's Way*, 11-12.

Second, Newbigin affirms that the corporate life of the church is not the realization of God's kingdom in history. As it has been noticed, Newbigin stresses that the church is called to bear in its communal life the presence God's reign. Yet, the life of the church is not the realization of the reign of God. In this regard, Newbigin criticizes a view of Christian mission which seeks to liberate the oppressed and to achieve the justice of God by human work. Although the church is a sign of the kingdom of God in history, Newbigin clarifies, it cannot be the realization or the manifestation of the kingdom in history:

The church lives in the midst of history as a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the reign of God. But this does not mean that in the life of the church there can be at any point in time a simple identification of the justice of God with the justice of a particular political cause.¹⁶²

For Newbigin the kingdom of God should be considered with its eschatological dimension. The kingdom of God has come and is now a present reality in this world. Yet, the manifestation of the kingdom in its fullness depends on the Father's sovereignty and his timing. It is not by "a simple ascent" that the veiled presence of the kingdom is fully revealed to the world.¹⁶³ The kingdom is not established by human development or some type of "evolutionary process" in history:¹⁶⁴

There is no evolutionary process by which the cosmos finally arrives at [its] goal. Our picture of history – the picture of what is to come – must be shaped less by the idea of evolution than by the New Testament Apocalypse. History is seen in this view under the sign of the cross. [The church] is not and can never expect to bear God's cause in the sense that it is the agency through which God's order is established within history. That is the Constantinian dream.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 110.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Newbigin maintains that in the present time, between Jesus' ascension and his coming again, the kingdom of God remains veiled in the life of the church. The presence of the kingdom of God in Jesus is continued through the church, 'in the same veiled form.' In this sense, Newbigin states, "The church can only represent the righteousness of God in history in the way that Jesus did;"¹⁶⁶ "[The church] must be a sign and foretaste of God's universal kingdom, in the way and only in the way that Jesus was the sign."¹⁶⁷

Further, Newbigin highlights the characteristic of the church's mission that the church continues the mission of Jesus by 'the way of the cross.' First, Newbigin frequently refers to John 20:19-23 in explaining how the mission of the church is defined by the mission of Jesus.¹⁶⁸ In the passage, according to Newbigin, Jesus launches the church upon its mission. As Jesus' words, "Peace be with you," (v.19) the church is sent "to bear in its own life God's gift of peace for the life of the world."¹⁶⁹ "Peace" here indicates "shalom, the all-embracing blessing of the God of Israel" or "the presence of the kingdom."¹⁷⁰ The church is given the authority to forgive sins (v.23), so the gift of God's peace is made possible for the world.¹⁷¹ What is more, Jesus in this passage gives a particular and concrete shape to the mission of his disciples. Jesus' words, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you," (v. 20) indicates that "(it) is the manner in which the Father sent the Son that determines the manner in which the church is sent by Jesus."¹⁷² In the passage, Jesus is identified with his wounds to the disciples that "he showed them his hand and his side." (v.20) The scars of his passion "will be the authentic marks of the

¹⁶⁶ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 111.

¹⁶⁷ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 57.

¹⁶⁸ Goheen, "As the Father Has Sent Me," 178.

¹⁶⁹ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 48.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Newbigin, *Mission in Christ's Way*, 23.

body of Christ until the end,” and the disciples will be anointed and sent by the Spirit. (v.22)¹⁷³

In sum, John 20:19-23 clarifies that the missionary calling from Jesus has to be carried out “in the power of the Spirit” and “in suffering and weakness.”¹⁷⁴

Second, Newbigin affirms that the church becomes the sign of God’s kingdom by bearing the marks of the cross. The veiled presence of God’s reign in Jesus is continued in the church “under the sign of the cross.”¹⁷⁵ It is by the marks of the cross that the church can be identified as the sign of God’s kingdom. By necessity, the church must bear the mark of the cross in its life and must be assimilated to the life of Jesus. Newbigin explains the essential condition for the church to be the bearer of the presence of the reign of God:

(The) Church can become such a sign insofar as, and only insofar as, her life is assimilated to the life of Jesus who was himself the only sign given of the Kingdom, Jesus himself the crucified King who bears in his risen body the marks of his passion (John 20:19-23). Only the Church which bears those marks can be recognisable as the body of Christ and recognisable therefore as a sign of the Kingdom.¹⁷⁶

Newbigin also mentions that the marks of the cross are to be present both in the communal life of the church and in the individual life of the members of the church.¹⁷⁷ In this regard, Newbigin states:

It will be those same scars in the corporate life of the church that will authenticate it as indeed the body of Christ, the bearer of his mission, the presence of the kingdom.... The marks of the cross will have to be recognizable also in the lives of its members if the church is to be the authentic presence of the kingdom.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 48.

¹⁷⁴ Goheen, “As the Father Has Sent Me,” 178.

¹⁷⁵ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 121.

¹⁷⁶ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 50-51.

¹⁷⁷ Newbigin does not discuss in detail about the mark of the cross in the life of individual Christians. Yet, Newbigin’s missionary thinking certainly acknowledges the missional significance of the individual life of Christians and that Christians are called to bear their cross in the concrete life circumstances.

¹⁷⁸ Newbigin, *Mission in Christ’s Way*, 23.

Third, Newbigin maintains that the church is sent into the world as the suffering witness. Suffering is an essential element of the church's witness to the reign of God. The church's missionary task in the world "is not to be the governor and controller of [worldly events], but to be the suffering servant and witness of the Lord."¹⁷⁹ The church challenges the power of evil by being "the witnessing, suffering servant of God."¹⁸⁰ Newbigin sees the suffering as an active form of witness to the presence and the power of God's reign. He states, "This suffering is not the passive acceptance of evil; it is the primary form of witness against it. It is the way in which we follow Jesus along the way of the cross."¹⁸¹ By following "the way of suffering witness" the church unmask the false power and confronts the world with the ultimate purpose of the Father.¹⁸² Referring to the missionary commission given to the first disciples, Newbigin states:

[Jesus] sent out his disciples with a commission to [challenge the power of evil.] And yet he also told them that they must of necessity suffer, just as he would have to suffer. This paradox is at the very heart of the gospel: "He saved others; himself he cannot save." It belongs to the mission of the church to the end. The power given to the church to meet the power of evil is just the power to follow Jesus on the road that leads through suffering, through total surrender to the Father, to the gift of new life and a new world.¹⁸³

When the church embraces suffering in mission, the paradox of the cross is at work. Newbigin sees this as a fundamental principle of mission, which is "at the very heart of the gospel."¹⁸⁴ The suffering and the defeat are the way of participating in the victory of Jesus. Newbigin states,

¹⁷⁹ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 45.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁸¹ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 107.

¹⁸² Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 118.

¹⁸³ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 108.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

“Their sufferings can be a participation in the victory of the Lamb. They can be part of the witness by which Christ’s victory is won.”¹⁸⁵

In sum, Newbigin conceptualizes the nature of the church’s mission with the theology of the cross. The church continues the mission of Jesus, which is “to embody and to announce the presence of the reign of God”¹⁸⁶ However, the church continues the mission of Jesus only in the veiled form – that is, the church by its own wisdom and might cannot manifest the presence of the reign of God. The reign of God is a reality beyond the church’s control or management. It is not the church but the Spirit of God himself who is in charge of God’s continuing mission in the world.

2.4 The Holy Spirit and Vulnerability as the Instrument of His Witness

Discussing the role of the church in the mission of God, Newbigin stresses “the primacy and sovereignty of the Spirit in missions.”¹⁸⁷ During the time between Jesus’ ascension and his coming again, the sovereign agent of the mission of God is the Holy Spirit.¹⁸⁸ Newbigin maintains that “the active agent of mission is a power that rules, guides, and goes before the church: the free, sovereign, living power of the Spirit of God.”¹⁸⁹ In relation to the primary witness of the Spirit, “(the) church’s witness is secondary and derivative.”¹⁹⁰ In the missionary advance, “(the) initiative is with the Spirit; the Church follows,”¹⁹¹ “It is thus by an action of the sovereign Spirit of God that the church is launched on its mission. And it remains the mission of

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 134.

¹⁸⁷ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 78.

¹⁸⁸ When Newbigin discusses the sovereignty of the Spirit in mission, he means the sovereignty of the triune God. Newbigin always understands mission in the trinitarian dynamics. Newbigin objects to the “exclusive emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit” or the separation of the doctrine of the Spirit from the doctrine of the Trinity. He says, “The Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son.” See Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 79, 81.

¹⁸⁹ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 56.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 56, 61.

¹⁹¹ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 39.

the Spirit. He is central.”¹⁹² The church’s task in mission is “simply to follow faithfully.”¹⁹³

Newbigin articulates as follows the relationship between the Spirit and the church in the mission of God:

“[The church] is not in control of the mission. Another is in control. . . . Because the Spirit himself is sovereign over the mission, the church can only be the attentive servant. In sober truth the Spirit is himself the witness who goes before the church in its missionary journey. The church’s witness is secondary and derivative. The church is witness insofar as it follows obediently where the Spirit leads.”¹⁹⁴

Newbigin’s emphasis of the sovereignty of the Spirit is based on his conviction in “[the] doctrine of the *missio Dei*.”¹⁹⁵ For Newbigin it is of great importance to recognize that “(the) mission is not ours, but God’s.”¹⁹⁶ Mission is first of all the continuing action of God himself. The action of God takes precedence over the human work in mission. Referring to the primacy of the action of God, Newbigin states. “This is the primal reality in mission; the rest is derivative.”¹⁹⁷

Additionally, in Newbigin’s missiology the concept of *missio Dei* is discussed in the trinitarian dynamics. *Missio Dei* needs to be understood in the trinitarian terms because “the mission is the mission of the triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit.”¹⁹⁸ Newbigin articulates mission in the trinitarian dynamics and that mission is the action of the triune God:

[Mission] is an action of God – the triune God – of the Father who is ceaselessly at work in all creation and in the hearts and minds of all human beings whether they acknowledge him or not, graciously guiding history toward its true end; of God the Son who has become part of this created history in the incarnation; and of God the Holy Spirit who is

¹⁹² Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 58.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁹⁵ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 135; Note here that Newbigin refers to *missio Dei* as “the doctrine.” Newbigin sees *missio Dei* as the consensus of the Church and to be acknowledged as the doctrine of the Church.

¹⁹⁶ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 83; Also see Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 117.

¹⁹⁷ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 135.

¹⁹⁸ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 79.

given as a foretaste of the end to empower and teach the Church and to convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment.¹⁹⁹

Newbigin's missiology locates the church's mission within the context of the work of the triune God:²⁰⁰ Newbigin specifies his understanding of the church's mission within the trinitarian framework and especially in relation to the work of the Spirit. The mission of God in the church is accomplished not by human work but by the work of the Spirit. Thus, Newbigin states: "The witness to the Kingdom is not the work of men but of the Spirit."²⁰¹ The missionary work of the church gains significance as "the participation of the Church in the Spirit's witness to what the Father is doing... namely to sum up all things in Christ..."²⁰² Concerning Newbigin's notion that the church's work is subject to the action of the Spirit, Michael Goheen states: "(Mission) does not belong first to the church but to the Spirit; mission is first of all a work of the Spirit and the church is taken up into that work."²⁰³

Newbigin offers a concrete account of how the Spirit is sovereign and active in the church's mission: in the church, "[the mission of Jesus] is continued through the presence and active working of the Holy Spirit, who is the presence of the reign of God in foretaste."²⁰⁴ The Spirit, who is given to and indwells the church, constitutes the presence of the reign of God and the witness to the reality of the reign of God.²⁰⁵ Newbigin explicates that the Spirit, who is the

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ In this respect, Newbigin states that "The mission of the Church is to be understood, can only be rightly understood, in terms of the trinitarian model." See Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 118.

²⁰¹ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 54.

²⁰² Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 54-55; Here Newbigin asserts that the success of mission is not measured by number or appearance, but it is sufficient that the church faithfully participates in the work of the triune God.

²⁰³ Goheen, "As the Father Has Sent Me," 154.

²⁰⁴ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 118.

²⁰⁵ As it has been discussed in this chapter, the Spirit indwells the church as the foretaste of the God's reign and the pledge of the coming God's reign in fullness. See Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 37.

foretaste, first fruit, and pledge of God's perfect reign, bears the witness to the present reality of the reign of God:

The presence of the Spirit is a real presence of the love, joy, and peace that belong to God's perfect reign, but it is not yet the fullness of these things. It is the sign that the last things have begun (Acts 2:17); consequently it both assures us of their coming and makes us hope more eagerly for their full fruition. It is in this way that the presence of the Spirit brings a powerful witness to the reality of the reign of God to which the world is otherwise blind.²⁰⁶

It is by the presence and working of the Spirit in the church that people come to perceive the presence of God's kingdom and confess Jesus as their Lord.²⁰⁷ In this regard, Newbigin maintains that the Spirit "(works) secretly in the hearts of men and women to draw them to Christ;"²⁰⁸ "(The) Spirit's work is to lead men and women to confess Jesus as Lord;"²⁰⁹ "It is by the presence of the Spirit that men are enabled to confess Jesus as Lord."²¹⁰ Newbigin explains further that the presence of the Spirit in the church initiates the missionary encounter and enables people to recognize the veiled presence of God's reign. Newbigin stresses that "the beginning of mission is not an action of ours, but the presence of a new reality, the presence of the Spirit of God in power."²¹¹ The presence of the Spirit in the church initiates the missionary encounter with non-believers as it prompts people "to ask the question to which the gospel is the answer."²¹²

²⁰⁶ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 62-63.

²⁰⁷ Newbigin does not confine the work of the Spirit within the church. He maintains that while the Spirit's missionary witness "is not separated from the Church," it "is not confined within the limits of the Church." See Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 39; Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 53.

²⁰⁸ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 119.

²⁰⁹ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 39.

²¹⁰ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 53.

²¹¹ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 119.

²¹² *Ibid.*

“(The) active power of the Spirit,” then, “(draws) men and women to recognize in [the] human weakness the presence and power of God.”²¹³

Newbigin explicates that the role of the church in the mission of God is to provide the locus and the occasion for the work of the Spirit. For Newbigin the theological meaning of the church’s mission is to become the locus and the occasion in which the Spirit witnesses to the reality of the kingdom of God. Newbigin states in this regard, “The significance of the Church’s missionary witness lies at this point: that it is the place where men are confronted with the reality and power of God’s Kingdom.”²¹⁴ The church is not called to take control of the missionary advance and accomplish the missionary work by its own capability. Rather, the church’s calling in mission is essentially “to be present” and “(to become) the place where [God’s sovereign rule] is made manifest, the place, therefore, where men are called upon to decide for or against God.”²¹⁵ The witness to the present reality of God’s kingdom “is not a work of the Church. It is the work of the Holy Spirit dwelling with the Church;”²¹⁶ “(The) Church is not the source of the witness; rather, it is the locus of witness.”²¹⁷ “For this witness of the Spirit,” states Newbigin, “the words and the deeds and the corporate life of the fellowship may indeed provide the *locus* and the occasion.”²¹⁸ Defining the church’s role as being the locus and the occasion of mission, Newbigin clarifies the subject of mission – that is, whose work is decisive in the accomplishment of mission: mission is primarily and practically the work of God himself. Newbigin objects to the concept of mission which over-emphasizes the church’s responsibility in mission and considers

²¹³ Ibid. Here, Newbigin is giving the description of missionary encounter from his observations of church growth of his day. Newbigin thinks this pattern is found in the book of Acts.

²¹⁴ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 54.

²¹⁵ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 47, 48.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 48.

²¹⁷ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 120.

²¹⁸ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 41.

the church's performance as the decisive factor in mission.²¹⁹ For Newbigin it is not the case that the church saves unbelievers by its own work while the Spirit merely assists the church's work. Rather, the case is that the church offers itself to God as the locus and the occasion of the Spirit's work:

It is the Spirit who will give [the disciples] power and the Spirit who will bear witness. It is not that [the disciples] must speak and act, asking the help of the Spirit to do so. It is rather that in their faithfulness to Jesus they become the place where the Spirit speaks and acts.²²⁰

Newbigin defines the church's mission as the locus and the occasion of God's mission with a recognition that mission is not human possibility. The veiled presence of the kingdom of God is made known only by the work of God. The witness to the lordship of Jesus is made effectual only by God who acts in the power of his Spirit:

If a man or woman comes to see that the cross of Jesus is not a folly and a scandal but is the very power and wisdom of God, then that is always a miracle, a supernatural work of the Spirit of God himself. The human words and deeds of the Church will have provided – here and there – the occasion for that work; but the work itself is always a work of the Spirit, a miracle that goes beyond human contriving.²²¹

Furthermore, Newbigin's theology of the cross specifies what it means that the church is taken up by the Spirit as the locus and the occasion of God's mission: *The Spirit uses the church's vulnerability as the instrument of his witness*. Newbigin underlines that the Spirit uses the church's weakness – the rejection, suffering, and helplessness of the church – as the locus and the occasion of his mission. Newbigin maintains that “The substance of [the church's witness] is

²¹⁹ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 117-118.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Newbigin, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 41-42.

the work of the Holy Spirit who, in his sovereign freedom, uses the occasions of the Church's weakness and trouble to speak his own convincing word to the world."²²² Referring to the Johannine discourse of the hatred of the world in John 15:18-27, Newbigin remarks that "the hatred of the world will be the occasion for the witness of the Spirit."²²³ When the church is under trial and is incapable of defending itself, the Spirit acts as an advocate of the church. The Spirit defends the church and confutes its adversaries, making a powerful witness out of the church's weakness and foolishness:

The church is weak. It is under trial. It does not know what to say. It has no arguments to confute its persecutors. But exactly in this situation it can be calmly confident.... There is an advocate who is more than adequate for the task. It is his work... to take the weakness and foolishness of the cross, mirrored in the life of the community, and make it the witness that turns the world upside down and refutes its most fundamental notions.²²⁴

Newbigin emphasizes that the church is called in mission to "a position of total weakness and rejection."²²⁵ In the mission of God, Newbigin maintains, the church is not called to a position of seeming power and success. The church is rather promised the witness of the Spirit amid the experience of vulnerability: "The Church is not promised success; it is promised the peace of Christ in the midst of tribulation, and the witness of the Spirit given out of the Church's weakness and ignorance."²²⁶ Additionally, the Spirit uses those who are in the position of weakness and rejection, those who are lowly and seemingly insignificant in society. Newbigin states that "[The Spirit] chooses as his instruments" those who are weak and neglected; "He makes out of very humble and insignificant people powerful witness in the face of hostile

²²² Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 48.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

²²⁴ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 62.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 83-84.

powers...;”²²⁷ The Spirit has “often through the words and deeds of very “insignificant” people, spoken the word that confronted and shamed the wisdom and power of the world.”²²⁸

Further, concerning the Spirit’s witness given out of the church’s weakness, Newbigin stresses that the Spirit manifests the presence and the power of God’s kingdom in the midst of the church’s weakness. For Newbigin “(Mission) is not an action of ours, but the presence of a new reality, the presence of the Spirit of God in power.”²²⁹ Amid vulnerability and incapability of the church, the Spirit – who is the foretaste of the kingdom – brings and manifests the power of God’s kingdom. In this process, the church’s weakness becomes the occasion in which the Spirit reveals the reality of God’s kingdom and leads people to recognize the lordship of Jesus. Newbigin describes that in the midst of the persecution of the world and the church’s helplessness, the Spirit manifests the foretaste of the coming kingdom:

(It) is in the midst of the world’s rejection and of the messianic tribulations that flow from it that we are assured of the presence of the Spirit. The Spirit brings the reality of the new world to come into the midst of the old world that is. It is the firstfruit of the coming harvest. It is the proof that we are heirs of the coming kingdom. And it is thus that the Spirit is witness – the recognizable presence of a future that has been promised but is not yet in sight.²³⁰

Precisely in the weakness of the church, Newbigin affirms, the Spirit speaks and acts as the sovereign agent of mission, unveiling the presence and power of God’s kingdom. The church’s struggle against the power of evil becomes the occasion where the Spirit reveals the reality of the kingdom and the knowledge of the lordship of Christ. Newbigin stresses that exactly at the attack

²²⁷ Ibid., 78-79.

²²⁸ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 62.

²²⁹ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 119.

²³⁰ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 63.

of the evil and at the vulnerability of the church, it is revealed that Christ is the king and that history will be consummated upon Christ's return to the world:

Our life is still lived... in a world in which the power of darkness is still at work. The more actively we challenge these powers in the name of Jesus, the more violently will they attack. But exactly when this attack is most violent and exactly when we are at our most vulnerable, signs will be given of the presence of the kingdom, the power of the Spirit to speak the word that bears witness to Christ's kingly power and assures us that the victory is to him and not to the powers of darkness.²³¹

As it has been discussed, Newbigin asserts that the Spirit is the sovereign agent of mission who uses the church's weakness as the instrument to unveil the presence and power of God's kingdom. In this sense, the mission of God advances "through the active power of the Spirit drawing men and women to recognize in this human weakness the presence and power of God."²³²

Next, Newbigin maintains that the church participates in the dynamics of the trinitarian mission by embracing suffering and weakness in mission. In his discussion of the church's action for justice, Newbigin stresses that the church witnesses to the justice of God by actively accepting the attack from the power of evil. In this case, the suffering and the seeming defeat of the church is the active witness to the reign of God. Newbigin states that the suffering is an authentic part of the church's mission in the face of evil:

This suffering is not the passive acceptance of evil; it is the primary form of witness against it. It is the way in which we follow Jesus along the way of the cross. Jesus challenged the power of evil consistently right to the end. At the very end, when the limit

²³¹ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 114.

²³² Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 119.

was reached, he surrendered, not to the power of evil, but into the hands of the Father. This final surrender is not defeat but victory.²³³

The church's suffering in mission is its participation in the suffering of Jesus, and further, in the trinitarian dynamics of mission. As the church follows Jesus and actively embraces suffering, the church becomes the participant in the obedience of God the Son to the Father. Newbigin sees it as the church's participation in the sonship of Jesus. This participation is made possible by the work of the Spirit:

[The Spirit's] work is to enable us to participate in Christ's Sonship, to be one with him in his obedience to the Father. And only he can enable us to participate in, and thereby be the occasions of, his witness.²³⁴

Newbigin specifies the meaning of the church's participation in God's mission that when the church embraces the way of suffering in mission it is used by the Spirit as the occasion of God's mission.²³⁵

²³³ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 107-108.

²³⁴ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 81.

²³⁵ It has become a cliché among those who study and practice mission that 'The church participates in the mission of God.' Yet, the discussion of the church's participation in *missio Dei* often lacks focus and substance: the church's participation is spoken without clarity and consistency, or sometimes it is used as a common expression without specific meaning in it.

Chapter 3. The Debate (Proposal & Criticism) of Diaspora Missiology

3.1 Proposal: Effective Strategy To, Through and Beyond Diaspora

Diaspora missiology is a missiological reflection on the international migration and the subsequent formation of immigrant communities around the world. Diaspora missiology emerged in the early twenty-first century, defining itself as “a missiological framework to understand and participate in God’s redemptive mission among people living outside their place of origin.”²³⁶ Recognizing the distinguished volume of contemporary migration, diaspora missiology surveys how the international population movements present the opportunities of mission to the church. Diaspora missiology concentrates on devising and promoting effective strategies to evangelize migrants and to mobilize them for missionary work.

Diaspora missiology has been developed as a combination of academic discipline, movement, and mission strategy.²³⁷ First of all, diaspora missiology is an academic discipline. Diaspora missiology has its root in the missiological discussion on migration in the early twenty-first century. Around the beginning of the twenty-first century, there increased an awareness in the missiological circles of the significance of international migration for Christian mission.²³⁸ The annual gathering of the American Society of Missiology in June 2002 devoted to the topic “Migration Challenge and Avenue for Christian Mission,” and the journal *Missiology* published the proceedings from the gathering.²³⁹ Prompted by the 2002 gathering of the American Society of Missiology and the publications from it, the early proponents of diaspora missiology

²³⁶ Lausanne Committee, *Scattered to Gather*, 12.

²³⁷ Krabill and Norton, “New Wine in Old Wineskins,” 442-444.

²³⁸ Sadiri Joy Tira, “Diaspora Missiology and the Lausanne Movement at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century,” in *Global Diaspora and Mission*, ed. Chandler H. Im and Amos Yong (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 217-218.

²³⁹ See *Missiology: An International Review* 31 no 1 (Jan 2003); Tira, “Diaspora Missiology and the Lausanne Movement,” 217-218.

developed their own concepts and introduced the term, ‘diaspora mission.’ The official launch of diaspora missiology was at the 2004 Lausanne Forum for World Evangelization held in Pattaya, Thailand.²⁴⁰ The forum convened the Diaspora Issue Group and produced one of the key documents of diaspora missiology, *Lausanne Occasional Paper No.55: The New People Next Door*.²⁴¹ This document envisions how the formation of diaspora communities brings the opportunities and challenges of mission to the church worldwide; the Christian communities in the host society can reach out to diaspora communities, and the diaspora communities can participate as well in diaspora mission. After the 2004 Lausanne forum, the leadership of diaspora missiology was appointed and regional consultations followed in order to continue the discussion of diaspora missiology.

Another stepping stone for the study of diaspora missiology was laid at the 2010 Lausanne Congress at Cape Town. The congress issued a crucial document of diaspora missiology, *Scattered to Gather: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora*.²⁴² This document concentrates on articulating a mission strategy in response to the reality of global diaspora: the framework of diaspora missiology, ‘mission to, through, and beyond the diaspora’ is introduced in the document. The 2010 Lausanne Congress assembled the Global Diaspora Network, which succeeded previous leadership of diaspora missiology. The Global Diaspora Network organized the 2015 Global Diaspora Forum in Manila, Philippines, producing a compendium of diaspora missiology.²⁴³ The compendium of diaspora missiology surveys diaspora mission in the aspects

²⁴⁰ Sadiri Joy Tira and Darrell Jackson, “Responding to the Phenomenon of Migration: Early Proponents of Diaspora Missiology and the Lausanne Movement,” in *Scattered and Gathered: A Global Compendium of Diaspora Missiology*, ed. Sadiri Joy Tira and Tetsunano Yamamori (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2016), 91- 92.

²⁴¹ Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 55: The New People Next Door* (paper presented at the Lausanne Forum, Pattaya, Thailand, September 29 to October 5, 2004). Available from https://www.lausanne.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/06/LOP55_IG26.pdf.

²⁴² Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *Scattered to Gather: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora*

²⁴³ *Scattered and Gathered: A Global Compendium of Diaspora Missiology*, ed. Sadiri Joy Tira and Tetsunano Yamamori, (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2016).

of statistics, biblical and theological study, strategy, and case studies. The compendium seeks to reflect on the realities of diaspora and to conceive the effective strategy for various contexts of mission.

Second, diaspora missiology has gained its influence as a mission movement.²⁴⁴ Diaspora missiology is characterized by its partnerships within the Evangelical circle, especially in coordination with the Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization (LCWE). The leadership, consultations, and major publications of diaspora missiology have been brought forth on the platform of the Lausanne movement: in 2004 the Diaspora Issue Group was launched at the Lausanne Forum for World Evangelization held in Pattaya, Thailand. In 2007 the Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization appointed a Senior Associate for Diasporas, who, in turn, in 2008 assembled the Lausanne Diaspora Leadership Team. In 2009 the Lausanne Diaspora Leadership Team organized two consultations of diaspora mission – which are, the Lausanne Diaspora Strategy Consultation in Manila and the Lausanne Diaspora Educators Consultations in Seoul, South Korea. In 2010 the European Diaspora Educators’ Team arranged the LCWE Diaspora Educators’ Consultation in Oxford. In the 2010 Lausanne Congress of World Evangelization in Cape Town, the Global Diaspora Network was organized and it succeeded the leadership role of diaspora missiology. In 2015 the Global Diaspora Network convened the Global Diaspora Forum in Manila.²⁴⁵

As a mission movement diaspora missiology seeks to facilitate collective efforts for evangelism, training, and resourcing. The initiatives and collaborations of diaspora missiology have brought together scholars, practitioners, and mission agencies for the promotion and the

²⁴⁴ Krabill and Norton, “New Wine in Old Wineskins,” 443.

²⁴⁵ Tira, “Diaspora Missiology and the Lausanne Movement,” 87-92; Tira and Jackson, “Responding to the Phenomenon of Migration,” 217-221.

application of diaspora missiology. The primary goal of diaspora missiology is not in the scholarship itself but in the practice of ministry and the application of strategy. In this regard, a Lausanne paper on diaspora missiology, *Scattered to Gather: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora*, clarifies that the purpose of diaspora missiology is found in the Great Commission, the practice of evangelism and discipleship.²⁴⁶ The compendium of diaspora missiology also stresses that diaspora missiology is devoted, not to developing pure theories, but to suggesting a practical guideline of diaspora ministry:

[The writings of diaspora missiology] are not missiologies that have arisen from the theoretical speculations of study-bound theologians. Rather, [diaspora missiology] represents instead the fruit and outcome of personal struggle, experience, testimony, and long-term engagement of its stakeholders with the phenomenological realities of diaspora faith and human migration.²⁴⁷

Third, the distinctive feature of diaspora missiology is how it sets forth strategy of mission, using *diaspora*²⁴⁸ as its conceptual basis. Diaspora missiology suggests the efficient flows of mission in two ways: (1) the evangelistic outreach to the diaspora and (2) the mobilization of the diaspora for missionary work.²⁴⁹ First of all, the diaspora, or an ethnic immigrant community, is perceived as a target of evangelism. The proponents of diaspora missiology maintain that as the large number of non-western migrants have moved to the west, mission opportunities have emerged in

²⁴⁶ Lausanne Committee, *Scattered to Gather*, 25.

²⁴⁷ *Scattered and Gathered: A Global Compendium of Diaspora Missiology*, ed. Sadiri Joy Tira and Tetsunano Yamamori (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2016), 7, 87.

²⁴⁸ The term 'diaspora' could refer to various meanings. In diaspora missiology 'diaspora' has a strong reference to 'a community of migrants which is formed outside the country of origin.' It is assumed that members of the diaspora community naturally bond with each other and maintain interpersonal connections. It is also assumed that the diaspora is distinguished from the host society in terms of ethnicity, culture, and language.

²⁴⁹ Lausanne Committee, *Scattered to Gather*, 27; In this regard, a Lausanne Global Classroom mentions that diaspora missiology concerns about giving people in diaspora 'saving knowledge of Jesus' and at the same time giving them 'a missionary calling.'

the western societies – that is, without traveling a long distance and crossing borders, the western churches can now evangelize and disciple the unreached peoples of the world:

Many previously presumed to be “unreached” people from the 10/40 windows are now accessible due to the global trend of migrant populations moving “from south to north, and from east to west.” Congregations in the receiving countries (i.e. industrial nations in the West) can practice “missions at our door step.”²⁵⁰

In the next phase, the diaspora communities could be educated and mobilized for mission. “The Diaspora,” according to a Lausanne document of diaspora missiology, “is not only a mission field to be reached but a group of people with great potential to be mobilized for the Kingdom.”²⁵¹ The proponents of diaspora missiology suggest the host Christian communities to mobilize both non-Christian and Christian population in the diaspora: On the one hand, the missionary vision could be instilled to non-Christian diaspora people as they are evangelized and converted into Christianity. On the other hand, the existing churches and Christians in the diaspora could be educated for mission – that is, “motivated and empowered to carry out their missionary duties.”²⁵² Moreover, the proponents emphasize strategic advantages that diaspora communities could provide for global mission: the international networks of diaspora communities – the personal connections that diaspora population creates and maintains in the course of migration – are potential bridges of missionary advances. The diaspora connections could facilitate missionary flows to the home country of migrants, to other ethnic communities, and to the host society as well.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Lausanne Committee, *Scattered to Gather*, 27.

²⁵¹ Lausanne Committee, *The New People Next Door*, 26.

²⁵² Lausanne Committee, *Scattered to Gather*, 30; Diaspora missiology assumes that churches and Christians in the diaspora need to grow in their understanding and attitude of mission. A Lausanne paper writes that diaspora Christian communities ‘lack the understanding of their role in mission, may feel insecure in evangelism, and are often inward looking.’ See Lausanne Committee, *The New People Next Door*, 20.

²⁵³ Lausanne Committee, *Scattered to Gather*, 27; Lausanne Committee, *The New People Next Door*, 25.

The strategy of diaspora missiology is summarized into the threefold framework of ‘mission *to*, *through*, and *beyond* the diaspora.’ First, ‘mission *to* the diaspora’ refers to the evangelistic outreach to the diaspora. In this case of mission, the Christian communities of the host society reach out to the incoming migrants to perform evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. Mission to the diaspora is an effective ministry since the migrants are already located within the immediate reach of the host Christian communities, and in the course of migration the diaspora people become more receptive to the gospel.²⁵⁴ Next, ‘mission *through* the diaspora’ is a model in which Christians in the diaspora are educated and motivated to evangelize their kinsmen. Mission through the diaspora is a productive model since the evangelistic outreach progresses through the existing relationships of diaspora Christians, without encountering ethnic and cultural barriers. Lastly, ‘mission *beyond* the diaspora’ refers to the cross-cultural evangelism performed by diaspora Christians. As diaspora Christians acquire language skill and make cultural adaptation in the host society, they become able to engage in the missionary outreach beyond the confines of their ethnicity and culture. Mission beyond the diaspora is a strategic way to mobilize diaspora Christians to reach out to native population of host society and to other ethnic groups.²⁵⁵

Diaspora missiology has been shaped by particular views on contemporary migration and the role of missiology in the context of migration. First, diaspora missiology interprets the phenomenon of global migration as the God-given opportunities of mission – that is, God moves people globally in order to arrange the opportunities of evangelism and discipleship. Diaspora missiology affirms divine sovereignty in the international population movement: God determines

²⁵⁴ Lausanne Committee, *Scattered to Gather*, 27-28; This document maintains that as the migrants experience the lack of comfort and security in the course of migration they more readily accept sociocultural changes and become more open to the gospel.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 27-30.

people's movement, and the time and the place of their habitation (Acts 17:26-28). What is working sovereignly behind the formation of global diaspora is the redemptive purpose of God; God "designs, conducts, and employs" the diaspora to prepare the occasions of the church's mission and the possibilities of salvation.²⁵⁶ "Diaspora," in this sense, is "a missional means decreed and blessed by God under his sovereign rule to promote the expansion of His Kingdom and the fulfillment of the Great Commission."²⁵⁷ Although diaspora missiology acknowledges complex dynamics and causes behind international migration including human sins and struggles, it conceptualizes global diaspora primarily as divine strategy and action that open up possibilities for the church's mission.²⁵⁸

Second, diaspora missiology postulates that the role of missiology in the situation of global migration is to capture the mission opportunities and to suggest effective strategies. Diaspora missiology is based on an understanding that the objective of missiology is to assist the practice of mission: missiology is valid and useful as long as it serves 'the fulfillment of the Great Commission'²⁵⁹ The assumption on the practical purpose of missiology is evident in the writings of diaspora missiology. For example, a Lausanne document of diaspora missiology, *Scattered to Gather*, clarifies its concentration on the practice of mission. Quoting the words of Donald McGavran, the document states:

(The) purpose of missiology [Couldn't we add "diaspora" missions?] is to carry out the Great Commission. Anything other than that may be a good thing to do, but it is not Missiology.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 15.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 21.

²⁵⁸ In this respect, the proponents of diaspora missiology maintain: "Diaspora in its core is God's redemptive actions." Lausanne Global Classroom, "Diaspora" (forum, Tyndale University and Seminary, Toronto, ON, October 20, 2015); See also Lausanne Committee, *Scattered to Gather*, 28.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 25, 27.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 25.

As assisting the mission practice, diaspora missiology aims to assess the mission opportunities and propose the effective models of ministry. It is noteworthy that the mission opportunities and strategies are discussed in terms of number and efficiency: diaspora missiology explores the possibilities of mission by reading figures such as the number of international migrants, the size of diaspora communities, and the percentage of non-Christians among the diaspora population. Further, diaspora missiology suggests strategies that would make an efficient use of resources and maximize the outcome of ministry. For example, diaspora missiology describes the diaspora population as the ‘strategic forces,’ whose missionary potential needs to be ‘maximized’ by the education and the mobilization of the host Christian communities.²⁶¹ The emphasis on the productivity and efficiency is ingrained in the framework of diaspora missiology. Diaspora missiology at its heart is framed and formulated by the question: ‘how to make the most use of the presence of diaspora communities in the western societies?’ The theoretical framework of diaspora missiology, ‘mission *to, through, and beyond* the diaspora,’ is precisely the outcome of its pursuit of productivity and efficiency.²⁶²

3.2 Criticism: The Disastrous Neglect of Christian Migrants and Their Missionary Initiative

There has been scholarly criticism on diaspora missiology. In 2015, Krabill and Norton published an article, which questioned the validity of diaspora missiology as a missiological framework.²⁶³ Looking into core assumptions and theories of diaspora missiology, Krabill and Norton argue that the framework and the research focus of diaspora missiology are not adequate

²⁶¹ Ibid., 27, 28.

²⁶² The pursuit of efficiency in mission is not necessarily a negative thing. Seeking to evangelize and disciple more people is a godly motive in mission. This thesis examines the logic and the details of diaspora missiology, not in order to undermine the validity of diaspora missiology and the godly motive of its proponents, but in order to engage in the debate of diaspora missiology and also to enrich the study of diaspora mission by proposing a theological perspective.

²⁶³ Krabill and Norton, “New Wine in Old Wineskins,” 442-43.

to discuss the missiological significance of contemporary migration. The criticism on diaspora missiology is formulated on the following four points: First, diaspora missiology has failed to present itself as a distinct discipline of missiology. The proponents of diaspora missiology claim that diaspora missiology provides a new paradigm of mission in response to the demographic realities of the twenty-first century. For example, Enoch Wan, one of the main proponents of diaspora missiology proposes that diaspora missiology employs categories that are distinct from and exhibit significant improvements from the so called, 'traditional missiology.' Wan claims that as opposed to the traditional missiology, which is polarized and dichotomized, territorial and unidirectional, and geographically-divided, diaspora missiology promotes a different perspective that is holistic and contextual, de-territorialized and multidirectional, and non-spatial and borderless. However, the critics repudiate Wan's proposal, arguing that Wan's discussion of missiology does not reflect the improvements made in the missiological studies during the last several decades: the deficits of the existing missiology, which Wan points out, have been discussed and dealt with to a great extent in the missiological circles. Therefore, the critics affirm, diaspora missiology has not really presented any significant improvements from the existing discussions and theories of missiology.²⁶⁴

Second, diaspora missiology discounts Christian presence among international migrants and reduces the migrants as the objects of evangelism. The critics point out how the framework and categories of diaspora missiology undermine non-western and non-evangelical Christianity of international migrants. Contrary to the narrative of diaspora missiology which describes the migrants to be non-Christian and unreached, a large portion of the migrants are self-professing Christians. A recent demographic survey of migration shows that in 2012, Christians comprised

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 444-447.

about half (49%) of the world's 214 million international migrants.²⁶⁵ The significant Christian presence among international migrants is also being noticed in the demographic survey of the western countries that receive international migrants. For example, in the United States as of 2010, three-quarters of the foreign-born population – those who have moved from another country to the United States – identified themselves as Christians.²⁶⁶ It is due to “the problematic assumptions and methodological issues,” the critics insist, that diaspora missiology fails to notice Christian presence among the diaspora population. For example, J. D. Payne, one of the major proponents of diaspora missiology, defines “the Great Commission opportunity” presented by the non-western immigrants to the western countries.²⁶⁷ However, because Payne uses a category of the Unreached People Group (UPG), his study classifies self-professing Christians of Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostals, and African Initiated Churches to be ‘the unreached’ or ‘the least-reached’ people.²⁶⁸

Third, diaspora missiology neglects the missionary potential of Christian migrants. The critics affirm that diaspora missiology fails to recognize the missionary potential of Christian migrants because its focus is on the missionary outreach *to* the diaspora: “(The) primary emphasis is placed on mission *to* the diaspora, with fewer examples of mission “through” and “beyond” the diaspora.”²⁶⁹ As a consequence, the critics maintain, diaspora missiology promotes a narrative of mission which is biased and inaccurate: global migration, to the most part, is discussed as the mission opportunity to evangelize the unreached and the least-reached population that have moved to the west. Moreover, diaspora missiology describes Christian

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 447; the demographic figure is from the study of Pew Research Centre on the topic of the religious affiliations of international migrants.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ J. D. Payne, *Strangers Next Door* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity: Press, 2012), 33.

²⁶⁸ Krabill and Norton, “New Wine in Old Wineskins,” 447-448.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 448-449.

migrants to be “passive and naïve,” “in need of help, education, training, and mobilization from the “host” Christian community.”²⁷⁰ The critics argue that the narrative and underlying assumptions of diaspora missiology contradict the realities of immigrant congregations in the west: missiologists have noticed the missionary zeal and vibrant faith of the immigrant churches and that Christian migrants are bringing new dynamics of mission to the west.²⁷¹ In some parts of the west where the western church is declining, Christian immigrant congregations are growing and thriving. These immigrant congregations have a different perspective and practice of mission from the western church that their mission is not a strategy, but a way of life: the missionary vision and endeavor of Christian migrants are integrated to life and are developed as their own initiatives. Thus, the critics suggest, missiological reflection on migration should notice the missionary initiatives of the immigrant congregations and the changing dynamics they are bringing to the west.²⁷²

Fourth, diaspora missiology fails to grasp the multidirectional flow of mission between the migrant’s home country and the country of destination. According to the critics, diaspora missiology holds one-sided view of the transnational mission movements of diaspora Christians:

[Diaspora missiology] promotes a largely uni-directional understanding of the flow of religious and missional activity between migrant and destination country: *from* the diaspora Christians who are mobilized to conduct mission *to* their homeland.²⁷³

The view of diaspora missiology on the missional impact of diaspora Christians does not reflect an important aspect of diaspora mission that the church-planting initiatives flow in both ways between the home country and the destination country of diaspora congregations. The

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 449.

²⁷¹ Here, Krabill and Norton refer to missiologists who are outside the circle of diaspora missiology.

²⁷² Ibid., 448-450.

²⁷³ Ibid., 450.

transnational orientation of diaspora congregations is crucial today as non-western Christianity is growing and exhibiting the vibrant global impact: the church-planting movements are stemming from the global south and flow through the transnational networks of Christian migrants. Yet, diaspora missiology is holding the biased view of the missionary initiative of the diaspora that diaspora congregations require education and mobilization from external sources.²⁷⁴ The critics argue that diaspora missiology should consider the multi-directional flow of diaspora mission and recognize diaspora congregations and organizations “as active contributors to the missional mobilization and evangelistic motivation of immigrant Christians.”²⁷⁵

The critics of diaspora missiology conclude that the framework and the research focus of diaspora missiology are inadequate to understand the missiological significance of contemporary migration. Although the critics acknowledge to a certain extent the value of diaspora missiology, they oppose to using diaspora missiology as a key framework for the missiological discussion on migration. The critics state in this regard: “While some aspects of diaspora missiology contribute helpful insights to the future of missiology, ongoing missiological reflection that uses diaspora as its key framework raises concerns...”²⁷⁶ According to the critics, the framework of diaspora missiology promotes the incorrect focus for the understanding of migration and mission:

(Perhaps) the more central question regarding the relationship between mission and migration is not how Christians from the west can reach out to unreached diasporas, but rather how the initiatives and movements of Christian migrants are shaping the American religious landscape.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 450-451.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 451.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 443.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 451.

Instead of surveying the capacity of non-western Christian migrants to revitalize Christianity of the west, diaspora missiology is preoccupied with the strategy to evangelize and mobilize the diaspora. In other words, diaspora missiology is driven by a narrow and biased view of migration in that it primarily emphasizes a possibility of mission flowing from the western church to non-western migrants. As a consequence, diaspora missiology fails to understand the significance of international migration for the future of global Christianity. The critics summarize their claim on diaspora missiology as follows:

Because the primary emphasis is on outreach to diaspora people – diaspora missiology falls short in fully grasping the significance of non-western initiatives and movements for the future of global Christianity. Diaspora missiology begins to engage with the “new wines” – grappling with the opportunities and challenges posed by contemporary migration – but it is housed within older wineskins that privilege western initiatives, programs, and structures.²⁷⁸

3.3 Engaging in the Debate of Diaspora Missiology

This thesis engages in the debate of diaspora missiology by studying the nature and significance of the missionary initiative of diaspora Christians. The critics of diaspora missiology are making a valid point that diaspora missiology, as a missiological research on migration, is not paying its due attention to the “non-western missionary initiatives.”²⁷⁹ Despite that a significant portion of diaspora population in the west is Christian and that diaspora congregations are exhibiting the missionary movements of their own, diaspora missiology is focused on the role of the western church in transforming the diaspora.²⁸⁰ Although, to a certain extent, diaspora missiology recognizes the missionary potential of the diaspora communities, diaspora missiology

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 452.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 451.

²⁸⁰ Numerous mission scholars are claiming that non-western Christian migrants are becoming the important agents of mission in the west and around the world. This point will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

assumes only the secondary and passive role for diaspora Christians:²⁸¹ in the framework and the narrative of diaspora missiology, the missionary engagement of the diaspora – ‘mission *through* and *beyond* the diaspora’ – is possible after diaspora Christians are educated and empowered by the host Christian communities. In this regard, an official document of diaspora missiology describes diaspora congregations to be lacking in missionary vision and in the understanding of their role in global mission, oftentimes being inward looking as well.²⁸²

Further, diaspora missiology has not yet considered unique dynamics of diaspora mission brought on by the realities of globalization and migration. Contemporary migration has qualitative significances for Christian mission that are not grasped by the quantitative and strategical discussion. The large-scale movements of international population, by bringing together and mixing people of different culture and origin, cause pervasive and fundamental changes of society. Therefore, it is necessary in missiological research to explore how particular forces and patterns of international migration affect the life of people and the mission of the church. However, without looking into the changing dynamics of mission in the context of globalization and migration, diaspora missiology has limited its attention to the themes and categories of the past, and to the outlook of western strategists.²⁸³

As engaging in the debate of diaspora missiology and examining the essence of ‘mission beyond the diaspora,’ this thesis takes an approach of theological reflection: the method of this study is to apply Lesslie Newbigin’s theology of the cross to understand the significance of

²⁸¹ The writings of diaspora missiology acknowledge Christian presence in the diaspora and that the spiritual vitality of diaspora congregations could contribute to revitalize western Christianity. See Lausanne Committee, *Scattered to Gather*, 29-31; Lausanne Committee, *The New People Next Door*, 19.

²⁸² See Lausanne Committee, *The New People Next Door*, 20, 26; Krabill and Norton, “New Wine in Old Wineskins,” 449.

²⁸³ Diaspora missiology only emphasizes the quantitative aspect of contemporary migration that the ‘unprecedented’ volume of migration means more opportunities for the church’s mission. See Lausanne Committee, *The New People Next Door*, 7, 8; Lausanne Committee, *Scattered to Gather*, 25, 33.

helplessness in the missionary movement of diaspora Christians. Newbigin's theology of the cross, as it has been surveyed in the previous chapter, explicates that helplessness constitutes the pattern and the substance of the mission of God; Newbigin's theology of the cross is a theological category which makes sense of the meaning of helplessness in the mission of Jesus and also in God's mission through the contemporary diaspora church.

The application of Newbigin's theology of the cross to the study of diaspora mission, moreover, offers a perspective which arises from diaspora communities. As opposed to a mission strategy devised and imposed from external sources, Newbigin's theology of the cross contributes to form an outlook of mission which is relevant and real to the context of diaspora Christians.²⁸⁴ Newbigin's theology of the cross informs diaspora Christians to reflect on their experience as migrants and to cultivate an understanding of mission in the light of the mission of Jesus: in reference to Newbigin's theology of the cross, diaspora Christians can perceive the essence of their missionary task that God called them into the life and ministry of powerlessness. In sum, using Lesslie Newbigin's theology of the cross, my thesis attempts to examine 'mission beyond the diaspora' from the viewpoint of diaspora Christians and, at the same time, in the light of the cross of Jesus.

The approach of this study could enrich the discussion of diaspora mission in the following two respects.²⁸⁵ First, the application of Lesslie Newbigin's theology of the cross will provide a platform from which to develop the understanding of *missio Dei* in diaspora mission.

²⁸⁴ The chapter two of this thesis has surveyed Lesslie Newbigin's theology of the cross, considering the weakness of the cross as the pattern of God's mission. The last chapter of this thesis will use Newbigin's theology of the cross for the theological reflection of the missionary engagement of diaspora Christians.

²⁸⁵ The proponents of diaspora missiology also observe that the theological reflection from the perspective of diaspora will enrich the study and the practice of diaspora mission. They write, "It is time to foster our theological thinking in dialogue with other Christian thinkers in diaspora. Theologizing in the context of diaspora will enrich our Christian tradition and our missional pilgrimage." Lausanne Committee, *Scattered to Gather*, 31.

The concept of *missio Dei* is fundamental to the articulation and the practice of mission today.²⁸⁶

Although *missio Dei* is not a perfectly defined concept and the church's understanding of it is still developing, *missio Dei* presents basic assumptions of mission that cannot be neglected.²⁸⁷

The fundamental assumptions of *missio Dei* include the divine subjectivity and the trinitarian basis of mission:²⁸⁸ simply stated, *missio Dei* postulates that mission is God's mission, and not under human control; the triune God himself is the source as well as the continuing subject of mission. In relation to *missio Dei*, human act of mission is derivative and secondary; the church's mission gains significance as the participation in the primal reality of *missio Dei*.

Diaspora missiology holds a weak understanding of *missio Dei*: diaspora missiology over-emphasizes the role of human work, whereas it does not attribute the accomplishment of diaspora mission to the continuing action and sovereignty of God. In diaspora missiology God is portrayed as the grand-organizer of diaspora, who moves people according to his redemptive purpose: God scatters and gathers people globally in order to arrange fresh opportunities of missionary work.²⁸⁹ As God designs and implements the demographic changes, the church is

²⁸⁶ The *missio Dei* notion has become the premise of Christian mission. *Missio Dei* emerged clearly at the 1952 Willingen Conference of the International Missionary Council. The Willingen meeting produced a consensus on the divine subjectivity of mission and acknowledge the trinitarian sending to be the origin of mission. According to David Bosch, "The recognition that mission is God's mission represents a crucial breakthrough in respect of the preceding centuries." Since Willingen, the *missio Dei* concept has been accepted by virtually all Christian persuasions. Now *missio Dei* is the consensus on Christian mission from which a Christian community cannot depart. See David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 389-393; John G. Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 6, 9; Wilhelm Anderson, "Further Toward a Theology of Mission," in *The Theology of the Christian Mission*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 303.

²⁸⁷ Some scholars point out that the *missio Dei* notion lacks the substantive development. For example, Tormod Engelsen maintains that the church's consensus on *missio Dei* is "developing" and that the current status of consensus is "one of terminology than theological substance." See Tormod Engelsen, "Missio Dei: The Understanding and Misunderstanding of a Theological Concept in European Churches and Missiology," *International Review of Mission* 92, (Oct 2003): 486; See also Flett, *The Witness of God*, 76.

²⁸⁸ John Flett includes *missio Dei*'s relation to the theme of the kingdom of God.

²⁸⁹ Diaspora missiology holds an understanding that the global migration and the formation of diaspora communities is the redemptive action of God in the world. The movement of people is the means and the strategy of God's mission. See Lausanne Committee *Scattered to Gather*, 21.

called to respond by the effective ministry, in other words, “to seize the golden opportunity.”²⁹⁰ The focus on the mission strategy – ‘mission to, through, and beyond the diaspora’ – advances naturally from the overall narrative of diaspora missiology that ‘God arranges opportunities, and human produces the most out of them.’ In this view of mission, the fulfillment of the Great Commission depends too much on human effort and competency.²⁹¹

The heavy emphasis of human performance, if pressed on to its logical conclusion, contradicts the basic assumption of *missio Dei* that God, not human, is the primary subject of mission. In the narrative of diaspora missiology, God controls the movement of people and arranges the possibilities of mission. Yet, there is no explication provided concerning how, or if, God is taking the work of diaspora mission as His own. While God is sovereign over the organization of diaspora, the sovereign action of God in diaspora mission stops on the surface level of moving people geographically. From this point on, the accomplishment of diaspora mission is taken over by the church; it is the church that carries out the missionary enterprise, and the fulfillment of diaspora mission rests in the action and capability of the church.²⁹² As a consequence, diaspora missiology suggests an understanding of God who stays aloof from the

²⁹⁰ Enoch Wan, “Diaspora Mission Strategy in the Context of the United Kingdom in the 21st Century,” *Transformation* 28 no 1 (Jan 2011): 11.; See also, Lausanne Committee *Scattered to Gather*, 28.

²⁹¹ This kind of understanding is not exclusive to diaspora missiology. Rather, it reflects a widespread notion of mission that concentrates on recognizing the opportunities of mission and, in turn, considering effective methods to engage with the opportunities. Additionally, with regard to the theme of mission opportunity, Andrew Walls observes as follows: “The great theme of early-twentieth century mission thinking is opportunity – the opportunity for Western Christianity to bring the gospel to the non-Christian world, which is also the non-Western world.” See Andrew F. Walls, “Mission and Evangelization: The Gospel and Movement of Peoples in Modern Times,” *The Covenant Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (Feb 2005): 26.

²⁹² According to John Flett, the over-emphasis on human performance in the fulfillment of the missionary command results in the loss of *missio Dei* during the time between Christ’s ascension and His coming again; Christ gives the missionary command to the church, but He is absent in the actual ministry in the world. Flett states: “The Christ event initiates missionary activity, but its accomplishment rests in the actions of the Christian community.” See Flett, *The Witness of God*, 45.

Further, the heavy emphasis of human action in diaspora missiology leads to a serious theological problem as it posits human action to be the decisive factor of reconciliation between God and man, in the context of the diaspora.

actual practice of diaspora mission; in diaspora missiology God remains as an abstract force behind migration, who is – to a considerable degree – irrelevant to diaspora mission.²⁹³

However, contrary to the narrative and the logic of diaspora missiology, God is deeply involved in the life and ministry of diaspora. The action of God in the context of diaspora goes further and deeper than moving people and arranging the ministry opportunities for the church. Rather, the work of God himself remains primary and decisive in the fulfillment of diaspora mission. As Wilhelm Anderson clarifies in his discussion of *missio Dei*, “Mission is completely and fully the work of God. It is His work that He has carried out and is carrying out in our world.”²⁹⁴ Therefore, it is necessary, without negating the importance of human role, to make sense of the continuing presence and work of God in diaspora mission.

In this thesis Lesslie Newbigin’s theology of the cross provides a platform from which to articulate the reality of *missio Dei* in the practice of diaspora mission. As assuming human helplessness – the lack of human control and power – to be an essential element of mission, Newbigin’s theology of the cross gives a rationale of why divine intervention is indispensable and apparent in the accomplishment of mission. In other words, Newbigin’s theology of the cross informs to narrate an aspect of diaspora mission that the sovereign action of God is performed in the midst of human helplessness.

Next, the approach of this thesis provides a logic to understand diaspora mission from the reality and the identity of diaspora Christians. Diaspora missiology does not give a room for diaspora Christians to understand and practice mission as who they are. Written predominantly

²⁹³ Diaspora missiology does not provide any clue to understand the trinitarian dynamics of mission or who God is in the Trinity. The doctrine of the trinity is one of constitutive elements of *missio Dei* concept. Although the discussion *missio Dei* usually does not provide a detailed or developed connection to the trinitarian dynamics, even simple explanation of the trinitarian dynamics, such as the trinitarian sending, is important to maintain *missio Dei* understanding; For reference, see Flett, *The Witness of God*, 41-47.

²⁹⁴ Anderson, “Further Toward a Theology of Mission,” 303.

from the viewpoint of strategists, diaspora missiology upholds an understanding of mission which is too linear and goal-oriented. Diaspora missiology entails a functional view of human being in that it describes diaspora Christians as a resource to be used to meet the goal and to fulfill the strategy. For example, an official document of diaspora missiology identifies diaspora Christians as strategic force whose potential should be ‘maximized’ by the cultural improvement. The document explains that diaspora Christians can serve cross-cultural evangelism at their best, “after acquiring the language and making cultural adjustments.”²⁹⁵ However, while learning new language and new culture is necessary to practice mission in the immigrated society, the crossing of cultural barriers in mission cannot be comprehended by the single-minded logic of improvement and efficiency. On the part of diaspora Christians, cultural incompetence – being unable to speak perfect language and being a foreigner – is integral to their life and identity. What needs to be considered along with the importance of cultural improvement is that diaspora Christians are called to mission as who they are, as the aliens in the foreign land. The identity and apparent weaknesses as migrants constitute the very content of diaspora mission. The approach of this thesis helps to construct a more nuanced view as it considers the lack of proficiency to be an essential element of ‘mission beyond the diaspora.’

In engaging the debate of diaspora missiology, it is not the intention of this thesis to negate the validity of diaspora missiology or to undermine the godly motive behind the diaspora strategy. The framework of diaspora missiology is valid and useful for planning, in macro perspective, how to use resource and personnel efficiently in mission. Additionally, the strategy of diaspora missiology is based on the godly motive to reach more people with the gospel and to make the best use of ministry opportunities. Although the focus of diaspora missiology is

²⁹⁵ Lausanne Committee, *Scattered to Gather*, 29.

inadequate to capture the nature and dynamics of mission initiated by diaspora Christians, it might be advantageous to conceptualize the western church's outreach to the non-Christian migrants. Just as any other theories or mission perspectives, diaspora missiology has its strengths as well as its limitation. In this sense, the critics of diaspora missiology are making a rather excessive argument when they repudiate the ongoing validity of diaspora missiology as a missiological framework. While diaspora missiology might need improvements and might also need to adjust its focus as a missiological discipline, it is not a constructive suggestion to negate, in the most part, the validity and the usefulness of diaspora missiology.

Globalization and migration of today is a complex reality. It would be an unrealistic expectation looking for a flawless and perfectly-fit model of mission for the conditions of migration in their all diversity and variances. A better missiological response to contemporary migration is found in Steven Bevan's discussion of contextual theology and of a need to employ various models to better understand reality. Bevan claims that different models and perspectives are required to understand complex reality, arguing that "(An) exclusive use of one model might distort the very reality one is trying to understand."²⁹⁶ Referring to the writing of Barbour, Bevan maintains:

"(One) model points to certain aspects of experience, another model or other words can be employed to bring other aspects of experience to light. Because of the complexity of the reality one is trying to express in terms of models, such a variety might even be imperative."²⁹⁷

Seen in this angle, a proper stance of missiology in the context of international migration is to seek interactions and conversations between different perspectives and models. It is necessary in

²⁹⁶ Bevan, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 30.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. Bevan here is referring to the work of Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms*, 29-48.

the missiological discussion to have a mindset of acknowledging each other's difference and trying to benefit each other. Conversation and constructive criticism between different perspectives will produce a greater and a richer understanding of the missiological implications of migration. There are too many things we lose when we stop conversation, refuse to listen to criticism, or to exclude the other.

Chapter 4. Research Findings from the Broader Circle of Missiology

Global migration has been a prominent theme of missiological research, not only within the circle of diaspora missiology, but also for many scholars in the wider circle of missiology. Especially since the early twenty-first century, numerous missiologists have studied the international population movement and its implications for Christian mission. This chapter will survey the research findings from the broader scholarship of missiology on globalization and migration. The insights from the broader scholarship are crucial for learning the background and patterns of contemporary migration and, further, to construct a realistic understanding of the relationship between migration and mission. The review of the broader scholarship will highlight that diaspora Christians, or non-western Christian migrants, are becoming the important agents of global mission. Most importantly, in relation to the main argument of this thesis, the research findings of wider scholarship on contemporary migration will clarify that vulnerability is integral to the non-western missionary initiatives.

4.1 The Patterns of Contemporary Migration

Missiologists widely admit the significance of today's migration for Christian mission: they take notice of the massive scale of international migration and its profound impact on human society and the mission of the church. According to the missiologists, the migratory movement of this era is distinguished by its exceptional volume and velocity. Although the movement of people has been an ongoing factor of human history, "international migration is reaching new heights today."²⁹⁸ In this respect, a missiologist Jehu Hanciles states: "(The) scale and velocity of human migration in the contemporary period are without historical precedence,

²⁹⁸ Stephen Castle & Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* 4th ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2009), 7; This book is not a missiological study. But, this book is a monumental study of contemporary migration, and it is frequently referred by missiologists in their study of migration and mission.

giving rise to the conviction that we live in “the age of migration.”²⁹⁹ The large-scale movements of international population are causing pervasive and lasting changes to human societies around the globe.³⁰⁰ One way of capturing the influence of contemporary migration is, as Lesslie Newbigin describes, to see it as “the enormous mixing of population.”³⁰¹ as a consequence of globalization and migration, the culturally-others and those who were previously distant from each other have been put into same social space. The mixing of international population increases diversity, alters dynamics of society, and creates ambiguities and tensions in various dimensions of life.³⁰² In the most parts of the world, the presence of international migrants has become or is becoming a tangible force that reshapes communities and societies.³⁰³

The upsurge in the international migration is expected to continue and intensify. According to Stephen Castlse and Jim Miller, the leading scholars of migration studies, major factors that will contribute to the enduring trend of migration include the followings: “Growing inequalities in wealth between the North and South,” “Political, environmental and demographic pressures,” “Political or ethnic conflict in a number of regions,” “The creation of new free trade areas will cause movements of labour.”³⁰⁴ A missiologist Jehu Hanciles also expects that the distinctive volume of migration will continue:

²⁹⁹ Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 4; Here, Hanciles is referring to the work of Stephen Castle and Jim Miller, *The Age of Migration*.

³⁰⁰ The impacts of migration on society are deep and pervasive. They include cultural identity, economy, politics, national security, social cohesion, law and policy. See Castle & Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 25.

³⁰¹ Lesslie Newbigin, Lecture on the Newbigin Website.

³⁰² Globalization and migration is a complex reality. There exist different views and mixed emotions around the phenomenon of international migration. One of the perspectives on migration is a negative response to migration that the migrants cause conflicts, anxieties, and even pose threats to the migrant-receiving country. In this respect, a news report of ‘Economist’ writes: “Economic migrants are seen as a threat to jobs and the welfare state. The reality is more complex;” “Along with trade, migration is one of the two main sources of public anxiety about globalization.” See Economist, Oct 1st to 6th 2016

³⁰³ In this regard, Stephen Castle and Mark Miller write that “(Migration) is an intrinsic part of globalization and is itself a major force of reshaping communities and societies.” See Castle & Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 54.

³⁰⁴ Castle & Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 25.

The unprecedented levels of international migrant movement seem set to continue. The various stimuli for migrant movement – including wars, employment, and asylum seeking – are growing worldwide.³⁰⁵

One of the areas being deeply influenced by contemporary migration is religious demography around the world. Historically, migration has been a prime factor of religious expansion and the changes of religious population: “(When) people move,” Hanciles maintains, “they carry their ideas, beliefs, and religious practices with them.”³⁰⁶ The correlation between migration and the shifts in religious demography has proven to be strong especially for Christian faith. Christianity from its beginning has changed its outlook with migration.³⁰⁷ In this respect, Andrew Walls argues that the migratory movement of Christians and the formation of Christian diaspora has been a significant force behind global expansion of Christianity.³⁰⁸ Further, numerous missiologists anticipate that the role of migration for the advance of world Christianity will continue to be crucial. It is believed that “recent migration movements... have the potential to significantly affect the geographic and demographic contours of the world’s major religions and provide a vital outlet for proselytism and missionary expansion.”³⁰⁹ Therefore, Missiologist have been studying the patterns of recent migration and how they will affect the demography and the missionary movements of the global church.

³⁰⁵ Jehu J. Hanciles, “Migration and Mission: Some Implications for the Twenty-first-Century Church,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 27, no. 4 (Oct 2003): 147.

³⁰⁶ Hanciles, “Migration and Mission,” 146.

³⁰⁷ Jehu Hanciles observes in this regard that “(Migration) movement has historically been a prime factor in global religious expansion – pre-eminently so in the case of Christianity...” See Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 377.

³⁰⁸ Andrew F. Walls, “Mission and Migration: The Diaspora Factor in Christian History,” in *Global Diasporas and Mission*, ed. Chandler H. Im and Amos Yong (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 21-33; Here, Andrew Walls provides extensive examples of Christianity being forwarded by migration and Christian diaspora communities. Walls begins his observations from the first century Jewish diaspora and Christian ministry in the era of the Roman empire. Walls continues to strengthen his point by explaining that the great European Migration in the middle age has transferred Christian faith from the west to Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

³⁰⁹ Hanciles, “Migration and Mission,” 146.

The study of recent migratory movements, first of all, has discovered a pattern of migration ‘*from the global South to the North.*’ Although today’s global migration is versatile and multi-directional, the volume of migration is focused on the movements from the Southern continents of the world to the Northern continents – that is, migration is being mainly a “movement from Africa, Asia, and Latin America to the developed countries of Europe, North America, and Oceania.”³¹⁰ The clear pattern of population movements from the global South to the North, the movement from non-west to the west, is expected to continue. Andrew Walls maintains in this regard: “There has been a massive movement, which all indications suggest will continue, from the non-Western to the Western world.”³¹¹ Additionally, the migratory pattern from the global South to the North has resulted in the formation of non-western diaspora in the western societies. The presence of non-western communities has become substantial in many countries of the west. The growth of non-western diaspora is reconfiguring the demography of the western countries and facilitating cross-cultural encounters:

Contemporary migration has helped to create new societies in which the cultural “other” is... a distinct, sizable presence within and impinging on the same social space (be it neighborhood, the city, the province, or the country). The presence of vibrant, growing, non-white immigrant communities within Western societies puts the West and the non-West together in a manner that is without historical precedent and with profound long-term consequences.³¹²

³¹⁰ Castle & Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 58.

³¹¹ Walls, “Mission and Migration,” 34; Andrew Walls recognizes historical behind the migratory pattern from the non-west to the west. Walls sees that the current migration is the reversal of the great European migration. In our age, according to Walls, the great migration has now gone into reverse.” The great European migration started in the early 16th century. It was ocean-based migration, and it lasted about four and half centuries. The great European migration spread Christian faith to non-western world. See also Walls, “Mission and Migration,” 28-33.

³¹² Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 377.

The second pattern of distinction found in contemporary migration is that it is a population movement ‘*from emerging Christian nations to post-Christendom.*’ The migratory movement from the global South to the North is being accompanied with a major demographic trend of global Christianity – the decline of Christianity in the west and the growth of Christianity in the non-western world. In the past century, the church of the west has experienced a sudden and large-scale decline of its number. The numerical decline of the western church occurred with the marginalization in society – that is, the church has been relegated from the public domain and culture, and the Christian practice and life has lost its relevance for general population.³¹³ According to a church historian, Andrew Walls, the decline of the western church in the past century was “one of the largest and fastest movements away from the Christian faith ever to have taken place.”³¹⁴ In the meantime, there has been a rapid growth of Christianity in the non-western world, contributed by the oversea missionary activities of the western church. In numerous countries of the non-western world churches were planted and developed as a fruit of the western mission.³¹⁵ Many scholars acknowledge this demographic change to be ‘a shift in the centre of gravity of world Christianity, from the global North to the South.’³¹⁶

³¹³ Kenneth R. Ross, ““Blessed Reflex”: Mission as God’s Spiral of Renewal,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 27, no. 4 (Oct 2003): 162; Quoting the words of a historian Callum Brown, Kenneth Ross describes the relegation of Christianity among the British people: “(The) British people since the 1960s have stopped going to church, have allowed their church membership to lapse, have stopped marrying in church and have neglected to baptise their children. Meanwhile, their children...stopped going to Sunday school, stopped entering confirmation or communicant classes, and rarely, if ever, stepped inside a church to worship in their entire lives.”

³¹⁴ Andrew F. Walls, “Mission and Evangelization: The Gospel and Movement of Peoples in Modern Times,” *The Covenant Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (Feb 2005): 14.

³¹⁵ Ross, Blessed Reflex,” 163.

³¹⁶ Andrew Walls stresses that the demographic shift of global Christianity was concentrated on the last one century, since around the year of 1910. Walls states as follows: “the period that has seen this great recession from the Christian faith in the West, there has been an equally massive accession to that faith in the non-Western world;” “As a result of mission, the centre of gravity of the church has shifted substantially during a single lifetime.” Walls also Walls offers a statistical information that in 1910, 80% of the world’s Christians resided in the West while in 2010, 60% of the total Christians in the world are found in the Southern continents of the world. See Walls, “Mission and Evangelization,” 14-15.

Amid the shift in global Christianity the population movements from the majority world to the west has resulted in the influx of non-western Christians to various parts of the western world. Demographic studies have pointed out that Christians consist of the biggest religious group involved in international migration and the formation of immigrant communities. For example, according to a demographic survey published in the *Global Diaspora Compendium*, Christians take up the largest portion among all different religious groups in diaspora.³¹⁷ These diaspora Christians, or non-western Christian migrants, move to and establish their religious communities in North America and Europe. African Christian diaspora is a clear example that migrants from the emerging Christian countries come to the west and build up vibrant faith communities. While Africa is experiencing fast growth of Christianity, it is also a major source and centre of international migration. Consequently, African Christian migrants have moved across the west and form their Christian communities. Missiologists maintain that the migratory pattern from the new centre of Christianity to the post-Christendom will significantly change the dynamics of global Christian mission.³¹⁸

Next, contemporary migration is characterized by a pattern of population movements in terms of global economic relations: it is a movement ‘*from the poor to the rich.*’ Prominent causes of contemporary migration include the widening gap of global economy and the prevalent lack of resources in the non-western world. Many people choose to migrate from the majority world to the west in the pursuit of a better life or simply to survive.³¹⁹ The enormous gap of

³¹⁷ Gina A. Zurlo, “Migration, Diasporas and Diversity: A Demographic Survey,” in *Scattered and Gathered: A Global Compendium of Diaspora Missiology*, ed. Sadiri Joy Tira and Tetsunano Yamamori (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2016), 56; This survey provides data on the number and percentage of religious adherents in diaspora communities of the top 10 immigrant-receiving countries.

³¹⁸ Hanciles, “Migration and Mission,” 149.

³¹⁹ The economic situation of non-western migrants varies. Some non-western migrants are rich and they carry their economic resources with them to the western countries. Yet, in the overall pattern of globalization and migration, non-western migrants are less-privileged and relatively poor in western societies.

wealth between the west and the majority world, as Jehu Hanciles clarifies, is a powerful motivation behind the migratory flows toward the west:

The overwhelming majority of contemporary international migrations are economically driven. The widening economic gap between the highly industrialized countries of the North and the “developing” or “underdeveloped” countries of the South has transformed the former into a magnet for migrant movement.³²⁰

Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, an African missiologist, also notices that the economic struggle and social instability are the practical reasons why numerous Africans leave their homeland:

The critical motivation in all these movement is *survival*. For many Africans, migration occurs because fields are dry, crops have failed, or they are facing one form of persecution or another.³²¹

The economic motivation of migration and the marginalized condition are what characterize Christian diaspora in the west. In this regard, Asamoah-Gyadu maintains that African Christian diaspora in the USA and in European countries are made up of marginalized people who have immigrated primarily for the economic betterment:

A significant majority of the patrons of African immigrant churches in the USA, as elsewhere in Europe, tend to be economic migrants.³²²

These desperate and vulnerable people are those who constitute the religious communities that we are calling Christian churches in diaspora.³²³

³²⁰ Hanciles, “Migration and Mission,” 147; Jehu Hanciles adds that the steep growth of population in the poor, majority world is accelerating the international migration toward the west. He states: “In a world where the richest 1 percent receive as much income as the poorest 57 percent, the inverse relationship between demographic growth and economic development is a potent catalyst in the buildup of pressures that stimulate mass migration. It is estimated that around 95 percent of all global population growth in the next quarter of a century will take place in developing countries.” See *Ibid*.

³²¹ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Migration, Diaspora Mission, and Religious Others in World Christianity: An African Perspective,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39, no. 4 (Oct 2015): 190.

³²² J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “On Mission Abroad: Ghana’s Church of Pentecost and Its USA Missions,” in *African Christian Presence in the West: New Immigrant Congregations and Transnational Networks in North America and Europe*, ed. Frieder Ludwig and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 90.

³²³ Asamoah-Gyadu, “Migration, Diaspora Mission, and Religious Others,” 190.

In sum, it is an overriding pattern of contemporary migration that migration from the majority world to the west are economically driven and that diaspora communities, including diaspora church, is marginalized in the western society.

4.2 Christian Migrants as the Principal Agents of Global Mission

Missiologists widely believe that in the realities and patterns of contemporary migration mentioned above, non-western Christian migrants will become “the principal agents of global mission.”³²⁴ The massive influx of Christian migrants and the formation diaspora congregations are considered to be the new dynamics and driver of Christian mission. According to numerous mission scholars, Christian migrants from the majority world are exhibiting the missionary initiatives in the western society. The impact of non-western missionary initiatives is reaching, not only the immigrant communities, but also native population of western societies. For example, Andrew Walls observes that Christian migrants from the non-western world are impacting the native population of the west with their missionary endeavors: “It is also clear that they are beginning to have an impact on the indigenous Western population.”³²⁵ The emerging initiatives of Christian migrants in the west, or diaspora Christians, are expected to be a crucial factor of global mission and of the future change of religious demography. Hanciles states therefore: “(The) future of Christianity is intricately bound up with the emerging non-Western missionary movement.”³²⁶

The positive evaluation of the missionary potential of diaspora Christians in the scholarship of mission is connected to the missiological theme of re-evangelization of the west. Missiologists in their research of the significance of contemporary migration often discuss the

³²⁴ Walls, “Mission and Migration,” 35.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Hanciles, “Migration and Mission,” 149.

role of non-western migrants for the renewal of Christianity in the west. The movements of Christian migrants from the majority world to the west are being understood as a potential source to re-evangelize the post-Christian west. In this respect, Kenneth Ross anticipates: “(It) may be that the new life on what were once seen as the fringes will prove to be the source of renewal for today’s European church.”³²⁷ Andrew Walls, whereas, gives a more convinced view of the non-western Christian migrants’ role in mission. He thinks the non-western missionary movements are indispensable for the global mission initiatives, including the re-evangelization of the west:

(Our) hope for evangelization of the world now rests with the cultures of African and Asian and Latin American Christians and any re-evangelization of the West can only be carried out with their help.³²⁸

There exists a growing awareness in the missiology circle that the missionary potential of diaspora Christians is more than a hopeful anticipation. Mission scholars have found “growing evidence” which indicates that “non-Western Christians are becoming the agents of reevangelizaing the West.”³²⁹

Several evidences are frequently mentioned by missiologists to support the importance of the non-western missionary initiatives. The factors intensifying the missionary impact of non-western movements include the followings: First, non-western Christian migrants and their congregations are actually exhibiting the missionary movements in the western contexts.³³⁰ The communal life and the evangelism of diaspora church are characterized by vitality and

³²⁷ Ross, ““Blessed Reflex,” 163; Here, ‘new life on the fringes’ indicates the emerging church of the majority world and Christian migrants from the majority world.

³²⁸ Walls, “Mission and Evangelization,” 26.

³²⁹ Peter Vethanayagonomy, “Mission from the Rest to the West: The Changing Landscape of World Christianity and Christian Mission,” in *Mission after Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission*. Edited by Ogbu U. Kalu, Peter Vethanayagonomy, and Edmund Kee-Fook Chia (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 60. Andrew F. Walls, “Mission and Migration: The Diaspora Factor in Christian History,” in *Global Diasporas and Mission*, ed. Chandler H. Im and Amos Yong (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 21-33

³³⁰ Asamoah-Gyadu, “On Mission Abroad,” 90.

enthusiasm. Scholars have observed the cases of diaspora congregations in the west that actively practice mission and demonstrate “evangelistic zeal.”³³¹ Although the non-Western missionary movement “is still in its early stages,” they are increasingly representing the missionary initiatives in the Western countries.³³² Second, non-western Christian migrants hold a self-perception and a calling as ‘a missionary to the west.’ Many leaders and members of the immigrant churches have a vision for mission in the western society. For example, African Christian immigrants in the USA and Europe show a strong sense of missionary calling. Despite their vulnerable situations, African Christian migrants go further than self-seeking: “doing mission,” in the western contexts, “has acquired a central place in the minds of African immigrants;”³³³ “many immigrant leaders and their churches... have come to define themselves as missionaries [to the host society.]”³³⁴ Third, migration intensifies the religious commitment of Christian migrants. It has been argued by many scholars that the experience of migration, the act of uprooting and resettlement, often leads to stronger religious commitment and enthusiastic religious life. Timothy Smith, in his important study on how migration affects the relationship between ethnicity and religion, argues that the migrant experience has overriding influences on the identity-formation and the religious life of migrants. Making his well-known statement, “Migration was often a theologizing experience,” Smith maintains that migration tends to deepen the religious reflection and participation of migrants.³³⁵ Some missiologists also confirm that the migratory experience strengthens the religious reflection and ministry participation of Christian

³³¹ Hanciles, “Migration and Mission,” 152.

³³² Ibid., 152.

³³³ Asamoah-Gyadu, “On Mission Abroad,” 98.

³³⁴ Asamoah-Gyadu, “Migration, Diaspora Mission, and Religious Others,” 190.

³³⁵ Timothy L. Smith, “Religion and Ethnicity in America,” *The American Historical Review* 83, no. 5 (Dec 1978): 1175; Timothy Smith is not writing from Christian perspective. Yet, his study is frequently referred to by mission scholars that study the relationships between migration, ethnic identity, and religious commitment.

migrants. For example, Jehu Hanciles states that Religion “is central to [immigrants’] way of life and a crucial means of preserving identity as well as homeland connections.”³³⁶ Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu also maintains: “Religion,” “is interwoven with migration in a further and even more deeper and profound sense.”³³⁷ Fourth, there exist ‘the diaspora factors’ that increase the missionary impact of Christian migrants. Diaspora – the trans-national communities and their networks – is a prevalent reality of today’s world. Facilitated by the processes of globalization and the increased connectivity in the world, diaspora opens up multi-directional flows of ideas, people, resources, and movements of different areas. Missiologists recognize the potential of diaspora as “the possible networks” by which to carry out and support mission across the world.³³⁸ In this regard, Andrew Walls confirms the positive effect of the diaspora factor for global mission: “The rich diversity of that diaspora... has the capacity to advance Christian mission in both the Western and the non-Western worlds.”³³⁹

Additionally, the theme of ‘reverse mission’ has been explored as a perspective to capture the missionary initiative of non-Christian migrants in the western societies. The term, ‘reverse mission,’ involves some variations in its meaning and use.³⁴⁰ Yet, in a general sense, the reverse mission emphasizes the intentional sending of missionary force, from the non-west to the west, and the goal of re-evangelizing the western countries. For example, Paul Freston defines the reverse mission as follows: “the sending of missionaries to Europe and North America by

³³⁶ Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 146

³³⁷ Asamoah-Gyadu, “On Mission Abroad,” 99.

³³⁸ Walls, “Mission and Migration,” 36.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ Hun Kim, “Receiving Mission: Reflection on Reversed Phenomena in Mission by Migrant Workers from Global Churches to the Western Society,” *Transformation* 28, no. 1 (Jan 2011): 62-63.

Hun Kim maintains that the term ‘reverse mission’ involves some controversy and variations of use: in terms of its concept, some scholars understood it from the viewpoint of the western church that accommodate the missionary activities of non-westerners, and others have more stressed they missionary initiatives from the immigrant-sending countries. Additionally, as for its term, ‘reverse mission’ has been also referred to as ‘receiving mission’ or ‘mission in reverse.’

churches and Christians from the non-Western world, particularly Africa, Asia and Latin America.”³⁴¹ The concept of reverse mission was noticed in missiological scholarship in the context of “(the) reverse wave of immigration and the waning of Christianity in the Western society;”³⁴² mission scholars proposed the missionary initiative from the non-western world as the potential source to revitalize Christianity in the west. As opposed to the missionary engagement that arises spontaneously as a grassroots movement in the course of migration, reverse mission presupposes the intentional planning and sending of missionary personnel. The concept of reverse mission emphasizes the significance of non-western initiatives in the western societies.

However, there are scholarly voices that challenge a simplified view of migration and mission: against a position that might romanticize or elevate too quickly the importance of non-western initiatives for the future of global mission, some missiologists have presented their criticism and their nuanced understanding of global migration and mission.³⁴³ First, Paul Freston objects to perceive the missiological significance of global migration exclusively from the perspective of ‘the reverse mission from the non-west to the west.’ Freston poses a question, if or to what extent the reverse mission is actually being attempted. Freston holds a rather negative view on the rhetoric of reverse mission as it concentrates on “the capacity of diaspora communities to act as missionaries to native populations.”³⁴⁴ He contends that the actual cases of reverse mission in the west have had little success.³⁴⁵ Instead, Freston suggests “non-diasporic

³⁴¹ Paul Freston, “Reverse Mission: A Discourse in Search of Reality?,” *PentecoStudies* 9, no. 2 (Oct 2010): 155.

³⁴² Kim, “Receiving Mission,” 63.

³⁴³ I will highlight four scholarly views here which, in my judgment, have pointed out crucial arguments to construct a healthy and nuanced understanding of international migration and the church’s mission.

³⁴⁴ Freston, “Reverse Mission,” 160.

³⁴⁵ Freston, “Reverse Mission,” 158; It is questionable if Freston could judge the efficacy of reverse mission with information and stats that are available now. The missionary movement of diaspora communities is still in its early stage and, moreover, extensive research on the numerical data of migrant mission is lacking. Therefore, it might be too early for Freston to conclude that reverse mission is “the wish,” and “not the reality.”

reverse mission,” in which non-Western missionaries join and cooperate with Western churches.³⁴⁶ Freston’s argument is noteworthy in that it encourages non-Western missionaries to move beyond their ethnic communities and to unite with the western church in making the missionary attempts. Freston believes that the preaching of the gospel essentially involves “(divesting) oneself of one’s culture” and discarding “ethnic/national/cultural pride.”³⁴⁷

Second, John Corrie criticizes a romanticized notion of migrant mission as ‘reverse mission’ to the West ‘from below.’ According to Corrie, migration is a “profound” experience with “many ambiguities and creative tensions.”³⁴⁸ The complexity of migration should be reflected in the conceptualization of migrant missions. Corrie proposes “a mutual interculturality between migrants and indigenous Western churches.”³⁴⁹ According to Corrie, both the Western church and non-Western Christians are experiencing the relegation or the Exile in western societies. Therefore, the sharing and mutual interpretation of each other’s experience will bring transformation on both sides.

Third, some scholars argue against the simplified distinction between the *agents* and *recipients* of migrant mission. For example, in his discussion of reverse mission, Kenneth Ross maintains that both Western and non-Western churches are “addressees as well as agents of mission.”³⁵⁰ Ross refers to the concept of *missio Dei* that “human involvement is always *first* as addressee and *only then* as agent.”³⁵¹ Ross also emphasizes that a missionary renewal is multi-directional and creative in the context of today’s globalization.

³⁴⁶ Freston, “Reverse Mission,” 162.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 170.

³⁴⁸ John Corrie, “Migration as a Theologizing Experience: The Promise of Interculturality for Transformative Mission,” *Mission Studies* 31, no. 1 (2014): 9, 10.

³⁴⁹ Corrie, “Migration as a Theologizing Experience,” 9.

³⁵⁰ Ross, “Blessed Reflex,” 163.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Fourth, it is still a valid approach to highlight the evangelistic efforts toward non-western migrants that are coming to the west. The current flows of migrants from the majority world to the west include a large number of non-Christian migrants. Therefore, it is legitimate and necessary, from the perspective of Christian mission, to consider the evangelistic opportunities among the non-western migrants. With regard to the possibilities of reaching non-Western Christians, Samuel Escobar describes migration as “an avenue for mission.”³⁵² In the course of migration, migrants become more open to new faith and new relationships. The church in the host society should capture this window to reach out to the migrants with compassion, sensitivity, and reciprocity.

In sum, the scholarship of missiology has largely accepted the significance of the emerging initiatives of non-western migrants. Having studied contemporary migration with various themes and from different perspectives from each other, some missiologists present critical opinions against the too-linear and simplified view of non-western initiatives. Their criticism is helpful to construct a more nuanced understanding of migrant mission that might reflect complex realities of the current population movements around the globe. Although some divergences exist in the way scholars perceive the implications of global migration for mission, it can be said that the mission scholarship on migration has accepted the importance of non-western missionary initiatives.

4.3 A New Paradigm of Mission – ‘Mission from a Position of Weakness’

There is a prominent observation on the distinctive quality of the non-western missionary initiative, which appears across the writings of various missiologists: Christian migrants from the majority world are bringing a new paradigm of mission to the west, by being who they are in the

³⁵² Samuel Escobar, “Migration: Avenue and Challenge to Mission,” *Missiology* 31, no. 1 (Jan 2003): 22.

realities of globalization and migration. Today's globalization is a multi-faceted reality which incorporates diverse interactions and dynamics: "its dynamics renders the constructs of "margin" and "center" fluid and interchangeable.... it is marked by a complex interplay of domination and weakness, paternalism and marginalization."³⁵³ Yet, there still exist "dominant process" of globalization that affect and even determine the context and experience of human life.³⁵⁴ The missionary movement of non-western migrants is being shaped by the dominant force of globalization that relates to economy, power, and social standing of the non-western Christians.

In the global picture, the emerging Christianity of the majority world is characterized by its poverty and powerlessness.³⁵⁵ Missiologists maintain that Christianity is being more and more represented by poor people around the world: "Christianity now will increasingly be associated (mostly) with rather poor and very poor people, and with some of the poorest countries on earth."³⁵⁶ Rapid expansion of Christian faith is occurring in the most impoverished places of the world. In this regard, Jehu Hanciles states that the emerging Christianity of the non-western world is characterized by its lack of power and resource:

To the extent that it is predominantly non-western, the new face of global Christianity is one of relative poverty and powerlessness, ..., the global church displays the most explosive growth and increasing missionary vitality precisely in those areas that are most marginalized and impoverished.³⁵⁷

The lack of resource and power is prevalent both in the homeland and the diaspora communities of non-western migrants. The proponents of diaspora missiology also acknowledge that the

³⁵³ Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 386.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵ Poverty, on the one hand, is a relative concept in the world of market economy. But, on the other hand, in many parts of the world people experience actual poverty and powerlessness in a sense that they do not have enough food or that they lack social and political securities.

³⁵⁶ Walls, "Mission and Migration," 35.

³⁵⁷ Hanciles, "Migration and Mission," 149.

experience of poverty and suffering is typical to diaspora Christians and their congregations: in the case study of the Filipino Christian diaspora, Sadiri Joy Tira and Enoch Wan maintain that “[Filipino experience] encompasses themes of poverty, suffering, and marginalized communities, and the challenges that it presents to the church.”³⁵⁸

The vulnerability is integral to the non-western missionary initiatives in the western societies. Non-western Christians migrate to the west as the poor and vulnerable, and they engage in mission as who they are – the marginalized in a foreign land. Missiologists observe that vulnerability is the most distinctive feature of the non-western missionary movements. For example, Jehu Hanciles argues that the non-western missionary movement is distinguished by “the experience of marginalization, powerlessness, and vulnerability,”³⁵⁹ which is accompanied by the migrant process from the non-west to the west:

(In) its encounter with Western society, the non-Western missionary movement is most clearly stamped by the experience of marginalization, powerlessness, and vulnerability, which are hallmarks of migration. Few other aspects of the movement more clearly expose its distinctness from Christendom.³⁶⁰

As Christians from the majority world engage themselves in mission from their state of marginalization and vulnerability, they bring the new paradigm of mission to the west: the non-western migrants reveal the new missionary paradigm – ‘*mission from a position of weakness.*’ Missiologists generally evaluate that the vulnerability, imprinted on the life and ministry of non-western migrants, constitutes the new paradigm of mission. For example, it is observed that “African Christianity is revealing new paradigms of mission,” which is “vulnerability.”³⁶¹ The

³⁵⁸ Sadiri Joy Tira and Enoch Wan, “The Filipino Experience in Diaspora Missions: A Case Study of Christian Communities in Contemporary Contexts,” 3.

³⁵⁹ Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 382.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁶¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, “Migration, Diaspora Mission, and Religious Others,” 190.

new paradigm of the non-western missionary initiative is being produced by the processes and the realities of global migration today. Missionary engagement arising in the movement from the global South to the North is “by and large, mission from the poor to the rich, from the periphery to the center in the global economy.”³⁶²

The new missionary paradigm of Christian migrants – mission from a position of weakness – has historical and theological significances for Christian mission. First, in respect to history of Christian mission, the non-western initiative of today resounds a crucial shift in the pattern of global mission – a shift “from power to vulnerability.”³⁶³ As Lesslie Newbigin points out, the missionary initiative arising from the majority world exhibited a new missionary pattern, which is “mission from weakness to strength, not from strength to weakness.”³⁶⁴ From the late medieval period to the occurrences of the two world wars, Christian global mission, to a large extent, advanced alongside the colonialist endeavors.³⁶⁵ However, after the First World War, colonialism and Christian mission were fiercely objected to by the non-Western world. Additionally, in the midst of growing secularism and pluralism, Christianity in the west lost its vitality and was relegated in the public sphere of society.³⁶⁶

According to missiological research on migration, the current flows of migration and the missionary initiative arising from it is significant as reverting the power-based mission of the

³⁶² Ross, “Blessed Reflex,” 166.

³⁶³ Stephen Bevans, “From Edinburgh to Edinburgh: Toward a Missiology for a World Church,” in *Mission After Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission*

³⁶⁴ Lesslie Newbigin, (lecture); Here, Lesslie Newbigin is discussing the missionary endeavors of the non-western world in general, and he is not particularly pointing to the context of migration.

³⁶⁵ Roman Catholic mission in the late medieval period and the subsequent Protestant mission was accompanied by the colonial expansion. David Bosch states in this respect: Colonialism and mission...were interdependent; the right to have colonies with it the duty to Christianize the colonized.” However, there also existed missionary enterprises which had nothing to do with colonial powers. Additionally, after the First World War, colonialism and Christian mission together were fiercely objected to by the non-western world. See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 226.

³⁶⁶ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 38.

past.³⁶⁷ In this regard, Andrew Walls argues that Christian mission in diaspora context reverses the old pattern of Christian mission of being “(the) religion of confident technological advance and rising affluence, and sometimes [seeing] these as a mark of God’s favor.”³⁶⁸ In the emerging paradigm of Christian mission, the active agent of global mission is ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘underprivileged.’³⁶⁹ Kenneth Ross describes that the non-western missionary initiative follows the pattern of the earliest Christian mission in that it places “the poor and marginalized” as its active agents:³⁷⁰

What excites the Christian imagination about this development is that, after the long years when the Evangel was compromised by being intertwined with imperial power and economic exploitation, it is now restored to the poor and marginalized, who were its original agents.³⁷¹

Further, the distinctive dynamics of the non-western initiative – mission from the base of weakness – has theological implications for the mission of the church. The missiological scholarship on migration notes from the non-western initiatives a biblical pattern of God’s mission that God uses for his mission the weak and the lowly things of the world (1 Cor. 1:27-29).³⁷² Jehu Hanciles, for example, discusses how non-western Christian migrants understand the efficacy of their ministry from the viewpoint of the marginalized. According to Hanciles, the perspective of non-western initiative is formed around “a consciousness of weakness and marginality.”³⁷³ As opposed to the western perspective which considers “divine providence,” or

³⁶⁷ It cannot be said that the missionary initiative in the context of contemporary migration is the first case of the mission from a position of weakness. But, the contemporary migration is providing the channels to resound and to facilitate the shift in the pattern of mission.

³⁶⁸ Walls, “Mission and Migration,” 35.

³⁶⁹ Newbiggin, Lecture

³⁷⁰ Ross, “Blessed Reflex,” 166.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 390; Asamoah-Gyadu, “Migration, Diaspora Mission, and Religious Others,” 190; Ross, “Blessed Reflex,” 162.

³⁷³ Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 391.

God-given resources and opportunities, as the driver of mission, non-western Christians look to the biblical pattern of mission that God uses “weak things of the world” (1 Cor. 1:27).³⁷⁴ The condition of migration leads the non-western Christians to realize “the efficacy of that core scriptural motif of the people of God as strangers and pilgrims.”³⁷⁵ Additionally, Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu maintains that the contemporary migration from the global South to the North reveals the purpose of God to accomplish his mission by using the vulnerable migrants. He states: “(As) Christianity moves from the South to the North through migration, we shall discern in it the move of God empowering the weak to fulfill his purposes among the strong.”³⁷⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu also explicates that the non-western initiative is practiced in the principle of “the incarnation,” which is “redemption through humble condescension and the identification with the other.”³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 390.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 391.

³⁷⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu, “Migration, Diaspora Mission, and Religious Others,” 192.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

Chapter 5: Theological Reflection on the Missionary Initiative of Diaspora Christians

Having examined Lesslie Newbigin's theology of the cross and the scholarly debate and findings on contemporary migration, this chapter will theologically reflect on the missionary initiative of diaspora Christians. In doing so, Lesslie Newbigin's theology of the cross will be used as a category to evaluate the significance of vulnerability of in diaspora mission. The examination of vulnerability in diaspora mission will, in turn, illumine the nature and significance of 'mission beyond the diaspora.' Additionally, the theological reflection will be done from the perspective of diaspora Christians – that is, from the outlook of those who are called to the life and mission of helplessness. The consideration of diaspora mission from the concrete experience of migration will produce a renewed understanding of the meaning of the missionary task given to diaspora Christians.

5.1 Diaspora: The Occasion of Weakness and Dependency

For Christian migrants from the majority world to the west, 'diaspora' is the occasion of weakness. Diaspora is a concrete situation where non-western migrants become weak and marginalized. The experience of diaspora involves uncertainty, risk, and vulnerability. By moving to a foreign land, one experiences the lack of relevance to local culture and the lack of resource and power compared to the people of host society. One author describes as follows the tangible vulnerability of non-western migrants:

(People) of colour who are maginalised and regularly experience their actual powerlessness.... they have difficulties finding jobs and places to live, and at the aliens' offices they feel helpless against seemingly all-powerful officials.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁸ Wahrisch-Oblau, Quoted in Asamoah-Gyadu, "On Mission Abroad," 99

Although the vulnerable experience as a migrant might vary and diverge from each other, vulnerability is a clear and distinguished characteristic found from the dominant forces and the overriding patterns of contemporary migration. The diaspora people are the ones who have moved from the poorer places to the more affluent and powerful society.

The missionary task of diaspora Christians, mission beyond the diaspora, is rightly understood in the light of the vulnerable reality as migrants. The concrete and helpless situation of diaspora Christians prevents a mechanical view of Christian mission which considers people to have been given a call to produce the most out of the given resource and situation. The logic of efficiency is not plausible for those the helplessness and cultural incompetence have been made, to one degree or another, an important part of one's social identity.³⁷⁹ Furthermore, in the case of the cross-cultural missionary outreach beyond their cultural boundary, the rhetoric of productivity loses even more its relevance to diaspora Christians.

Because of the vulnerable reality as migrants, the missionary endeavor of diaspora Christians bears profundity: the practice of mission in the situation of diaspora involves a dimension of mission which points to a fundamental reality of mission. In their missionary activity, as those who are weak and marginalized, diaspora Christians witnesses to the reality that contradicts their apparent plight: "It is the powerless who, putting their faith in God's power, proclaim a reality that contradicts the reality of their experiences."³⁸⁰ In reality, 'mission beyond the diaspora' means the followings: a diaspora Christian, who has the unstable legal status, preaches that God is the Rock and the sure foundation; a diaspora Christian, with no medical plan and who cannot freely go to see a doctor when she is sick, makes a missionary witness that

³⁷⁹ Cultural incompetence is inherent to the social identity of migrants. For example, even though the migrants learn local language and improve their relevancy in communication, they retain the imperfection in language, such as foreign accent, the unnatural use of vocabulary, or the lack of elegance in speech.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

Jesus is the healer. The deeper dimension of mission in the missionary initiative of diaspora Christians is understood and fulfilled by referring to a reality that is bigger than their life.

The peripheral life in diaspora increases one's reliance on God in the practice of mission. In the experience of diaspora, dependency is tangible reality. As being weak, marginalized and lacking resource, diaspora Christians seek God more actively and desperately. Seeking God and praying for His help comes out of the practical needs of life. Diaspora Christians are made to ask for God's help frequently in cases such as – when they need money to buy grocery and pay the hydro bill, when they need to go to a hospital, or when they need to get a warm winter jacket. The tangible needs and scarcity of diaspora Christian gives an awareness of the bigger reality in Christian life and mission.

In the context that necessitates and develops the dependency on God, diaspora Christians gain an understanding that mission is the work of God himself. As those who are weak and deeply in need, diaspora Christians know well that they cannot help but look to God. Here, the simplified and prevalent narrative of mission – ‘God gives a command, and human obeys at their best.’ – does not make sense to the situation and experience of diaspora Christians. The command received cannot be fulfilled by capability of themselves. Diaspora Christians understand that their own competency, plan, and enthusiasm only come up to scarcity to meet the missionary task. In other words, the Great Commission of Matthew 28 – “Go and make disciples of all the nations...” – is not a matter diaspora Christians can accomplish by themselves; they understand that they cannot take over the responsibility of mission from God. Rather, the missionary command makes sense since God promises His continuing presence and intervention – “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mt 28:20)

Diaspora Christians, from their concrete and vulnerable reality, develops a perspective of mission that aligns with the *missio Dei* concept. The *missio Dei* is realistic for the experience and circumstances of diaspora Christians. From the standpoint of diaspora Christians God is not the one who arranges the opportunity of work and steps back from it. Instead, God should be the one who takes the work of mission as His own. In the outlook of diaspora Christians their place in mission is the one of receiving, being assisted, and held in the mighty hands of God. In this respect, Jehu Hanciles maintains that the missionary perspective of diaspora Christians consists of “a consciousness of weakness and marginality” that considers themselves as “weak things of the world” used by God;³⁸¹ diaspora Christians understand “the efficacy of that core scripture motif of the people of God as strangers and pilgrims.”³⁸²

In sum, diaspora Christians develop the direction of the missionary outlook out of their weakness and dependency on God. Yet, their perspective of diaspora mission is decisively shaped by the knowledge of the cross of Jesus. Diaspora Christians come to know the essence of their missionary calling, ‘mission beyond the diaspora,’ by reflecting on the weakness of the cross in God’s mission in the light of their own experience of vulnerability.

5.2 Helplessness and the Secret of God’s Kingdom

Lesslie Newbigin’s theology of the cross provides a theological category to discover the essence of ‘mission beyond the diaspora.’ Newbigin’s theology of the cross enables diaspora Christians to understand the missiological significance of their vulnerability, and thereby, the essence of ‘mission beyond the diaspora.’³⁸³ Newbigin sees from the cross of Jesus the paradigm

³⁸¹ Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 390, 391.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 391.

³⁸³ Although vulnerability of diaspora Christians becomes a clue to understand the nature of ‘mission beyond the diaspora,’ we cannot elevate it or romanticize it. Vulnerability, on the other hand, means struggle and pain. It is also an issue to be dealt with practically and overcome.

of God's mission that God chooses and uses the weakness and shame for his mission: the secret of the kingdom of God, or the saving knowledge of Jesus, is revealed in the apparent weakness and shame of the cross.

Newbigin's theology of the cross explains the decisive factor of Christian mission – the efficacy of weakness. God chooses and uses weakness as an essential element of his mission. God accomplishes his mission in a way that contradicts the expectation and the standard of the world: God reveals the secret of his kingdom in the weakness and humiliation of the cross. In the mission God the seeming weakness provides the locus and the occasion to reveal the presence and power of God's kingdom; precisely in the weakness and shame of the cross, the secret of the kingdom of God, or the saving knowledge of Jesus, is made known to the world. In other words, the sovereign action of God in mission is made in the weakness of the cross. According to Newbigin's theology of the cross, it is the decision and the action of God himself to choose the way of the cross in mission; the efficacy of weakness is revealed in the redemptive work of the triune God himself.

Newbigin's theology of the cross offers a perspective to understand the truth of the trinitarian mission. In the trinitarian mission, Jesus submits himself to the will of the Father and accepts the way of the cross:

As the Son, Jesus loves and obeys the Father. He submits himself wholly to the Father's ordering of events.³⁸⁴

Yet, paradoxically, his calling is to the way of suffering, rejection, and death – to the way of the cross. He bears witness to the reign of God not by overpowering the forces of evil, but by taking their full weight upon himself.³⁸⁵

³⁸⁴ Newbigin, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 39.

³⁸⁵ Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 35.

God's way in mission is the antithesis to what the world expects for deity. It is in the weakness and suffering of the cross – the loving obedience of the Son to the Father – that the presence of the reign of God is revealed to the world. The Spirit is the sovereign power of God acting in the trinitarian mission; the Spirit takes the weakness of the cross as the locus and the occasion to reveal the reality and the power of the reign of God.

Further, Newbigin's theology of the cross expounds how in the trinitarian mission God embraces the way of the cross and uses the helplessness for his mission. Newbigin's theology of the cross explains the trinitarian dynamics in diaspora mission and gives a more concrete account of God's work: God the Father is the organizer of global diaspora who moves people and prepares fresh and creative occasions of mission; God the Son is found in diaspora mission as the one who embraces the plight of a migrant – a dislocated, helpless, and marginalized. God the Son embraces the weakness and shame of a migrant in his loving obedience to the Father; God the Spirit is the sovereign and acting power of God in each case of diaspora mission. God the Spirit takes the helplessness of diaspora Christians as the locus and the occasion to reveal the secret of the reign of God.

5.3 Embracing the Weakness and Shame of the Cross

The theological reflection using Lesslie Newbigin's theology of the cross gives a renewed understanding of the missionary initiative of diaspora Christians. Seen in the light of Newbigin's theology of the cross, 'diaspora' entails the design of God's mission as to how God uses the weakness and shame of the cross in his mission. The phenomenon of global migration is the occasion that renders diaspora Christians as the weak and the marginalized in the western societies. And God uses the weakness of diaspora Christians for his redemptive work.

As many scholars studying migration postulate, contemporary migration includes or reveals divine purpose of salvation. God is sovereign over the population movements and God uses migration for the fulfillment of His purpose. In this respect, Jehu Hanciles maintains that both biblically and historically, migration reveals divine purpose of salvation:

(The) conjunction between migrant movement (mobility) and God’s salvific purpose or missionary expansion is deeply rooted in the biblical story and strongly manifested throughout Christian history.³⁸⁶

Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu also articulates his conviction that the redemptive purpose of God works behind the occurrences of population movements. He argues that Christian migrant movement from the global South to the North reveals the purpose of God to use vulnerable migrants for his mission: “(As) Christianity moves from the South to the North through migration, we shall discern in it the move of God empowering the weak to fulfill his purposes among the strong.”³⁸⁷

With the assumption of the connection between migration and divine purpose and the missiological significance of vulnerability, the meaning of ‘mission beyond the diaspora’ is made clear: God is placing diaspora Christians in the western context as the vulnerable and lowly. The powerlessness of diaspora Christians is the occasion by which God unveils the presence and power of His kingdom.

The understanding of ‘mission beyond the diaspora’ gives a renewed mindset to diaspora Christians who are called in mission. Diaspora Christians are called to offer themselves in mission as they are called – the powerless and vulnerable in a foreign land. The weakness of

³⁸⁶ Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 378.

³⁸⁷ Asamoah-Gyadu, “Migration, Diaspora Mission, and Religious Others,” 192.

diaspora Christians provides the locus of the work of the Spirit. Precisely in the weakness and shame as migrants, the Spirit will unveil the secret knowledge of salvation.

The cross of Jesus is the reference to understand the essence of ‘mission beyond the diaspora.’ The cross in the mission of Jesus discloses the loving obedience of the Son to the Father. As a loving and obedient Son, Jesus accepts the weakness and shame of the cross. Jesus renounces any masterful control of the worldly events. Instead, Jesus embraces the way of the cross and subjects himself to the purpose of the Father. The obedience of the Son to the Father offers the reference for diaspora mission. In their plight of vulnerability and the lack of social standing, diaspora Christians can participate in mission as the children who love and obey the Father. Diaspora, in this sense, is the Father’s ordering of worldly events and the occasion of Christian obedience.

Further, the Newbigin’s theology of the cross, diaspora Christians gains a perspective of diaspora mission within the trinitarian framework: God the Father is the organizer of diaspora; God the Son accepts the Father’s ordering of worldly events and embraces the weakness of the cross; God the Spirit is the sovereign and acting presence of God who reveals the secret of God’s kingdom amid vulnerability. The missionary endeavor of diaspora Christians can be better understood within the trinitarian framework of mission. It clarifies the nature of diaspora mission that God called diaspora Christians to be weak and to be depending on God.

The theological reflection on ‘mission beyond the diaspora’ offers a practical reference and perspective of mission for diaspora Christians. The theological reflection gives hope in the midst of hardships. Instead of a rhetoric of hard work, the theological reflection gives courage to embrace weakness and shame in diaspora mission. The missionary endeavor in the context of diaspora – the reality of vulnerability – can be made out of joy. The participation in mission is

joyful because it is God himself who continues to carry on His mission and sustains diaspora Christians when they are weak and marginalized.

Conclusion

This thesis has studied the missionary initiative of diaspora Christians with an aim to understand its essence through vulnerability experienced in the life and mission as migrants. The methodology of study – the theological reflection using Lesslie Newbigin’s theology of the cross and the survey of the findings from the scholarship of mission – deepens our understanding of the nature and significance of ‘mission beyond the diaspora.’ It has been discovered in this study that the apparent human weakness, which inheres the mission of diaspora Christians, belongs to the design of God’s mission in the context of contemporary migration. Using the weakness of diaspora Christians as the occasion of His action, God reveals the secret of his kingdom and the saving knowledge of Jesus.

The finding of this thesis gives a renewed understanding of diaspora and diaspora mission. For diaspora Christians the context of diaspora is not the occasion to exercise control and better management. Rather, the diaspora is the occasion in which God called them to take up their cross and follow Jesus. ‘Mission beyond the diaspora,’ in this sense, is not the task to be mastered by human wisdom and power. Diaspora Christians are called to offer themselves to God in their weakness and in their loving obedience to God. In their missionary initiative of vulnerability, diaspora Christians will participate in the paradigm of the mission of God that ‘the wisdom of God is made known by foolishness,’ ‘the power of God is made perfect in weakness,’ and ‘the glory of God is revealed through shame and self-humiliation.’

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