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GAVIN WAKEFIELD

# Mission in the Spirit: Revivalist and Celtic Strands of Mission

**Gavin Wakefield examines the world of two contemporary Anglicans, Mark Stibbe and Ray Simpson. Both are from charismatic backgrounds. Yet their work reveals radically divergent understandings of the origin, motivation, context and scope of mission. Wakefield uses this analysis to challenge Anglican Charismatics to deepen and develop their contributions to wider debates about the nature of Christian mission.**

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The Charismatic Movement developed in the mainline churches in England in the early 1960's, especially, though not exclusively, amongst Evangelicals. Just as evangelicalism has diversified in many ways since then, so too has the charismatic movement.<sup>2</sup> Diversification is well illustrated by the two developments in Charismatic thinking among Anglicans discussed in this article. As we will see, diversification is true not least in the understandings of mission which have emerged, and poses a challenge to Mark Cartledge's recent attempt to make the charismatic movement a *via media* within Anglicanism.<sup>3</sup>

Over the past fifty years there has been significant growth in the use of the term 'mission' among Christians of all persuasions.<sup>4</sup> From a relatively small field of meaning, centred on the sending and activities of 'missionaries', usually in another land, it has been in danger of losing any meaning, as 'everything became

1 I am grateful to friends and colleagues at St John's College for discussions on this subject and commented on this paper. In particular Mark Bonnington and Mark Cartledge have helped me to sharpen some of my thinking.

2 Nigel Scotland *Charismatics and the Next Millennium: Do They have Future?* Hodder & Stoughton, London 1995, p 21. In his historical survey of the charismatic movement in Britain Scotland describes the movement as 'wide-ranging'. On a global scale this is further illustrated by the 16 groups of Charismatics, distinguished from

Pentecostals, identified in Howard Foltz 'Moving Towards a Charismatic Theology of Missions' in *Probing Pentecostalism*, Society for Pentecostal Studies 17th Annual Meeting 1987, p 75f.

3 Mark Cartledge 'A New *Via Media*: Charismatics and the Church of England in the Twenty-First Century' *Anvil* 17.4 (2000), pp 271-83. The diversification of the Charismatic Movement, even within Anglicanism, makes it more difficult for it to be seen as having a mediating role.

4 David Bosch *Transforming Mission*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 1991, especially Introduction, pp 1-11.

mission'. As Andrew Lord puts it when discussing a mission eschatology, 'Understandings of mission range from seeing it as equivalent to evangelism to covering everything the church does in the world.'<sup>5</sup>

However, over the last twenty years or so there has been genuine convergence occurring on what the mission of the Church is about. The underlying theme of David Bosch's *magnum opus* on mission is precisely that there is 'an emerging ecumenical missionary paradigm'<sup>6</sup>. This paradigm is based on an explicitly Trinitarian view of God, which is seen as working out in God's mission in the world, *missio Dei*. The mission of the church, *missio ecclesiae*, is then developed from the *missio Dei*, as a consequence of reading texts such as John 20:21 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' This text is quoted repeatedly in ecumenical documents<sup>7</sup> and specifically Anglican documents on mission.<sup>8</sup>

This article therefore proceeds with a description of the models of the mission of the Church advocated by two Anglican charismatic authors, Mark Stibbe and Ray Simpson, using their published works. In the process we look for themes which are common to both authors and for those which are not. In the conclusion we make a brief comparison with one Anglican missiological framework, the Five Marks of Mission, and with a recent discussion of Pentecostal and Charismatic missiologies by the Pentecostal scholar Kärkkäinen.

## Two strands of mission in the charismatic tradition

I have chosen to describe two contrasting developments, those of Mark Stibbe, vicar of St Andrew's, Chorleywood, and of Ray Simpson, Guardian of The Community of Aidan and Hilda, based on Lindisfarne. Both authors are presbyters of the Church of England, and both have achieved a reasonable level of popularity among book-reading Christians. For Stibbe this has come about especially through the New Wine network associated with St Andrew's. For Simpson it has been through the general interest in so-called Celtic Christianity; it is notable that one of his key books, *Exploring Celtic Spirituality* (hereafter *ECS*), has remained in print since 1995 in a culture of very short print life.

They have both sought to combine serious scholarship with charismatic practice and have written extensively on a variety of topics. They have begun from not dissimilar evangelical and charismatic bases, but have developed their thinking in distinctive and to some extent divergent ways. They are both passionate about sharing the message of Christ in contemporary Europe and express deep dissatisfaction with the life of the Church as it is. For all these reasons it seems worthwhile and interesting to compare and contrast them with each other. Before we look in detail at what each author has to say about mission we need a few introductory remarks about their writing.

5 Andrew Lord 'Mission Eschatology: a Framework for Mission in the Spirit' *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11 (1997), p 111.

6 From the title of his central chapter. Bosch *Transforming Mission*, pp 368-510.

7 See, for example, Bosch *Transforming Mission*, p 514.

8 For example, *The Truth Shall Make You Free: The Lambeth Conference 1988*, Church House Publishing, London 1988, p 29, paragraph 1 of the Section Report on Mission and Ministry.

### Revivalist tradition represented by Stibbe

The main source used to investigate Stibbe's understanding of mission is his book *Revival*<sup>9</sup>, based on an extended sermon series at St Andrew's, Chorleywood. I have also looked at *O Brave New Church*<sup>10</sup>, his article 'The Theology of Renewal and the Renewal of Theology'<sup>11</sup> and the websites for St Andrew's<sup>12</sup> and for Europe Awake.<sup>13</sup> The justification for using the book *Revival* as a key source for Stibbe's understanding of the mission of the Church can be found in his discussion of 'The Mystery of Revival' following comments on the extraordinary work of the Spirit in a time of revival: 'This does not mean that the normal work of the church is to be disparaged. Nor does it mean that revivals are the *only* means for the effective spreading of Christianity. ... Such miraculous times are not different in "kind" from the regular activity of the Spirit in the Church. They are different in degree.'<sup>14</sup>

So in a time of revival what is seen is not different from the normal work of God in and through the church, but an intensification of it. Within this interpretation then, investigating revival enables us to see more clearly what the Church is for and how God is at work.

Stibbe's understanding of mission is put succinctly in the following two quotations from *Revival*, the emphasis in the first being his, as he sets out his definition of revival:

Revival is a season ordained by God in which the Holy Spirit awakens the Church to evangelize the lost, and the lost to their dire need of Jesus Christ.<sup>15</sup>

God has a cosmic plan for the Church and this plan is wholly tied up with the proclamation of the gospel... [the good news] is that the dynamic reign of God has arrived and that God's mercy and compassion are now available to all who would repent and believe.<sup>16</sup>

The four sections under which we will discuss the understanding of mission can be found in these quotations.

### Celtic tradition represented by Simpson

There has been a growing trend amongst charismatic Anglicans to seek inspiration from what has been loosely labelled the Celtic tradition. Apart from Simpson himself, John Finney and Michael Mitton are prominent speakers and writers from this tradition who have developed their understanding of Christian faith by exploring Celtic themes, not least in the area of mission.<sup>17</sup> Similar themes can also be seen to a lesser extent in the writing of Graham Cray and Robert Warren.

9 Mark Stibbe *Revival*, Monarch, Crowborough 1998.

10 Mark Stibbe *O Brave New Church: Rescuing the Addictive Culture*, DLT, London 1995.

11 Mark Stibbe 'The Theology of Renewal and the Renewal of Theology' *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 3 (1993), pp 71-90.

12 <http://www.ravello.co.uk/standrews/>

13 This organization, intended to pray for revival in Europe, was effectively ended on Good Friday, 2000, and its website no longer exists.

14 *Revival*, p 45f. See also p 192.

15 *Revival*, p 14.

16 *Revival*, p 18.

17 See John Finney *Recovering the Past: Celtic and Roman Mission*, DLT, London 1995; and Michael Mitton *Restoring the Woven Cord: Strands of Celtic Christianity for the Church Today*, DLT, London 1995.

Ian Bradley has provided a brief but helpful account of the current attention to Celtic Christianity, setting the interest of Anglican Charismatics in the context of both New Age ideas and more orthodox Christianity.<sup>18</sup> A sympathetic observer – he is listed as a Community Advisor to the Community of Aidan and Hilda (CA&H) – he is concerned that many writers are reading history to suit their own contemporary purposes. For our purposes it is worth noting that he draws attention to some of the more dubious claims about charismatic gifts that have been made, and also to the possible search for English identity bound up in some of the biases and readings of seventh-century history.

Because of Bradley's work I have chosen not to dwell on critiquing the historical dimensions of Simpson's writing, but to focus on what he and the CA&H say about mission. As with Stibbe, there is a statement which can be held to be definitive. In this case it comes from the document setting out *The Way of Life of the Community of Aidan and Hilda*, under the heading of Mission. It begins: 'Our aim is that "the whole created order may be reconciled to God through Christ" (Colossians 1:20). We seek to live as one Christian community so "that the world may believe" (John 17:21).'<sup>19</sup> Further elements of the statement are discussed later.

#### **Four Components in models of mission**

In order to engage with our chosen authors I have divided their material into four sections intended not to constrain or presuppose any particular definition of mission. The section headings are: the *origin*, *motivation*, *context* and *scope* of mission.

##### **The origin of mission**

In Stibbe's writings the origin of mission is clearly in God, expressed in the phrase 'a season ordained by God', and even more explicitly in talking about God's 'cosmic plan for the church'. Later he spells this out by emphasizing the grace of God, effective at all times, but with extraordinary effects in a revival. After quoting Iain Murray, Gardiner Spring and Charles Spurgeon he concludes: 'All this underlines the point that revivals are the result of the numinous and transcendent initiative of Almighty God.'<sup>20</sup>

Further emphasis on the divine origin of revelation and hence mission is found in the Europe Awake website: 'Other religions can be likened to people struggling to build roads up a holy mountain to the summit where God dwells. These religions contain moments of grace and revelations of truth, but they do not lead a person to the Father. Christianity is totally different. It is a revelation not a religion. In Jesus, God comes down the mountain and blazes a trail to the top, through his atoning death and his awesome resurrection and ascension.'<sup>21</sup>

Locating the origin of mission in God is not controversial in contemporary missiology, but the manner in which this is extended in the quotation from Europe

18 Ian Bradley *Celtic Christianity: Making Myths and Chasing Dreams*, Edinburgh University Press, 1999, p 205-210.

19 *ECS*, p 200.

20 *Revival*, p 46.

21 From Europe Awake – Focus 1998, website page.

Awake is. Many missiologists do hold the view cited, but not all; what is an adequate theology of religions is under active discussion. It would be interesting to know how Stibbe would want to discern 'moments of grace and revelations of truth', and to ask how it is that such moments and revelations occur within these religions.

The CA&H begin their statement on mission by setting out a cosmic vision, the reconciliation of the created order to God. This is clearly a large vision, but given the manner in which it is set out it is most properly described as *missio ecclesiae*, rather than *missio Dei*. This is surprising, given the emphasis in Simpson's writings on spirituality and the liturgies he has devised for the CA&H on the Trinity. It is precisely a dynamic trinitarian understanding of God which has led contemporary missiology to put great stress on *missio Dei*, as the foundation of the mission of the church.

In *ECS* there is little direct discussion of the nature of God. The one chapter which does so, chapter 13, is headed 'The Encircling Three', and opens with an edited form of Matthew 28:19. Despite this no link is made with mission; rather there are just three pages, much of it taken up with quoting prayers in a trinitarian form. We may note and commend the significant stress on prayer and worship here and throughout the book, but need also to note the lack of a developed theology undergirding the mission of the Church.

It may not strictly be seen as the origin of mission, but there is an important second element to the CA&H statement on mission which might be characterized as unity in community for the sake of witness. There is a strong emphasis on the value of community in Simpson's writing, a community united in Christ in order to share its faith. Thus the chapter on the unity of the church is the longest in *ECS*, and in the section that Simpson informed me was most explicitly about mission. The discussion about community itself is not in that section but placed early in the book. At the end of it he claims, 'Monasticism was not a feature of the Celtic Church, as it was generally in the Western church; it was *the* feature. In the same way, community has to become *the* mark of local churches and Christian groups today.'<sup>22</sup> For Simpson, then, the explicit origin of mission lies in a vision of a creation reconciled to God in Christ; it would seem fair to suggest that the community of faith, the church, is seen as a sign of that reconciliation, insofar as it is true to its calling.

### **The motivation of mission**

Stibbe's motive for mission is concern for the lost, a concern which must be awakened by the Holy Spirit. The 'lost' are not explicitly defined, but later Stibbe makes it clear that what people are to be saved from is hell: 'In seasons of revival, the Holy Spirit – who is the eschatological Spirit – brings eternal realities into sharp focus. For those outside of Christ, hell (that is, irreversible separation from Jesus Christ and the joys of heaven) becomes a terrifying reality. For those in Christ, revivals provide a foretaste of heaven.'<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *ECS*, p 42.

<sup>23</sup> *Revival*, p 64.

It is clear that for Stibbe, hell is seen as a place which will be 'an eternity of conscious torment'<sup>24</sup>, though he also discusses the concept of annihilationism, concluding that this too would be a terrifying destiny. Either way, Stibbe is making it clear that the destiny of those outside of Christ is eternal separation from God; Christians are to be motivated by this into sharing their faith. It is assumed throughout the discussion that those in Christ, found and no longer lost, are those who have made an explicit statement of faith in Christ, who have a saving knowledge of him.

Hints of another, wider basis for mission exist in Stibbe's writings: for example in 1993 he draws on the Pentecostal scholar, Steven Land, with evident approval: theology is to be orientated to a passion for the kingdom. He quotes Land's own words about 'a true theologian – one who prays for the kingdom'.<sup>25</sup> As we have seen, in *Revival* a passion for the reign or kingdom of God is picked up, but the content of that reign or kingdom is not made explicit; this observation links with the next point on the context of mission.

In Simpson the motive for mission has a very different feel: it lies in the love for God and all that is good shown by true disciples. Illustrating another point, he cites from Bede's *Life of Cuthbert* the occasion when Cuthbert and the dying prior Boisil of Melrose study St John's gospel, 'dealing with the simple things of "the faith which works by love"'.<sup>26</sup>

This motivation is seen in the discussion of evangelism: under the heading 'Affirming evangelism' – telling in itself – is given an example from the life of Columba of effective 'evangelism that goes with the flow of what is good in human nature.'<sup>27</sup> We are exhorted by Simpson to affirm what is good in others, 'but also to introduce them to the One who completes and gives meaning to their lives'. Again, he writes, 'Above all, it was the loving-kindness of these missionary men and women that won the hearts of people to Christ' and supports his claim with a quotation from Bede's *History of the English Church and People*. The motif of concern for the 'lost', so dominant in Stibbe, is not entirely absent. The Way of Life for CA&H goes on in the section on Mission: 'We evangelize not simply out of a sense of duty, but because the Spirit of God is giving us a heart for the lost.'<sup>28</sup> However, this is virtually the only reference of this kind and the tone of Simpson's discussion is much more positive about humanity than Stibbe's, a point we come to in the next section.

### **The context of mission**

The following discussion of the context of mission deals with the subject with reference to three interconnected issues: the nature of the world, the way in which evil is understood, and the work of the Holy Spirit outside of the church.

In *Revival* the essential context for the mission of the Church is a wicked world, from which individuals must be saved. This is a statement of the classic Protestant view of salvation, in which mission is essentially the rescuing of individual souls.

24 *Revival*, p 63.

25 Mark Stibbe 'The Theology of Renewal and the Renewal of Theology' p 73.

26 *ECS*, p 28, quoting Bede *Life of Cuthbert*, chapter 8.

27 *ECS*, p 169.

Further, Stibbe's introduction to the concept of revival is couched in the language of confrontation and militarism familiar from Protestant revivalism, from Jonathan Edwards onwards, and much of the Charismatic Movement.

So, through proclamation, 'the kingdom of God advances and the kingdom of darkness is assaulted and pushed back'. Again, 'the kingdom of God advances aggressively as it did in the time of Jesus (Matthew 11:12). Whenever this happens, the Church engages in a kind of "military push" into enemy territory.'<sup>29</sup> In his conclusion he writes, 'People must realize that revival is war.'<sup>30</sup>

It is not clear that the reference to Matthew 11:12, violence committed against the kingdom of heaven, means that the kingdom of God is itself aggressive. Certainly the passage suggests a violent response to the mission of Jesus but should that imply that the church engage in a 'military push'? Just a few verses later we have the 'words of comfort', 'Come to me, all you that are weary...' (Matt. 11:28), which puts the mission of Jesus in a very different context.

To be fair, elsewhere Stibbe is clearer that the empirical church is not necessarily the answer to the problems people face. In his words, 'the Churches in Britain have not offered the unchurched population what they really need. We have not offered them a sense of the powerful reality of God in worship. We have not offered the Good News of the Cross in a way that scratches where our generation has been itching. We have not offered people a vibrant, caring, outer-directed community in which addictive behaviour can be lovingly addressed.'<sup>31</sup>

In his book on addictive culture Stibbe writes with a greater sense that the Church itself is in need of transformation by God, and not simply needing to be more fervent in its praise and intercession. He rightly draws attention to the gift of prophecy being used more widely and more deeply than to provide individuals with guidance. Drawing on Walter Brueggemann he calls for 'a prophetic ministry of culture-watching'.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, the result of his culture-watching turns out to be very negative, and the sense of a wicked society under the judgement of God is the dominant motif. I can find no perception in Stibbe's writings that there are any positive features of society outside of the church. It would seem that the Holy Spirit is only active outside the church in preparing people to receive the gospel.<sup>33</sup>

In a perhaps over-simplified phrase, we might describe the context of mission in Stibbe's work as an evil world, from which individuals need rescuing. The sense of it is well summed up by words of Jesus which come at the end of the passage on the accusation that he cast out demons in the name of Beelzebul: 'Whoever is not with me is against me.' (Matthew 12:30a).

The context is described rather differently in Simpson: there is a recognition of the reality of evil and of a necessary struggle against evil, but it is much more clearly set in the context of a prayerful struggle against spiritual forces. Moreover,

28 ECS, p 200.

29 Both quotations from *Revival*, p 18.

30 *Revival*, p 237.

31 *Brave New Church*, p 91.

32 *Brave New Church*, p 4.

33 The Pentecostal scholar Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen makes a similar point about most Pentecostals in "'Truth on Fire": Pentecostal Theology of Mission and the Challenges of a new Millennium' *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3/1 (2000), p 54f.



the wider context is one of affirming what is good in humanity and the creation, seeking to encourage that goodness, and working with all who face that way. 'One thing the Celtic churches had in common was a missionary spirit... The Celtic evangelists attracted the people by sharing their humanity with them, transfigured by Christ. They had taken on board Irenaeus' insight that "the glory of God is seen through a human life fully lived".<sup>34</sup> Whether or not this is a truly accurate historical account of Celtic Christianity, the point is that Simpson wants to work this way now, seeing it as biblical, within the historic Christian tradition and appropriate within contemporary Britain.

Again, he writes of working with the culture whenever possible: 'In Ireland there was evangelism through 'spreading the nets wide' – that is, through working with the grain of cultural patterns.'<sup>35</sup> So in Simpson, in contrast to Stibbe, there is a affirmation of what is good, irrespective of whether Christ is named.

There is also a contrast between our authors in their approach to the conflict between good and evil. In Stibbe, as we saw, there is an apparently unreflective use of military metaphors to describe this spiritual struggle. Simpson also recognizes the struggle – his preferred word – but engages seriously, if briefly, with more recent objections to military language, especially from feminist theology.<sup>36</sup> His proposed solution is not to abandon the concept of spiritual warfare altogether but to see it redeemed, encompassing what is good in feminine and masculine archetypes. He is clear that the New Age movement, despite some positive features, is ultimately not of God, and he puts some emphasis on suggesting this is a key feature of contemporary society which Christians should struggle against.

Finally, and again in contrast to Stibbe, Simpson is ready to recognize the activity of God outside the visible church. This is partly spelt out above in the description of affirming what is good. It is seen in what Simpson calls 'gospel-friendly trends' in today's society, trends which might provide links for Christian mission. The list includes trends often associated in some way with the New Age movement, such as ecology, healing, peace movements, and meditation. We noted that Stibbe was critical of Moltmann for his positive discussion of such issues, yet here is a charismatic Anglican who also believes these issues can be used as 'points of connection for... mission.'<sup>37</sup>

Simpson believes he can justify his position on his reading of the 'Celtic' mission in the seventh century, as going with the flow of human life. It is open to debate just how far this is historically true, and though he writes a response for the reader implying that it was also the New Testament pattern he nowhere gives evidence to support this assertion.<sup>38</sup> This lack of substantial engagement with the Scriptures is not an isolated instance, despite the intended biblical basis to the discussion.

In summary, then, Simpson describes a more ambiguous context in which mission takes place, in which good and bad trends are occurring. Stibbe sees a darker picture altogether, with the light of Christ apparently penetrating the Church

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34 ECS, p 166.

35 ECS, p 168.

36 ECS, p 107-115.

37 ECS, p 173.

38 ECS, p 174.

but no further. Describing Simpson's approach we might use different words of Jesus from a context of others casting out demons in the name of Jesus: 'Whoever is not against us is for us.' (Mark 9:40).

### The scope of mission

For Stibbe, the priority of the church in its mission is set out in God's plan, and 'this plan is wholly tied up with the proclamation of the gospel.' The proclamation of the gospel is to individuals, even if it is hoped that this will be on a large scale in a revival. The key text for Stibbe is that of the Great Commission, Matthew 28:18-20: as individuals come to a saving knowledge, so the reign of God is extended.<sup>39</sup>

Just as there are hints of a broader base to mission in a theology of the kingdom, so there are hints that the scope of mission might be wider than individual salvation. Part of the justification given for looking for revival is that individual conversions on a large scale have previously had an impact on society and can do so again: 'The power of revival...is not confined to the Church but affects society as well.'<sup>40</sup>

It is noticeable, though, that the subsequent examples given of how conversions have led to consequent social effects are at the level of individual change, such as reduction of crime and drunkenness. To point this out is not to downplay the significance of such transformation for the individuals concerned and their immediate communities, but there is little impression here of the radical critique of the culture called for in Stibbe's earlier book, *O Brave New Church*.

In the conclusion to *Revival* there is a brief discussion of the messy reality of revival, especially related to doctrinal novelty and excesses and to strange behaviour as evidence of the Spirit's working. The proposed guards against such problems are two-fold: keeping the Word and Spirit together, so that everything is tested against Scripture, and an awareness of spiritual warfare, using the work of Richard Lovelace.<sup>41</sup> The proposal to use Scripture is not surprising, but there are places in the book where the use is not very careful, as we saw in the discussion of Matthew 11:12. The quoting of Lovelace can be found elsewhere in Stibbe's work, and leads to a further observation on the scope of mission as seen by Stibbe.

In 'The Theology of Renewal' Stibbe repeats exactly a diagram from Lovelace of Secondary Elements of Renewal, with one significant exception: under the heading 'A. Mission' Stibbe includes 'in proclamation' but omits 'in social demonstration'.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, Stibbe goes on to quote Lovelace positively on the societal effects of renewal, but is not clear that this might be part of the mission of God or of the Church.<sup>43</sup>

There are signs towards the end of the same article that Stibbe was working towards a more holistic understanding of mission and the work of the Spirit. He engaged there with Moltmann's work *Spirit of Life*, not least in the area of environmental concerns, and sought 'a more integrated approach that looks at the

39 *Revival*, p 18.

40 *Revival*, p 49.

41 *Revival*, p 228-39.

42 Compare 'Theology of Renewal', p 80 with Richard Lovelace *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, Paternoster, Exeter 1979, p 75.

43 'Theology of Renewal', p 81.

work of the Spirit within the cosmos as a whole.<sup>44</sup> Stibbe says there are 'obviously problems' with Moltmann's approach and raises the issue of discernment of spirits. This understandable criticism is somewhat weakened by Stibbe's apparent desire to seek the Spirit in art, science and philosophy.

It seems from this brief survey of Stibbe's writing that he sees the scope of mission as the proclamation of the gospel to the lost, and that where he tries to go beyond that he has problems because he identifies the kingdom of God too closely with the Church, and ultimately he is not willing to risk considering how the Spirit might blow outside the visible boundaries of the Church. The narrowness and harshness of the context for mission is of a piece with what Simpson would see as a restricted scope of mission.

The scope of mission in Simpson is expressly wider than in Stibbe, for whom social consequences of conversion are important, but apparently not seen as part of the mission of the church. Because Simpson starts with the concept of a creation reconciled to God, and builds on the notion of human lives lived fully to the glory of God, he is able to develop a more holistic understanding of mission. Simpson is conscious of a wide definition of mission: in *ECS* chapters 18-23 are all seen by him as part of mission.<sup>45</sup>

The statement about mission in the CA&H document *The Way of Life* also gives a broad definition of mission, as we noted above.<sup>46</sup> The first element is evangelism, corresponding to chapter 22 of *ECS*. It is modelled on the seventh century 'grassroot communities such as Lindisfarne, Iona and St David's' and explicitly set in a charismatic paradigm: 'We evangelize not simply out of a sense of duty, but because the Spirit of God is giving us a heart for the lost. We ask God to work through us in signs and wonders for his glory, not ours.' Mission next includes working for and with those on the margins of society: 'Our mission also includes speaking out for the poor, the powerless and those treated unjustly in our society, and to minister to and with them as God directs.' This statement makes clear that mission is not to be restricted to evangelizing the lost, but includes social transformation at its core, not simply as a consequence as in Stibbe. But it also provokes the question, is this a church and a community *for* the poor or *of* the poor? It does seem to reveal an attitude that the church remains a significant, if not powerful, force in society. The language of this and other statements about 'the poor' makes it clear that the poor are 'them', to whom good must be done. Without wanting to undermine the desire to aid the poor and powerless, paying attention to the language reveals that this manifestation of the contemporary church is again of the relatively rich and powerful.

The element of spiritual warfare so marked in Stibbe exists in Simpson as we have seen, but is expressed in the statement about Mission in less overtly military terms, and with specific targets in mind. Within this statement we also note implicit

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44 'Theology of Renewal', p 83.  
45 e-mail to the author, 11 April 2000. The subjects of these are chapters are: a church of the people; compassion for the poor; vocations for all; unity of the church; evangelism; healing of the nations.

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46 All the following material can be found in an Appendix in *ECS*, p 200f.

assumptions about the use of charismatic gifts, and about ministry by every believer: 'As our gifting and opportunity permit we counter all false materialistic, new age or occult teachings through love, sound argument, prayer and demonstrations of the power of God, in the spirit of St Patrick's Breastplate.' Given the suspicion of Christians, especially charismatics and evangelicals, to new age movements, and the desire of CA&H to address the underlying issues which new age movements also relate to, it is not surprising that this area is highlighted in mission.

## Assessment and Conclusions

In assessing our chosen models of mission we will follow the four components used in the description above and briefly interact with the Anglican Five Marks of Mission<sup>47</sup>, and associated material, and with five challenges for Pentecostal/Charismatic missiology by Kärkkäinen.<sup>48</sup>

The *origin* of mission is more obviously in God in Stibbe's writing than in Simpson's. In the light of the background to the Five Marks and most contemporary missiology this makes Simpson's work theologically weaker at this point. This is surprising, given his praise for Orthodoxy and his trinitarian emphasis.

He is not alone in this: MISSIO, an official Anglican Communion group examining mission and recently reviewing the Five Marks felt it necessary to strengthen the concept that mission begins in God. In their words:

'Mission as God-in-action – ...The initiative in mission is God's, not ours. ... The Five Marks of Mission could make that clearer.'<sup>49</sup>

Charismatics, with their emphasis on the activity and involvement of God in the world, are as well placed as any Christians to insist that the mission initiative of God is not simply historical but also contemporary. Kärkkäinen makes a related point in his fourth challenge, when he writes, 'what will be the specific contribution of Pentecostals/Charismatics to the understanding of the Spirit in the world?' Both Stibbe and Simpson might reflect more fully on the origin of mission in God and specifically the role of the Holy Spirit in God's mission, the empowering of Jesus, and His continuing work in and through the church.

The *motivation* of mission in Stibbe is the classic Protestant burden for the lost, who will end up in hell if they do not hear and respond to the message of the gospel. His understanding of the atonement which drives his model of mission is at least implicitly within the Calvinist tradition of penal substitution, and which

47 The statement known as the Five Marks of Mission is:

'Mission is characterized by 5 marks:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth'

The Five Marks were originally drawn up under the aegis of the Anglican Consultative Council between 1982 and 1990.

48 Subsequent references to Kärkkäinen's questions are all to Kärkkäinen 'Truth on Fire', p 59.

49 Eleanor Johnson and John Clark (eds.) *Anglicans in Mission: A Transforming Journey*, SPCK, London 2000, p 2f.

underlies The Thirty Nine Articles.<sup>50</sup> In Simpson the motive is love for God and his creatures. It is not that Stibbe would deny the value of love, nor that Simpson would deny that those without Christ are lost, but the starting points are very different. Simpson's model of salvation appears close to that of deification in the Orthodox tradition: Simpson has an awareness of theological connections between Orthodox understandings and those of the 'Celtic' church of this period<sup>51</sup> but it is not developed. Greater attention to the insights of the Orthodox might strengthen his theological base.

There is no doubt that by emphasizing the motive of love Simpson is much closer to recent official Anglican statements, expressed in the justification for the then Four Marks of Mission, by discussing the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, within recent Anglican documents on mission there is little discussion of what it might mean to be 'lost', though *The Mystery of Salvation* does contain some passing references to the concept.

It is a weakness of current Anglican statements on mission that little attention has been paid to motivation. Stibbe and Simpson, writing at a more popular level, have grasped the necessity of providing a motivation for the people of God to be part of mission, a motivation which goes beyond the abstract concept that 'God does mission, so we should'. The fact that many Anglicans may find the stark vision of the lost in Stibbe uncongenial does not invalidate the need for motivation.

The disjunction between these two Charismatic Anglicans also suggests that Charismatics need to continue to reflect on their motivation for mission. Kärkkäinen again raises an important point in his first challenge to Pentecostals and Charismatics: 'what is the role of Spirit-baptism in Pentecostal/Charismatic missions? Is it only for empowerment?... What is the array of spiritual gifts for mission?' It is noticeable that neither author had paid any attention to this issue: if Charismatics are to make an impact on Anglican motivation for mission then thinking through what we believe and practice about Spirit-baptism is essential.

The *context* of mission for both Stibbe and Simpson is an evil world, in which significant and powerful spiritual forces are at work. As we have seen Stibbe has a much more negative gloss on this than Simpson, who is more ready to acknowledge the work of the Spirit outside of the visible boundaries of the church. There is a crucial theological issue here on discerning the work of the Spirit: do Charismatics have anything distinctive to say? Stibbe has relied on a traditional Protestant model, Simpson in a rather less coherent fashion on an Orthodox one.

The need to acknowledge the variety of contexts is mentioned in the MISSIO review of the Five Marks and occurs in most official Anglican documents, sometimes in a discussion of cultures. There is an opportunity for Charismatics to contribute, especially if we can develop our understanding of how the Spirit is at work in the world. We have already quoted Kärkkäinen's fourth challenge, which includes this point.

50 Doctrine Commission *The Mystery of Salvation*, CHP, London 1995, p 210.

51 ECS, p 32.

52 *Bonds of Affection: Proceedings of ACC-6*, Anglican Consultative Council, London 1984, p 47f.

The *scope* of mission is very different in our authors: Stibbe has a strong emphasis on proclamation with the aim of saving the lost. Simpson has a broader understanding, similar to the Five Marks, and to some extent going beyond them, to include issues of unity, community and explicitly healing. Both begin with evangelism; it is notable that the Five Marks start with proclamation, originally identified with personal evangelism in 1984.<sup>53</sup>

The MISSIO review sees the first mark as a summary of all mission, an understandable interpretation given the phrase 'kingdom of God'. The comment in the review document is very brief, and will need teasing out. Our two authors, and probably most other Charismatics, would probably want to keep a clear reference to evangelism as the leading edge of mission; alongside others, here may be a contribution which they can make.

It is evident that how the reign or kingdom of God is understood is central to what is then an appropriate scope of mission: since the mission of the church is seen by all concerned as the extension of the mission of Jesus who came to bring the kingdom we need to know what that kingdom is. The point applies with particular force to Stibbe who generally works with a narrow understanding of mission, yet at times has a wider understanding of the kingdom, but clarification is called for from all interpretations. In the words of the second challenge given by Kärkkäinen, 'what is the relation of proclamation and social justice? ... What is the meaning of the kingdom of God in all of this? What about Spirit and kingdom?'

Comparing our two authors overall, it might be said that Stibbe has the more coherent theology and better biblical exegesis, with some limited historical investigation. His major weakness is inadequate engagement with the mission context. Simpson's strength is that he resonates well with contemporary concerns but he has a tendency to read those back into the history he expounds, and his biblical and theological bases are limited. In both cases a more developed discussion of the meaning of the kingdom of God might provide the theme to bring together Bible, theology, history and reading contemporary culture. A contribution of that kind would be invaluable to the wider Anglican debate.

To finish, then, here are four challenges of my own to Anglican Charismatics, relating to the four components of mission that have been discussed in this paper.

1. How do Charismatics understand the *origin* of mission in God? Can they offer a distinctive understanding of the contemporary mission of God through the Spirit?
2. Does Spirit-baptism offer any distinctive *motivation* for engaging in mission? What does it mean to say that the Spirit we have received is one of love (2 Timothy 1:7) when speaking of mission?
3. How do we interpret the *context* of mission? Should we emphasize the positive or negative features of our culture? How do we understand the Spirit to be at work in the world beyond the church?
4. When outlining the *scope* of mission, what do Charismatics mean by the kingdom of God?

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<sup>53</sup> *Bonds of Affection*, p 49.