NEW WORLD - NEW CREATION: MISSION IN
POWER AND FAITH

(1) The Transformation of Humanity

The goal of Christian mission is to create a humanity whose form is conformed to the "form of Christ" (Ga 4:19, *morphe*). The "form of Christ" is that of self-giving love. Being thankful for the act of the self-giving God, the church experiences a fragment of the universal fullness of the gospel.

The Eucharist embraces all aspects of life. It is a representative act of thanksgiving and offering on behalf of the whole world... The Eucharist involves the believer in the central event of the world's history (*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, 1982).

The apostolic tradition proclaims that humanity is personally, communally and cosmically re-created by this "central event" of self-giving love. Self-giving, being the opposite of self-glorifying, is truly healing. The focus of this healing is on the transformation (transfiguration) of humanity. This is an outline of the missiology of *theologia crucis*. The source of missiology, Christian prayer and meditation on the church's mission is the self-giving Christ. It is because the mystery of the transformation of humanity begins in Christ's self-emptying (*kenosis*). "On Mount Tabor not only does the Deity appear to humanity, but humanity appears in Divine glory" (Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna [published in Russian in 1873], quoted in *The Meaning of Icons*, by L. Ouspensky and V. Lossky, 35). Christian civilization, however, has often crucified peoples.

For in the beginning the Indians regarded the Spaniards as angels from Heaven. Only after the Spaniards had used violence against them, killing, robbing, torturing, did the Indians ever rise up against them (*Bartolomé de Las Casas, The Devastation of the Indies*, Tr. by H. Briffault, 32 [1552]).
We used to praise our God in our language, with our gestures and dances, with instruments made by us, until the day European civilization arrived. It erected the sword, the language, and the cross, and made us crucified nations (from the message that 2,500 Indians delivered to Pope John Paul II, April 8, 1987, in Salta, Argentina).

The language of novus mundus and nova ecclesia would terrify us if we knew how these words were used by the Christian West 500 years ago. Tragically, they expressed self-glorifying imperialism. The behavior of Western Christian civilization in the last 500 years has disfigured the form of Christ. Theologia crucis has changed into theologia crucificandi (Ps 106:20).

Yet, by the grace of God, there have been "7,000 of these Bartolomé de Las Casas and Steve Bikos" at every moment of our despairing history. Even Elijah was unaware of the 7,000. Even the most perceptive in our missiological study may not be informed about the deeds and thoughts of all these hidden people whose "knees have not bowed to Baal" (1 K 19:18). Thus missiology is always fragmentary. The transformation of humanity takes place with or without the organizations, methodologies, strategies, institutions, systems and paradigms that our finest minds create and with which we try to give a sense of order to the sovereignly free truth about "our being made like God" (theopoieisthai, Athanasius, De Incarnatione # 54).

(2) Theological Meaning of the "New"

The community of Christian faith proclaims, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that there is a God who is all merciful. "A God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex 34:6). The God merciful and gracious is the God of justice. This points to the awesome pathos of the Biblical God. "My emotions are agitated all together" (Ho 11:8. Anchor Bible Translation). Our emotions should be agitated all together.

The depth of the commandment, "you shall have no other gods before me" (Ex 20:3) is revealed in the words of the Lord's Supper, "this is my body that is for you" (1 Co 11:24). The divine self-affirmation is paradoxically deepened by the divine self-denial. "All ears were alarmed at the ineffable condescension of God" (Divine Prayers and Services of the Catholic Orthodox Church of Christ [August 6