Heart, hands & voices

#### This book is dedicated to

Hannelie, my wife, because I'm blessed by her holistic love and firm loyalty towards God, expressed in her lifestyle.

# Heart, hands & voices

# God's mission: Integrating Word and deeds

Translated from the Afrikaans by the Rev. Claude Vosloo

# Dr. André Jansen



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# Preface

"Let us rejoice, be glad, and give him glory, because the marriage of the lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready. She has been given the privilege of wearing fine linen, dazzling and pure." The fine linen represents the righteous deeds of the saints (Rev. 19:7-8).

As a human being existing in the here and now, your present behavior and character are determined mainly by what you expect your ultimate future is going to be. The Bible teaches us that as a Christian believer, your expectation of the future entails a life shaped by a certainty outside of yourself. That is, your ultimate future is the eternal love and glory of God, a new heaven and a new earth.

The most important and powerful life-changing dynamic of the Christian faith is to experience within oneself already the dawn of God's new all-encompassing and everlasting future. When your eyes already catch a glimpse of the breath-taking glory of God's final redemption and coming new creation, it transforms your life.

Our vision of God's great future does not only stir up our vision and passion to be bearers of the good news of the Gospel in missional outreach, but also determines the way we go about it.

The New Testament often makes it clear that the symbolism of the wedding gown for the return of Christ depicts engagement through acts of compassion, mercy and justice on behalf of the poor and suffering. Paul 3:12-15 reminds us: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience ... over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (Col 3:12-14).

When you form part of the Bride of Christ, the Holy Spirit fills you with love and compassion to be a channel of God's love and compassion in this broken world. The lifestyle of the early Christians provides an amazing picture of how Spirit-filled Christians live in the world.

Modern-day people often wonder why these early Christians showed such wholehearted compassion to the sick? Why were they so much more forgiving to their persecutors than believers currently? Why were their actions so much more ethnically inclusive than the world has seen? There actually is only one answer: Their attitudes and lifestyle were dependent on what they believed their ultimate future is going to be.

Christians had a living expectation of the return of their Bride groom Jesus Christ.

Their words and their deeds formed an integrated unity because they were constrained and compelled by the love of Christ.

This book developed out of the PhD doctoral research of Dr. André Jansen. As I was supervising his research, I realized that he is calling attention to very vital principles that are of global relevance for missions, community development organizations and practitioners. I, therefore, encouraged him to rework the material to make it accessible to a wider circle of interested readers who may use it for the enrichment of their ministries in God's worldwide kingdom. I am so glad that he took up the challenge and, with the assistance of Claude Vosloo, who is a very experienced text mentor, tertiary consultant, and knowledge practitioner, rewrite and reformat the whole PhD research project into this manual format.

I had the privilege to work with Dr. André Jansen for a few years in his doctoral research that has led to this publication. My sincere prayer is that the Lord may use this fruit of André's writing to help the Bride of Christ to be the hands and the feet and the compassionate heart of Jesus Christ. In this way, may it obey the instruction of Jesus: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:16).

Flip Buys International Director World Reformed Fellowship

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André Jansen has done a very thorough job of surveying key concepts from the biblical foundations for understanding and practising integral mission. His study opens a surprising range of biblical words and connects them to several strands of contemporary missiological discourse – including scholars who support or critique the theological case for holistic mission. Jansen himself builds a strong case supporting the view of mission that has shaped the DNA of the Lausanne Movement and, more recently, the Micah Network and like-minded churches and agencies.

#### The Rev. Dr. Chris Wright - International Ministries Director, Langham Partnership

André's approach has itself been a demonstration of integration – he is a pastor, minister, missionary, theologian, practitioner and a researcher. He brings together theology and praxis and helps us dig deeper into what this looks like in our everyday lives and mission. Heart, hands & voices gives us a clear integral approach, rooted in God's Word, informing what we do and say, with the Holy Spirit being the source of life, transformation, and the sign of the Kingdom of God.

#### Sheryl Haw – International Director, Micah Global (www.micahglobal.org)



In this introduction you will cover the following points:

- Globally there is a growing consciousness of the need for a holistic approach in delivering the Gospel.
- The main question focuses on the 'how' and on what basis; the point of departure: existing needs and problems, or biblical principles (or both)?
- In spite of significant input from churches and missionary organizations, the needs remain immense, which raises the question of effective missionary ministry and the lessons we can learn from the process.
- Are there clear biblically-based visions and plans showing the way forward and outlining one's purpose?
- Is it possible for missionaries<sup>1</sup> and missionary organizations to evaluate their work critically and assess its effectiveness, in order to learn from it?
- It is crucial to understand the nature of mission ministry comprehensively and apply it contextually.

## 1. Background to the problem

A new awareness is dawning worldwide. Within the international Evangelical and Reformed environment such as the Lausanne Movement, the Reformed Fellowship and the Micah Declaration, there is an increasing realization that God reveals Himself as the One who loves his people and cares for all of them.<sup>2</sup> God has compassion for the poor and destitute who, since the fall, suffers in the world due to illness, poverty, brokenness and alienation from God and their fellow humans. To remedy this condition, God commissioned Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel to the poor, proclaim the freedom of prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind; set the oppressed free and announce the year of the Lord's favor (cf. Lk 4:18-19).

Several missionary scientists accentuate the fact that the church functions as part and instrument of God's mission in the world, imitating Christ and obeying the Great Commission (Mt. 28:16-20; Jh. 20:21; Ac. 1:8). In this sense, the church must reach out with both hands: the one hand calling people to repent and reconcile with God through Christ; and the second hand that shows people the goodness of God's kingdom in Jesus' Name through concrete deeds of gratitude and tenderness.<sup>3</sup> Missionary scientists and missionary movements (Lausanne Movement, Micah Declaration and the World Reformed Fellowship) highlight the example set by Christ. By imitating Him in this notion, believers prove that they are being recreated according to the image of Christ and have received the first fruits of God's great future, the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of God's new creation.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, numerous publications show that mission through words and deeds in too many instances is contrasted and not integrated properly.<sup>5</sup> This raises the question: To what extent are heart, hands and voices integrated in missionary work, as emphasized by even more missionary researchers as well as international ecumenical movements?

This book focuses on a specific missionary context. You will find a deep-seated and factual investigation of the missionary work done by the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Christian Reformed Churches in The Netherlands. Dutch abbreveation: CGKN) in the region, KwaNdebele in the Mpumalanga province, South Africa. The aim is to evaluate whether, and to what extent, integral reformed mission would be able to contribute in a fundamental as well as practical sense to an improved quality of life in accordance with the motive of *missio Dei* (the fact that it is essentially God's mission) and thereby play a valuable role in the reconstruction and development of other countries and contexts such as South Africa.

This raises the question whether a balanced and integrated missionary ministry would assist the inhabitants of a targeted area (e.g. KwaNdebele) to glorify God through Jesus Christ with their lives and deeds as redeemed stewards of his grace and gifts. They would be able to do this because their lives are restored and rebuilt and they follow the creational and cultural commission. At the same time, the question is also whether this provides the opportunity for churches to experience the joy and deepening of their faith by carrying each other's burdens in a concrete way (Ps. 112:5-9; Is. 58:7-12; Mt. 10:8; 25:34-40).<sup>6</sup>

### 2. Gleaning from other sources

From a preliminary look at other sources (literature), it becomes clear that, since the first meeting of the Lausanne Evangelical Movement (Lausanne in 1974), exponents from Evangelical and Reformed circles globally have reflected far and wide and are still considering a more holistic approach to mission.

**Western watershed:** Edward R. Dayton (1987:53) even declares that Lausanne's 1974 meeting can be viewed as a watershed year for Western Evangelical missionary paradigms – designs on how to do missionary work.

Since the Lausanne meeting (1974), Evangelical and Reformed circles saw a plethora of publications focusing on the biblical motivation and missionary necessity for a more holistic approach to mission.<sup>7</sup> To top it all, influential missionary scientists and missionary organizations have pointed out the importance of integrated missionary endeavors. Keller<sup>8</sup> explains how the relationship between justice and righteousness forms a unit, which originates from God's intention – to reconcile humanity *in toto* with Himself, by reconciling them through Christ. Glenn (2007:2) refers to this notion as 'cosmic redemption', which implies the full-scale and cosmic reach of the extended redemption through Christ.

From the literature, the need is evident for an investigation into integrated, cross-cultural communication in light of the diverse worldviews of both the sending and receiving communities in the missionary endeavor. Misunderstandings in communication flowing from a lack of cultural sensitivity can impede the healthy development of the indigenous church as well as hamper improvements in the living conditions within the receiving community which in this way establishes a culture of dependency.<sup>9</sup>

The sources that were consulted confirm the need to look into an integrated proclaiming of the Gospel by means of heart, hands and voices. Several authors point out that an imbalance in such integration may lead to a secular 'social gospel' (on the one hand), a pietistic spiritualization of the Gospel, which can result in a divide between nature and grace.<sup>10</sup> In such a case, the listeners are not equipped for their cultural commission. Therefore, the integration does not lead to enhanced living conditions, quality of life, or to responsible

stewardship of God's gifts and grace.<sup>11</sup> On the contrary, this will only cause the culture of dependency to increase.<sup>12</sup>

**The attitude test:** C.H. Roux (2004:5) undertook intrusive factual (or empirically tested) research on the attitude of churches in South Africa toward a more holistic approach to their ministry. Roux found that 92% of the respondents indicated that, according to their opinion, the church's role is contributing to the upliftment and welfare of the community, and not merely to recruit new converts (proselyting). However, there is wide-spread uncertainty on how to effect this upliftment in a balanced way.

The goal seems clear: integrated mission with a holistic focus, involving the multi-dimensional aspects of heart, hands and voices. However, the way to reach this goal still needs to be set out.

## 3. Isolating and addressing the problem

Before moving further, one first has to pinpoint the problem and then formulate the aim and objectives to address this problem.

#### 3.1 Studying the problem

The scope of the study covers the following institutions: the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (CGKN, i.e. the Christian Reformed Churches in The Netherlands), the Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland (Free Reformed Churches in The Netherlands) and the Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (GKSA, i.e. the Reformed Churches in South Africa). These ecclesiastic institutions reside under the reformed church associations that undertook and still do missionary work in the context under study, KwaNdebele in Mpumalanga, South Africa.

From these church associations, various missionaries (mission agents) served this region. The CGKN, of which the missionary work is the focus of this study, did at first send out old-style 'missionaries' to KwaNdebele. However, since 2007 they opted for a project-driven approach. As a result, they supported projects for a certain period and missionary activity was mainly focused on education (CGKN, 2007:389-390, 410-411). It appears that a revised vision for missionary work and a shortage of available funds led to this different approach to mission.

During these missionary activities, the Gospel was preached to inhabitants of this region (KwaNdebele). This was done by the missionaries, but also by indigenous church leaders who were trained for such missionary work. From these endeavors sprouted short- and long-term aid projects that were launched internally as well as from overseas to help alleviate the distress of the inhabitants. In the process, new churches were founded and buildings erected. Theological training was introduced to school African leaders in theology. These entail facilities such as the Mukhanyo Theological College and Mukhanyo Bible School. As a spillover of this missionary work, several social service projects were introduced into the region. This also includes the Mukhanyo Community Development Centre that renders the following services:

- five daycare centers where orphans are provided with meals, medical care, homework guidance, Bible studies and sporting facilities;
- + medical care for HIV/Aids patients;



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