

IAMS 2016: Conversions and Transformations: Missiological Approaches to Religious Change

Proposal for a paper titled:

Conversions and transformations: a missiology focussed on deep incarnation

by

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Much as the concept of *missio Dei* shaped missiological thinking and the theology of mission, the growing interest in God's incarnation and embodiment may play a very formative role in Missiology, and is already evident in *Together towards life: mission and evangelism in changing landscapes*(2013) (TTL).

In this paper, "deep incarnation" will be introduced as a important concept in the theology of mission, in terms of the recent work by a number of leading theologians under the title *Incarnation - on the scope and depth of Christology* (2015, Niels Gregersen (ed.)). The paper will summarise "deep incarnation." Briefly, this signifies the coming-into-flesh of God's eternal Logos. In the process of incarnation, God the creator and the world of the flesh are conjoined in such depth that God links up with all vulnerable creatures. In Christ, God enters into the biological tissue of creation in order to share the fate of biological existence. In the incarnate One, God becomes Jesus, and in him God becomes human, sharing the life conditions of the least in creation. The most high and the very lowest are united in the process of incarnation.¹

The paper will show the importance of the concept of "deep incarnation" for theology of mission, and how it may inform missiology, with brief reference to TTL and how the major themes of "deep incarnation" (such as an orientation towards life in the broadest sense, the importance of suffering and marginality, the nature of unity and community) are already present in TTL.

The paper will conclude with a number of leading question on how "deep incarnation" may guide and transform current ideas on conversion and transformation, such as: particularity and universality, how Christ is present for

¹ Niels Gregersen (2015). *Incarnation: On the Scope and Depth of Christology*, Fortress Press. Kindle Edition, loc. 327-330

other creatures, the universal scope of the divine Logos assuming flesh, and the implications of the “extended body of Christ.”