THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Christian Mission in the Early Middle Ages:

An Examination of Mission, Baptism, Conversion, and Saints' Lives from the Perspective of Missiology

Beth Alison Shinn

PhD

The University of Edinburgh

March 2010

For my parents, especially my Dad
who passed away before seeing the completed work,
a constant source of encouragement and support.

Abstract

The underlying question explored by this thesis is whether missiology, applied as a lens to examine Christian mission in the early middle ages, can reveal new insights from historical sources. This approach has raised new questions and has revealed new tensions such as that between the group and individual, that between top-down and bottom-up mission, and that between syncretism and contextualization. One of the key insights is the need to hold the group and individual in tension, that is not to choose to interpret sources as either group or individual oriented but as moving between the two. Taking one's identity from a group did not negate the individual, it only meant that the individual submitted to group decisions. This tension, it is argued, needs to be highlighted and held in balance in order to understand how groups and individuals in the early middle ages reacted to, and interacted with, the Christian gospel message. To make this case mission, baptism and conversion, as foundational to Christian mission, are examined.

An examination of a selection of the writings of the Church Fathers, Saints' *Vitae*, Church councils and synods, and other correspondence of the early middle ages in light of syncretism and contextualization has raised questions about definition and content. With Rome and Constantinople setting the standard of content and practice, often anything that looked different was labelled as heretical, barbaric or pagan and this has usually been defined as syncretism. However, if the central core content of the Christian gospel message was not compromised, what was happening could be contextualization (that is, the working out of the Christian gospel message in an appropriate cultural manner). Although these are contemporary labels, early medieval sources do reveal an underlying concern about the loss of correct belief and practices.

The common interpretation of missional work as a top-down movement often fails to take into account the evidence for the bottom-up, or organic, spread of the Christian gospel message. This is not to say that the official accounts should be set aside, but rather these need to be balanced with the evidence for bottom-up growth.

To put some of these insights into an appropriate context, the *Vitae* of Boniface, Anskar, and Cyril and Methodius are examined as case studies. Each of these men represents different cultural starting points, different geographical areas, and different emphases in mission work. However, in each of these *Vitae* the tensions between the group and the individual, a top-down or bottom-up approach to mission, and syncretism versus contextualization can be examined, especially in light of the issues of baptism and conversion.

The conclusion is that missiology has much to offer early medieval studies. It is a field of study that is broadly interdisciplinary in its approach which gives it an elasticity which allows it to illuminate this period of history valuably. On the basis of this thesis, the discipline of missiology deserves to be applied much more frequently to the study of early medieval history.

Contents

Preface

How does one arrive at the point of studying Christian mission in the early middle ages? For me it was a lifetime of overseas experiences which prompted me to look further into history from a missiological perspective. Having lived in Mexico, Honduras, Japan, and Scotland I have experienced a variety of forms of ecclesial structure, forms of worship ranging from orthodox to charismatic, and various understandings of baptism and conversion. From these experiences several questions continued to form in my mind, such as, does external attendance at a church service equal internal faith? Do rites and rituals done differently change in essential meaning? How do Christianity and culture interact? What cultural differences influence the spread of the gospel message in different societal structures? What place does baptism have in church life? And what are the core unchangeable teachings of Christianity that are supra-cultural?

The key impetus for this study of Christian mission in the early middle ages came from my time in Japan. I first went to Japan as a university student, returned a few years later to teach English, and then returned, after gaining a master's degree, a third time to work with an official mission organization. Having lived in Japan as a non-church goer, usually termed a nominal Christian, I experienced Japan in a very different way than those who arrive in Japan as committed Christians with the purpose of spreading the Christian gospel message. This gave rise to the question of when does a person cross the line that moves one from external conformity to what is thought to be a Christian way of life to an internal change that brings a desire to study scripture; that is, to desire internal change even though externally one may no longer conform to the understood standard Christian practices. In other words, can this internal change of worldview be observed and analysed, and if so, what tools, if any, are available to the historian, and the missionary, to track this change.

Although I was part of an organised mission agency with the goal of evangelism, I was seconded to a small Bible school to teach and train workers for the Japanese church. This meant that I was part of consolidating the church in Japan. My

work within the Japanese congregation would also be considered consolidation rather than evangelism, since teaching and preaching were my main tasks. I also taught new believers baptismal preparation courses, and led Bible studies with church members. This raised the question that if mission is to be defined as evangelism, how did my work and the work of others not involved in primary evangelism fit into the overall picture of mission.

Studying for a master of arts in theological studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary gave me some missiological tools to apply to the questions raised by my personal experiences of church life in different cultures. It is these missiological tools applied to the study of Christian mission in the early middle ages that is the basis of this thesis. Having taken classes in anthropology, sociology and psychology over the years, it is still history which, to me, has the flexibility to engage with these different fields and to examine the evidence over the course of years, decades and centuries. For this reason, history is the vehicle chosen for this thesis. Not all the questions raised can be answered in the space of a thesis, so the main themes of group and individual, and syncretism versus contextualization in conjunction with baptism and conversion are explored.

Acknowledgements

A project of this sort is never done without the help, support and encouragement of others. Where to start the acknowledgements is the difficult part. Although tempted to name each and every individual that has influenced my life, I am sure I would overlook someone, and the acknowledgements would fill a book in themselves, so I will only name a few.

I must start with my family, as it has been a bedrock for me throughout my life. My parents have been a constant source of inspiration and intellectual challenge in my life. I can remember, from the time I was little, discussions around the dinner table that stretched the bounds of my understanding. Without my parents' constant input and support I would never had made the journeys overseas, or taken on such a project as a PhD. My Dad, while he was alive, was a real resource during my studies and acted as a shadow adviser. My Mom has always been there, creating a home and a space of refuge no matter how far and wide I have travelled. After my Dad's death in 2006, my siblings—Jen, Ridge, Craig, and Jerry—as well as their spouses, my nieces and nephews, and aunts and uncles have carried on the task of encouragement for the studies. Specifically I must thank Craig for a vital discussion in August 2008 that helped bring what was in my brain on to paper. His assistance during these past months has been invaluable.

I must express my thankfulness for congregations scattered across the globe who have been praying, supporting, and encouraging me on in this work: Hokuei Christ Church in Sapporo, Japan; Glad Tidings Church in Pascoag, Rhode Island; and Holyrood Abbey Church in Edinburgh, Scotland. The people of these congregations have fed me, at times clothed me, given me advice, and have constantly asked "Is it done yet?" Thank you all.

My colleagues in OMF International have been pillars of strength as I struggled with the decision to apply for a PhD and then have supported me throughout the process over the years. Thank you for your prayers and support.

There are particular individuals that have been helpful in various ways: Emma, thank you for all the lunches and conversations that have helped shape my

thoughts; Sylvia, thank you for your persistence in working through medieval Latin sources and teaching me how to handle Latin; Daniel and especially Ernie, thank you for proof reading the final draft and catching many of the errors; Bea, Sara, Christine, Allen, and Anne thank you for help with languages; thank you David and Lorna, Paul and Anne for your generosity in providing roofs over my head; and Mr. Cooke, thank you for taking on the challenge of tutoring me in early medieval history and laying some of the groundwork for this thesis. There are other individuals I would gladly name, but I know they wish to remain anonymous, but thank you for all the meals, prayers, support, and conversations over the years.

To the staff at the National Library of Scotland, New College Library, Edinburgh University Library, Free Church of Scotland College Library, Glasgow University Library, and International Christian College Library, thank you for allowing me access and helping track sources.

I am grateful for the many seminars and conferences available to students in various institutions; each and every one that I have attended has challenged me in my thinking and understanding. Thank you to all who have given papers and participated in conversations over meals.

Thank you to my advisers: James Fraser, thank you for your insights; Tom S. Brown, thank you for seeing the potential in a mature student with a slightly unusual history, but with an enthusiasm to learn. Thank you for your persistence, and for your invaluable insights and help during the process. Without you this project would never have been started let alone completed.

Above all, I am grateful to the God who has given the world the Christian gospel message, and who has given it to me individually. It is with deep gratitude and thanksgiving that this thesis is completed with the strong desire that God would use it to pass on His message to the world.

Abbreviations

CC	Corpus Christianorum
CC, SL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CC, SG	Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca
CF-ANF	Church Fathers—Anti-Nicene Fathers
CF-NPNF 1	Church Fathers—Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 1
CF-NPNF 2	Church Fathers—Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2
CSCO Scr. Syr	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MGH, Cap.	Capitularia Regum Francorum
MGH, SRG	Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum
MGH, SRM	Scriptorum Rerum Merovingicarum
PL	Patrologiae Latinae
PG	Patrologiae Graecea
SC	Sources Chrétiennes

List of Maps

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores how missiology and history interact in evaluating Christian mission in the eighth and ninth centuries in the frontier territory between the East Franks and the Byzantines. It argues that the field of missiology can deepen the understanding of Christian missions for the historian. Although the sources are not as abundant for the early middle ages as for later periods of history, there are enough available to the researcher to continue to ask relevant questions.

History is like a tapestry. Each historian examines just one thread of history, which gives insights in to how it was made, of what it was made, and how it functions. But in order to understand its meaning the thread needs to be placed in a larger context, that is the whole, or at least a larger part of, the tapestry. The difficulty is knowing how large a section of the tapestry is needed in order to understand the thread, or threads. This is true in the area of Christian mission and history. Christian mission is not just made up of the component of conveying a message. It is also concerned with what the message is, how it is conveyed, how it is received, what are the essentials that must be conveyed, and what are those elements that can be adapted in a new context, as well as other aspects such as time, place, and the historical, sociological, anthropological, archaeological, and political context. Thus, to examine missions as a topic of history is a lifetime study in and of itself.

Historians and missiologists write history differently. Both use the same sources, and, at times, both arrive at the same interpretations, but missiology adds to history the understanding of internal faith, which enables the scholar to address the issue of how faith interacts with society and culture in the context of history. It also allows for a bottom-up, organic, spread of the Christian gospel message which resulted in a faith conversion that was real and relevant to individual lives. Missiology, then, asks different questions of the historical sources, such as how the Christian faith is transmitted to the next generation within a cultural context.

This thesis began with thoughts about how mission was portrayed and missional work was recorded in the sources of the early middle ages, with an emphasis on the eighth and ninth centuries. The ongoing intent has been to look for

connections between the early church and the eighth and ninth centuries that show commonalities and differences in how mission was understood and dealt with in the sources. Such questions as how the choice of what is recorded reflects on the author and the actual events, have been asked and addressed by authors such as Delehaye,[1] Geary,[2] Noble,[3] and Head[4]. Determining the authors' intent is vital for evaluating the source content. However the work of the historian does not stop there, the next step is to draw some threads through these sources. One thread that is taken up and examined in this thesis is that of mission: how its aims and goals were portrayed as being unchanging or changing over these centuries. The other main threads are conversion and baptism as they relate to missional work. One remaining question arising from examining missional work in the early medieval period, which it is not possible to explore within the confines of this thesis, is that of whether there are any commonalities from history with missional work in the twenty-first century.[5]

1. Christian Mission in the Early Middle Ages

The patterns set in the task of Christian mission in the first millennium influence how mission was perceived and practised in the second millennium to the present day. The impression received from reading early medieval history is that until Gregory the Great sent Augustine and his companions to the Anglo-Saxons c.596, no mission took place, that is, Gregory was the first to initiate mission by sending Augustine to Canterbury.[6] But on closer inspection there is the evidence that

---

[1] Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. Donald Attwater (Dublin, 1998). Also see further discussion on page 16ff.

[2] Patrick J Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London, 1994).

[3] Thomas F.X. Noble and Thomas Head, eds., *Soldiers of Christ, Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1995), xiii-xliv.

[4] Thomas Head, 'Introduction', in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology* (London and New York, 2000); Thomas Head, 'Great Lessons from Bad History', *Christianity History* 20, no. 4 (2001). See also Head's articles 'The Development of Hagiography and the Cult of Saints in Western Christendom to the Year 1000', 'The Cult of the Saints and Their Relics', and 'Hagiography', on the Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies (ORB at http://the-orb.net). See also, Paul Fouracre, 'Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography', *Past and Present*, no. 127 (1990); Paul Fouracre and Richard Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography 640-720* (Manchester, 1996).

[5] This is certainly an interesting and important question to ask and answer but there is not room within this thesis to do this work. Therefore, it is an area for future research.

[6] For example: Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The Thousand Years of Uncertainty AD 500- AD 1500* (New York, 1938, 1966), 61; Ian Wood, 'The Mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English',

Gregory was reacting in response to a request.[7] Thus instead of initiating the mission work he was responding to a bottom-up request. What he did do was establish a pattern of mission for the papacy.[8] This pattern was a top-down approach with leaders of various peoples seen as the key to the spread of the Christian faith and the establishment of episcopal sees as essential for the stabilization of the Christian influence in an area. Therefore, the above statement would be better if qualified with words such as 'there was no *official* papal mission until Gregory the Great'.[9]

The Christian missional work in the early medieval times tends to be portrayed from the perspective of the church elite, as the authors of the sources are from this group. This, however, leads to the tendency to see church work as the formation of an ecclesial structure and institution, and to evaluate and to set the goals of missional work in these terms as well.[10] However, Wright, in his metanarrative approach, argues for the need to see missional work as having been existent from Genesis right though to Revelation.[11] Thus missional work did not suddenly start with Gregory the Great, or Paul, or even Jesus: it has always been central to the biblical narrative. In this understanding of missional history, the eighth and ninth

---

Speculum 69, no. 1 (1994): 8. Wood uses the phrase "for the most part the church of the fifth and sixth centuries lacked any missionary ideology"; Richard Gameson, 'Augustine of Canterbury: Context and Achievement', in *St Augustine and the Conversion of England*, ed. Richard Gameson (Stroud, 1999), 7 Gameson sets the mission in a Frankish context; Richard Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity* (Berkeley, 1997), 114; R.A. Markus, 'Gregory the Great's Europe', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th Series* 31 (1981): 27; Markus, 'Gregory the Great's Europe': 28; Lutz von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung, Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken im 7 und 8 Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1995), 23, 366. Padberg uses Pope Gregory I as his starting point and ends at the death of Boniface as a frame for his argument.

[7] Gregory I, 'Letter of Pope Gregory I to Theodoric and Theodebert, kings of the Franks (July 596)', in *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, ed. P Jaffé (Lipsiae, 1885).Translation in Dorothy Whitelock, ed., *English Historical Documents* (London, 1955), no. 162.

[8] R.A. Markus, 'Gregory the Great and a Papal Missionary Strategy', in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith*, ed. G.J. Cuming (Cambridge, 1970), 37; R.A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge, 1997), 187.

[9] Robert McCulloch, 'Gregorian Adaptation in the Augustinian Mission to England', *Missiology* VI, no. 3 (1978): 324; Markus, 'Papal Missionary Strategy', 37.

[10] From this understanding the term 'Christianisation' has been coined. See further discussion of this term in section 1.6 of chapter 1.

[11] Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's grand narrative* (Nottingham, 2006), 57-58, 62, 74, 105-06, 115, 123. Wright's approach is different to the metanarrative approach to church and missional history found in the late eighteenth into the nineteenth century. His approach is not to show the superiority of the west over other cultures, but to see the basic underlying theme of the Bible as God's mission to make his name known throughout the nations. See also: Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission, Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Carlisle, 2003), 6-7, 87ff; Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission*, ed. Derek Tidball (Nottingham, 2003), 11, 19-23.

centuries needs to be put within the broader context of the mission of God within history. If one takes this understanding to the study of history, it becomes an argument against starting missional work with Pope Gregory I's official mission to the Anglo-Saxons, or Constantine's conversion in the early fourth century, and in favour of starting where the metanarrative starts, that is in the Bible. From this perspective, then, the question is not so much when the missional narrative began, but what kind of missional work was being promoted and portrayed during the early medieval period.

One major question arising from the sources is why the ecclesial authors included instances of bottom-up, or organic mission, at all? If one of the main reasons for writing these accounts of missional work was to bolster the top-down ecclesial approach to missional work, then why even mention that groups or individual Christians already existed in certain areas. Would it not have been better to pass over this reality and report only that which promotes the author's agenda especially when there seems to be specific motives for writing the chronicles, annuals, and *Vitae*? Whether one agrees with this thought or not, the sources do mention already-existing groups of Christians, and at times individuals, in certain territories before the primary characters of these sources entered and started their work. There are also reports of church buildings already raised and in use but these are then dedicated or consecrated in order to be claimed by a certain authorized centre.[12] Rather than passing over these accounts, or dismissing them as unimportant since they are small in number, this thesis argues that these accounts should be given greater importance precisely for the reason that the authors were unable to totally write them out of their accounts. Therefore, the issue is how to put these accounts into some kind of balance within the larger context of the flow of history, and more precisely mission history.[13]

---

[12] This is one way of reading the document from Salzburg, *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum: Das Weißbuch der Salzburger Kirche über die erfolgreiche Mission in Karantanien und Pannonien*, ed. H. Wolfram (Vienna, 1979). For the full argument see, Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400-1050* (Essex, 2001), 168-86.

[13] See for example: David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York, 1991); Lamin O. Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY, 1989); Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (New York, 1996); Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY, 2002).

The eighth and ninth centuries saw the structured and intentional movement of missionaries into the people groups settling within the frontier territory of the East Franks and the Byzantines. One phrase applied to mission in the early middle ages is that 'without the aid of the political leaders Christianity would not have spread',[14] which gives the impression that only top-down, official mission work was valid in the early middle ages. But in saints' *Vitae*, *Annals*, correspondence and other sources it is clear that there was a continuous bottom-up or organic spread of the Christian message, though often it was seen as needing to be reined in under the control of an accepted ecclesial structure. This bottom-up, spontaneous growth was, for many people, the first contact made with the Christian gospel message. For example, in the fifth century there was a request to Rome for a bishop to be sent to take charge of the growing Christian community in Ireland.[15] In response to this request, Palladius was commissioned and sent. What is clear from this is that there was a group of Christians strong enough to request a bishop, and they had sufficient knowledge of the established church structure to approach the bishop of Rome, although no details were given as to how this group came into existence. Even though in later history the internal structure of the Irish church developed differently from that at Rome, once a bishop under Rome's authority was sent to the Irish group it would be seen to be under the Apostolic See.[16]

What the Irish request for a bishop does point to was a loosely structured organisation of several congregating groups desiring a firmer ecclesial structure. This, however, does not mean that bottom-up growth stopped, only that there was a desire for an ecclesial structure to organise what the bottom-up growth had brought into being. Therefore, a more accurate understanding of the above statement about Christian mission in the early middle ages would be that the 'institutionalised ecclesial structure of the Christian Church required the cooperation of political leaders in order to become established in an area'. This brings some clarity to the difference between the top-down and the bottom-up growth of the Christian church.

---

[14] For example: McCulloch, 'Gregorian Adaptation in the Augustinian Mission to England': 326; James Thayer Addison, *The Medieval Missionary: A Study of the Conversion of North Europe AD 500-1300* (London, 1936), 21.

[15] T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'Palladius, Prosper, and Leo the Great: mission and primatial authority', in *Saint Patrick, AD 493-1993*, ed. David Dumville (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1993), 1,5,7.

[16] Markus, 'Gregory the Great's Europe': 26.

The tension between the established core group's understanding of acceptable practices and mission work, whether highly structured or not, and the spontaneous growth from bottom-up carriers of the Christian gospel message, can be seen within the first generation after Jesus' death in the situation between the core group of apostles in Jerusalem and the new Greek-speaking church in Syrian Antioch.[17] The established group of leaders in Jerusalem was concerned with this growth into a new group outside of Judaism, so they dispatched Barnabas to take control of the situation. Here the established, accepted, core of apostles and disciples were reacting to a bottom-up spread of the message and moved quickly to take control of it to make sure the new community of believers received correct teaching, according to their standards. This is a pattern that can be observed in the early middle ages as well.

In many ways it is impossible for the historian to be able to study the internal change brought on by faith unless there is available an autobiographical account such as that left by Patrick[18] and Augustine[19]. Thus there is the current trend to evaluate changes in the socio-political structure as evidence of faith changes. This, however, leaves a gap in understanding the importance of the bottom-up spread of the Christian gospel message in early medieval history, and one of the contentions of this thesis is that the bottom-up spread of the gospel message should be given greater significance in the understanding of the spread of Christianity in any age,[20] but especially the first millennium, as this era lays the foundations of structure and understanding of mission for the second millennium and beyond.

---

[17] Acts 11:20-26.

[18] Patrick, *Confessio and Epistola ad milites Corotici, The Book of Letters of Saint Patrick the Bishop*, ed. D. R. Howlett (Blackrock, 1994). English translation in: Saint Patrick, *St. Patrick: his writings and Muirchu's Life*, trans. A. B. E. Hood (London, 1978); Saint Patrick, *The Confession of Saint Patrick and Letter to Coroticus*, trans. John Skinner (N.Y., London, 1998).

[19] Augustine, *Confessionum Libri XIII, CC SL 27* (Turnhout, 1981). There are numerous English translations, for example: Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford, 1991); Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Albert C Outler (London, 2002); Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. F. J. Sheed (Indianapolis, 2006).

[20] Peskett and Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission*, 64, 141, 147-49. In footnote 22 on page 64 Peskett quotes from Ross, "This form of popular grass-roots indigenization, often unplanned by the missionaries, is often ignored by historians...who tend to concentrate on the written records of the educated elites who accepted or rejected Christianity." (A. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed* (Edinburgh, 1994), p. 27).

McKitterick[21] and others have studied closely the transmission of sources and the agenda of early medieval writers in order to bring a better understanding of the sources that are available to the historian. It is clear that, when looking at mission and ecclesial church growth, almost all of the early medieval sources were written from the top-down perspective. However, this again, leaves the question of how to understand, and put into perspective, the bottom-up spread of the Christian gospel message. Thus if the standard historical approach is constrained by what can be found in the sources, are there other approaches that will give new insights? This is where fields such as sociology, ethnography,[22] linguistics,[23] and archaeology are contributing to early medieval studies. This thesis argues for adding missiology to this growing list of new fields applied to early medieval sources. Missiology, as an interdisciplinary field in its own right, can help the historian in looking at some of the larger issues of how to define mission, such as, what place does baptism have in church life in different eras, and what is, and how does one define, conversion? It also brings out the tensions between top-down and bottom-up mission work, how the group and the individual interact, and how to evaluate whether church growth occurs largely through syncretism or contextualization (that is, whether there is a line beyond which certain practices and thinking are declared heretical).

2. Sources Used

Among the variety of sources available to the early medieval historian, the *Vitae Bonifatii*, *Anskarii*, and the *Lives of Constantine* (Cyril) and *Methodius* are chosen as case studies. One of the reasons for choosing these *Vitae* is that each of these men covered a different area of the frontier between the East Franks and the Byzantines. Thus, although there are many more *Vitae* and other sources available for the eighth and ninth centuries, the areas of responsibility of these men overlap and cover much of what was happening in the frontier areas during these centuries.

---

[21] See for example: R. McKitterick, 'Political Ideology in Carolingian Historiography', in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Yitzhak Hen and Matthews Innes (Cambridge, 2000); R. McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004).

[22] Dennis H. Green and Frank Siegmund, eds., *The Continental Saxons from the Migration Period to the Tenth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective* (Suffolk, 2003).

[23] Dennis H. Green, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge, 1998).

Boniface usually has the more central place, as there is a comparative abundance of source materials available. Also he was involved in organising the Frankish ecclesial structure which continued to influence Continental church history far beyond the eighth century. Anskar is not one of the names which the average person has heard of, but his missional work is important, if only for the fact that there is controversy in how scholars evaluate his work. Scandinavian history has strong links into Anglo-Saxon and Continental history which also gives importance to Anskar's work and the position of Hamburg-Bremen within the Continental context. Cyril and Methodius brought the Byzantine influence into the frontier territories. They are usually studied for their influence in the work of vernacular Slavonic liturgical translation. However, Methodius' travels into Salzburgusian territory resulted in the production of the *Conversio Bagoariorum*, one of the few documents about missional work in the area. Thus, Methodius' work especially is significant beyond that of linguistic influence.

Each of these became archbishop of a people group instead of a territory: Boniface to the Germanic people east of the Rhine; Anskar to the people of the north; and Methodius, building on the work begun with his brother Cyril, to the Slavic people. This meant that each of them was responsible for a large portion of what was the frontier area between the East Franks and the Byzantines. Boniface, an Anglo-Saxon, worked in Frisia and Thuringia and helped to organise the ecclesial church structure in Frankish controlled territories. Anskar, from Corvey, worked among the Danes and the Swedes. Cyril and Methodius, from Constantinople, worked among the Moravians. Map 1 (on page 21) gives an overview of the various church structures and traditions in this frontier area during the eighth and ninth centuries. Where the work overlapped is where there were rival claims of authority, with the ultimate victorious tradition in an area setting the ecclesial allegiances still observable in the twenty-first century. Thus the eighth and ninth centuries saw the establishment of different ecclesial structures in different areas that have had implications from this time forward.

Other sources used are correspondence, synodal and conciliar decisions, annals, ecclesial histories, and some of the writings of the early church fathers. The Bible is also used as a primary source in the debates over baptismal rites, the Trinitarian formula, infant baptism, and the order of preaching, teaching and baptism.

Other missiological issues were debated on the basis of Biblical interpretation.[24] Therefore since the Bible was the primary source for the early medieval authors, it also becomes a primary source for the historian and adds to the understanding of the early medieval worldview. On this basis, several points in the thesis are argued using Biblical examples.

The other source-base used is the vast collection of missiological writings since the 1950s, when this became a recognised field of study. These sources look at mission from perspectives of, among others, theology, sociology, anthropology, culture, communication, church growth, syncretism, and contextualization. It is out of these writings that some aspects of missiology are taken and used to engage with history.

3. Analytical tools

In this thesis several phrases are used to try and bring lucidity in the discussion of Christian mission in the early middle ages. One of these phrases is 'the Christian gospel message' or 'the gospel message'. The meaning of this is explored in greater depth in the first chapter on mission. Suffice it to say here that this phrase is used to designate the unchangeable core components of the Christian message, that is, the life and work, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ[25]. These core values are

---

[24] See for example: D Ganz, 'Mass Production of Early Medieval Manuscripts', in *The Early Medieval Bible*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge, 1994); Margaret Gibson, 'Carolingian Glossed Psalters', in *The Early Medieval Bible*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge, 1994); R. Marsden, 'The Old Testament in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Early Medieval Bible*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge, 1994); R. McKitterick, 'Carolingian Bible production', in *The Early Medieval Bible* ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge, 1994); Robert E. McNally, *The Bible in the Early Middle Ages* (Atlanta, Ga., 1959, reprint 1986); Beryl Smalley, *The Bible in the Medieval World* (Oxford, 1985).

[25] Augustine, *Ep.* 137, *PL* 33 (Paris, 1864), 525; *Ep.* 166.7, 21 23, *PL* 33, at pp. 725, 729 and 730; Rufinus, "Apologia", *PL* 21 (Paris, 1861), Book 1.4, 543-44; Cyprian, *Ep.* 24, *PL* 4, (Paris, 1861), 434; Eddius Stephanus, 'Vita Wilfridi', in *MGH SRM VI*, ed. Wilhelm Levison (Hanover and Liepzig, 1913), §26; Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid* trans. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge, 1927); Donald A McGavran, 'The Biblical Basis From Which Adjustments are Made', in *Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity*, ed. Testunao Yamamori and Charles Russell Taber (Pasadena, CA, 1975), 27; Alan R Tippett, 'Formal Transformation and Faith Distortion', in *Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity*, ed. Testunao Yamamori and Charles Russell Taber (Pasadena, CA, 1975), 76; Peter Beyerhaus, 'Possessio and Syncretism in Biblical Perspective', in *Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity*, ed. Testunao Yamamori and Charles Russell Taber (Pasadena, CA, 1975), 99; Peskett and Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission*, 24, 25, 75, 76, 180; John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts* (Nottingham, 1990), 39, 190-91; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 9; Some biblical examples: 1 John 1:1-3; Acts 2:22-41, 4:8-12, 10:37-43; Romans 1:1-4. Some may put this as the Incarnation,

once again being debated within the theological and missiological communities in the current religious pluralism/evangelical debate. Those who are promoting religious pluralism argue that Jesus can continue to be seen as unique to the Christian worldview but he should not be seen as a person confined to an historical point in time.[26] Thus, they conclude that Christianity is on par with other religions as having the same core value of searching for a universal God.[27] Those arguing against this viewpoint continue to return to the necessity of the particular, as seen in Jesus, in order to understand the universal in God's mission.[28] That is, without an emphasis of God's particular involvement in history, centred on Jesus, there is no difference between Christianity and other religion. This, they argue, is unbiblical as it is clear within the Bible that God's purpose is unique and consistent among the plurality of religions of any age.[29] Although this debate is ongoing, the argument for a unique God with the central emphasis on Jesus as the Messiah has the greater continuity with the early Church Fathers.[30] Whether one agrees with contemporary belief,

---

Death and Resurrection however the life and works of Jesus are used as proof that he is God incarnate and thus his life and works are listed and not the incarnation as an event.

[26] For example: Wesley Ariarajah, *The Bible and People of Other Faiths* (Geneva, 1985), See Chapter 5; Paul F. Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions* (London, 1985), 89; S. J. Samartha, *One Christ--Many Religions: Toward a Revised Christology*, ed. Paul F. Knitter (Maryknoll, NY, 1991), 93, 104, 123, see also: 75-77, 86, 117.

[27] For example: Ariarajah, *The Bible and People of Other Faiths*, 53, 59, 60-61; Knitter, *No Other Name?* , xi. xii (Knitter lists some other names in this debate), 2-3, 9, 87, 93; Samartha, *One Christ*, 84, 87, 102, 138. See also, Paul F. Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions* (Maryknoll, NY, 2002). For an overview of these themes see Part I and II in Vinoth Ramachandra, *The Recovery of Mission, Beyond the Pluralist Paradigm* (Devon, 1996). Others participating in this debate, mainly from an Asian perspective, in various degrees are: Kenneth Fleming, *Asian Christian Theologians in Dialogue with Buddhism* (Oxford and New York, 2002); Moonjang Lee, 'Experience of Religious Plurality in Korea: It's Theological Implications', *International Review of Mission* 88, no. 351 (1999); Peter C. Phan, *In Our Own Tongues, Perspectives from Asia on Mission and Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY, 2003); Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (London, 2005); Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, 'Dialogue with other Religions--an Evangelical View', in *Sharing Jesus in the Two Thirds World*, ed. Vinay Samuel and Christ Sugden (Bangalore, 1983); Hwa Yung, 'Towards an evangelical approach to religions and cultures', *Transformation* 17, no. 3 (2000).

[28] For example: Bauckham, *Bible and Mission*, 46, 84; Peskett and Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission*, 18, 34, 72, 75, 179; Ramachandra, *The Recovery of Mission*, 179-223: Chapter 6 entitled 'The Scandal of Jesus'; Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 81, 94-95, 97; Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 9, 23-24; Wright, *The Mission of God*, 56-58, 73, 95.

[29] For example: Bauckham, *Bible and Mission*, 110; Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 30-31; Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 26ff; Wright, *The Mission of God*, 31, 41, 54-56, 101, 105-06, 110, 126, 128, 382.

[30] See citations in above footnote 25 for examples from Augustine, Rufinus, and Cyprian. Labels are certainly difficult to use, however, in the current theological community the 'evangelical' perspective seems to be closest to the Early Church Fathers' understanding of the central importance of the Bible for all things in life. Therefore, many of the works on missiology consulted for this thesis are from the evangelical perspective.

interpretation, or even lack of belief in these doctrines, many contemporary missiologists, as seen in the above discussion on pluralism, agree with the early church and the early medieval church that these are the essential components of Christian belief and doctrine.[31] It was these that made the new message introduced by Jesus unique, and it was these that the church fathers were concerned to convey to new listeners as accurately as possible. Over time the established Church added, among others, Creeds,[32] the doctrine of the Trinity,[33]and correct practice of sacraments, to the list of what constituted orthodoxy (that is, correct practice and doctrine). Roman, Irish, and Byzantine traditions added different pieces, but all could agree that the core essentials were the doctrines of the life and work, death and resurrection of Jesus. So the 'gospel' designates this core of beliefs acceptable to all the various traditions.

When speaking of the work of mission the phrases 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' are used. The phrase 'top-down' designates the work usually begun under the auspices of secular leaders, and which if successful usually resulted in a strong institutionalised ecclesial structure, or in other words, the officially sanctioned mission work under the auspices of human authority. This, as argued above, is the correct interpretation of Pope Gregory I's understanding of mission. As such, it became the accepted strategy for formal mission work. Bottom-up mission can also be designated as spontaneous or organic growth. This type of mission is not reliant on societal, economic, or political status but is the natural spread of the 'good news' among friends, family and acquaintances. It is important to understand that the

---

[31] In addition to the above cited materials in footnotes 25, 28 and 29: Stephen B Bevans and Roger P Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY, 2004), 8, 34-72; Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Leicester, 2005), 94-104; Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 32, 43.

[32] For example: 'Synodus Francofurtensis 794', in *MGH, Capitularia Regum Francorum*, ed. Boretius A. (Hanover, 1883). Section 33 states: *Ut fides catholica sanctae trinitatis et oratio dominica atque symbolum fidei omnibus praedictur et tradatur.*

[33] For example: 'Admonitio Generalis', in *MGH, Capitularia Regum Francorum*, ed. A. Boretius (Hanover, 1883). This piece of legislation written in 789 states in section 32: *In concilio Cartaginense: primo omnium ut fides sanctae Trinitatis et incarnationis Christi, passionis et resurrectionis et ascensionis in celos diligenter omnibus predicetur.* And again in section 82: *Primo omnium praedicandum est omnibus generaliter, ut credant Patrem et Filium et Spiritum sanctum unum esse Deum omnipotentem...et unam esse deitatem, substantiam et maiestatem in tribus personis Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti. Item praedicandum est, quomodo Dei filius incarnatus est de Spiritu sancto et ex Maria semper virgine pro salute et reparatione humani generis, passus, sepultus et tertia die resurrexit et ascendit in celis;....*

bottom-up or the organic spread of the gospel message had, and has, no defined structure to method or strategy but is reliant on opportunities either arising or created by individuals in various situations. Thus, the bottom-up spread of the gospel message is not only from the lower classes to the upper classes, but also the natural spread of the news from friend to friend, relative to relative, slave to master and so on. This is where the sources leave a gap in historians' knowledge, as most of those involved in bottom-up mission are unnamed, and mostly unacknowledged, in historical sources. But it is precisely this bottom-up mission that promotes the growth that many times result in official mission work within an area. Missiology is one field of study that, by applying observations from contemporary case studies and research, can shed some light on how bottom-up mission took place.[34]

Whether one takes the stand of the group as greater than the individual or the individual as greater than the group, will greatly influence how one reads history. The western emphasis on the individual often fails to take into account those cultures which are group oriented in decision-making. However, some of the current studies of the group oriented cultures of the early middle ages fail to allow space for the individual in action and thought, or, if it is mentioned, it is not seen as significant.[35] Thus, it is argued in this thesis, there is a need to balance the group and the individual in light of the historical sources. *Vitae* usually bring the individual to the fore, but even in these the influence of groups can be seen. For example, the individual Boniface interacting with the group decision making concerning the destruction of idols,[36] or *Vita Anskarii* acknowledging the congregated group of

---

[34] Some contemporary works which discuss this phenomenon are: Sanneh, *Translating the Message* ; Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* ; Walls, *The Cross-cultural Process.*

[35] For example: James C. Russell, The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation (New York, Oxford, 1994); Alexandra Sanmark, Power and Conversion: A Comparative Study of Christianization in Scandinavia (Uppsala, 2004); Steven Vanderputten, 'Faith and Politics in Early Medieval Society: Charlemagne and the Frustrating Failure of an Ecclesiological Project', Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique 96 (2001); Padberg, Mission und Christianisierung, 31. Here Padberg argues that the success of a change of belief is recognizable only when a change takes place in the deeper-lying social strata. When discussing baptism Padberg does bring in the individual but his overall thesis is concerned with top-down mission work as can be determined by his choosing Gregory the Great as his starting point of missional work in the early middle ages.

[36] Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii, MGH, SRG 57* (Hanover, 1905), §6. English translation: Willibald and C.H. Talbot, 'The Life of Saint Boniface', in *Soldiers of Christ*, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and Thomas Head (London, 1995).

believers but also highlighting some individuals.[37] Thus, the question of whether baptism and conversion were group or individual events is explored. The emphasis taken is not on either the group or the individual but on how the group and individual interact and influence one another.[38] Thus missiology helps to bring the 'and' into the phrase by recognising that cultures that are group oriented in decision making, are still individualistic in internalising these decisions.

The choice to use the paradigm of syncretism or contextualization[39] comes from current missiological discussion on these issues. Although syncretism has mostly negative connotations and contextualization has mostly positive, there is the need to understand the negative in order to see the positive. One of the keys to understanding syncretism is in how one defines and then uses the term.[40] In this thesis, the term is used and examined as the line beyond which either a belief or external practice became labelled as 'heretical'. Although many times the external practices were the focus of correction, there was a growing concern, especially under the Carolingians, that the people needed to understand the basics of the faith in order to perform correct practices. Thus it would be difficult to focus only on the external,

---

[37] Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii, MGH SRG* (Hanover, 1884, 1977), §11, 19, 20, 24. All English translations from Dutton: Paul Edward Dutton, 'Anskar and His Mission to Scandinavia', in *Carolingian Civilization* (Peterborough, Ontario, 2004); Rimbert and Charles H. Robinson, *Anskar, the Apostle of the North, 801-865, translated from the Vita Anskarii by Bishop Rimbert His Fellow Missionary and Successor.* (London, 1921).

[38] J. T. Nelson, 'Presidential Address: England and the Continent in the Ninth Century: 1, Ends and Beginnings', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12, no. 1-21 (2002): 7-8.

[39] Eugene S. Heideman, 'Syncretism, Contextualization, Orthodoxy, and Heresy', *Missiology* XXV, no. 1 (1997): 37. Heideman correctly argues that both these terms are western power words. That is, there are subtle judgments of an outside culture introduced by the usage of these words. However, although this is true for a current existent culture, for an historical culture that has ceased to exist as it is difficult to use any other words as the historian is certainly looking at culture from the outside in and is making certain judgments. Therefore to carry Heideman's concern into history does not seem to be helpful

[40] The term syncretism has not gone out of use within the missiological community as seen in works such as: Beyerhaus, 'Possessio and Syncretism in Biblical Perspective'; Heideman, 'Syncretism, Contextualization'; Anita M Leopold and Jensen Jeppe S, eds., *Syncretism in Religion, A Reader* (London, 2004), 2-28; Eric Maroney, *Religious syncretism* (London, 2006); David Emmanuel Singh and Bernard C. Farr, eds., *Christianity and Cultures: Shaping Christian Thinking in Context* (Eugene, OR, 2008); Gailyn Van Rheenen, ed., *Contextualization and Syncretism, Navigating Cultural Currents* (Pasadena, CA, 2006), especially the first section, 'Defining the Issues'; A Yong, 'Syncretism', in *Dictionary of Mission Theology*, ed. John Corrie (Nottingham and Downers Grove, Illinois, 2007), 373-76. An older work but an interesting one is W. A. Visser't Hooft, *No Other Name: The Choice Between Syncretism and Christian Universalism* (Philadelphia, 1963).

without considering the internal belief system, as many churchmen understood correct practice and correct belief as intertwined.[41]

Even though an individual at the local level, or even a group, may not have understood the implications of many of the theological arguments taking place in various councils and synods, the mission workers would be influenced by these decisions. So, although most historians are familiar with the term 'syncretism' as usually understood, as some kind of compromise of external practice within a new culture, this thesis extends this meaning beyond the external to also involve the mixing of the internal belief system which could evidence itself in continued traditional religious practices alongside Christianity, although it would be wrong to put all such practices under one heading.[42]

This examination of syncretism and contextualization also takes into consideration how, in the sources, the unique core of the gospel message was seen as being threatened, changed or compromised. The tracing of this can be quite difficult as the orthodoxy that grew in the early middle ages was greatly concerned with external compliance to religious practices. However, as argued in this thesis, it is clear that Charlemagne and other leaders understood that external compliance was not sufficient to bring lasting change of worldview and practice.[43] These needed to be built on a certain level of understanding that allowed the individual, as well as the group, to make intentional changes to daily lifestyles based on what was being promoted as correct biblical teaching and practices.

On the other side, that of contextualization, there seems to have been the argument that the gospel message would transform the understanding of the meaning and use of a traditional religious site. This is one interpretation of Gregory's

---

[41] For example many passages in the *Vitae* record correct preaching, instruction and doctrinal understanding. Eigil, 'Vita Sturmi', in *MGH, Scriptores 2* (Hanover, 1829), §2, 3, 23. English translation: Eigil, 'The Life of Saint Sturm', in *Soldiers of Christ*, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and Thomas Head (London, 1995); Willibald, *VB*, §5, 6, 7, 8; Alcuin, 'Vita Willibrordi, archiepiscopi Traiectensis', in *MGH SRM 7* (Hanover, 1920), §8, 10. English translation: Alcuin, 'The Life of Saint Willibrord', in *Soldiers of Christ*, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and Thomas Head (London, 1995); Rimbert, *VA*, §8.

[42] For example see: James Palmer, 'Defining paganism in the Carolingian world', *Early Medieval Europe* 15, no. 4 (2007); Ian Wood, 'Pagan Religions and Superstitions East of the Rhine from the Fifth to the Ninth Century', in *After Empire*, ed. Giorgio Ausenda (Suffolk, UK and Rochester, NY, 2002).

[43] See the discussion on p. 70.

instructions to Augustine.[44] The word coined to express this is 'contextualization', that is culturally appropriate practices in response to the gospel message.[45] Missiology would contend with the understanding that everything that looked externally different was inherently internally wrong. Even though, in the early middle ages, the established traditions of Rome and Constantinople labelled some of the practices of the new groups in the frontier areas as heretical or syncretic, over time some of these proved to be the carriers or communicators of the core gospel message to a new group. For example, Cyril and Methodius,[46] in the ninth century, introduced the Slavic vernacular liturgy into the Moravian and other Slavic territories. Although Constantinople and Rome, at least at first, had no problem with this change, some theologians contended that only Hebrew, Latin and Greek were acceptable for liturgical practice. Even though the Roman Church eventually overturned the Slav liturgy in Bavaria and other places, the Slavic translations influenced the church in Bavaria, Bohemia and later among the Rus'. Thus the work of Cyril and Methodius continues to be significant for Slav speakers even today. So is their work in the Slav vernacular to be labelled syncretic or contextualising? Another example is Gregory the Great's letter to Augustine of Canterbury,[47] at the end of the sixth century, recommending that established pagan sites of worship should not be destroyed, but changed into Christian churches. Whether one interprets this to mean that the core gospel message became compromised for the Anglo-Saxons, or whether this meant that the message became more accessible to a greater number of people, determines whether the label syncretism or contextualization should be applied.

A word needs to be said about hagiographical sources since the *Vitae,* among other sources, are used as main case studies. Padberg states that the Christian worldview of the early middle ages was formed in complementary fashion by the

---

[44] D. H. Farmer, 'St Gregory and St Augustine', in *Benedict's Disciples*, ed. D. H. Farmer (Leominster, 1980); Gameson, 'Augustine of Canterbury: Context and Achievement'; Edward W. Poitras, 'St. Augustine and the *Missio Dei*: A Reflection on Mission at the Close of the Twentieth Century', *Mission Studies* XVI-2, no. 32 (1999).

[45] Alan R Tippett, 'Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity', in *Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity*, ed. Testunao Yamamori and Charles Russell Taber (Pasadena, 1975). See Chapter 1, section 1.3 for a more detailed discussion of these terms.

[46] For further insights see the Case Study on Cyril and Methodius.

[47] Gregory I, 'Epistola LXIV *Ad Augustinum Anglorum Episcopum*', in *PL 77* (Paris, 1849).

Bible and the cultus of the saints promoted by hagiography.[48] The watershed work on understanding hagiographical sources, their pitfalls as well as positives, is Delehaye's *The Legends of the Saints*[49]. Geary has also added helpful insights into some of the changes that have taken place since 1965 in how historians are using these sources.[50] Delehaye sees the production of hagiography as a combination of what the writer wished to portray and what the populace desired to hear.[51] Having established this, Delehaye gives several pertinent warnings to those studying hagiography. The first is to find out what the author attempted to accomplish and then to judge the work in light of this.[52] Another is to recognize that the writers saw all sources as of equal value. Therefore the historian needs to examine the works for the various components borrowed from other sources.[53] This leads to an evaluation of the historical value of the work dependent on its selection of sources for use, as well as their interpretation.[54]

Delehaye classifies the source documents according to their authenticity and historical reliability as (a) official written reports, (b) accounts of reliable eye-witnesses, either first or second-hand, (c) Acts of which the principal source is a written document, (d) historical romances, (e) imaginative romances, and (f) forgeries.[55] In the same vein, Padberg sees the sources as three concentric circles of accuracy and reliability. The central circle is made up of synodal records, capitularies, legal codes, archaeological evidence, and letters or correspondence such as those of Alcuin. In the circle around this are the *Vitae* written within or shortly after the death of the central character, but these are not as reliable as they are usually influenced by the situation of the author as a central motive for writing. The outer circle consists of hagiographical sources several generations removed from the

---

[48] Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 29.
[49] Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*.
[50] Geary, *Living with the Dead*, 10-11.
[51] Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, 9.
[52] Ibid, 52.
[53] Ibid, 56.
[54] Ibid, 61; Geary, *Living with the Dead*, 12. Geary puts these same points across as two major things to remember when studying and using hagiographical sources. The first is that they are to be used for the study of not just religion, but also of society. That is, they need to be put into their larger context. The second is to recognise that there is usually a reason for the use and production of the hagiographical source at a specific historical point in time.
[55] Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, 89-92.

events portrayed with a clear audience of their contemporaries.[56] Within these two paradigms, the *Vitae* used as case studies fall within the second categories. They were written shortly after the deaths Boniface, Anskar, Cyril and Methodius respectively.[57]

Having established the relative reliability of these sources, it is clear that these are not to be used as accurate historical records. Padberg gives several uses of the hagiographical materials. One was educational since they were biographical but were also sharing a theological ideal of the divine world order and, thus, had a didactic moral goal.[58] A second use was as devotional literature, that is, for the purpose of changing the worldview of the people, or as Padberg would put it, for the christianising of people.[59] What, however, is of most value, Padberg would argue, is to use these as a source of understanding the pietistic history of the mission epoch.[60] It is in this context that the *Vitae* are used in this thesis. They are examined not so much as factual accounts but as to how mission was understood and portrayed not only for the specific situation recorded, but also in the wider context of how mission work was understood and carried out in the eighth and ninth centuries.

4. The Structure of this Thesis

How to create a framework that brings some of these themes raised above into a consistent order is difficult because, as the Christian Church became so intertwined with the political movements in the early middle ages, trying to separate mission and politics is, in many ways, impossible. Equally impossible is to cover the whole spectrum of sources in detail. Since the aim of this thesis is to explore how missiology, when applied to early medieval sources, can bring new questions and new insights to historical research, like a stone skipping across water, only a few of

---

[56] Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 24.

[57] For dating and manuscript discussion see: Willibald, *VB*, §1. The consensus is the *Vita* was written within 13 years of Boniface's death. Rimbert, *VA*. The consensus is that the *Vita* was written by Anskar's pupil and successor, thus shortly after his death. For Cyril and Methodius see Marvin Kantor, *Medieval Slavic Lives of Saints and Princes* (Ann Arbor, 1983), 17. "Most scholars agree that both *Lives* were written in Moravia shortly after the death of their respective protagonists; but the individual authorships still remain in doubt."

[58] Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 25.

[59] Ibid, 26.

[60] Ibid, 27.

the many themes and issues of Christian mission work will be examined before applying them to four saints' *Vitae* as case studies.

The themes chosen are mission, baptism and conversion, as these were the very foundations of Christian faith in the early middle ages. Baptism was set as a standard initiation rite into the new Christian community by Jesus and his apostles. Thus the apostles and disciples gave it prominence as a demarcation of a believer and a non-believer. Therefore, after outlining a basic understanding of baptism, some of the issues surrounding baptism are explored, such as, how should baptism be interpreted, what tensions were created within the church when mass baptism became the norm, whether baptism was a group or an individual event, whether the growing acceptance of infant baptism had an effect on church growth and strength, and whether variety in ritual led to syncretic practice and understanding. For conversion the issues explored are, how to define the term and what it meant in the early middle ages, whether conversion could be a group event, whether political change led to a faith or worldview change, and the gnarly question of individual internal conversion.

In order to track some of the changes in usage, understanding and significance of mission, baptism and conversion, each of the first three chapters has a section with a brief overview of the early church in light of these themes, followed by one concentrating on the early middle ages, especially the eighth and ninth centuries. Although this thesis concentrates for its case studies on the eighth and ninth centuries, much of this work would be valuably applied to the tenth century as well.

Part 1 has three chapters, one each on mission, baptism and conversion. The first chapter, entitled History, Mission, and Missiology, is divided into four main sections: the first works towards a definition of mission after exploring what is mission, proposing five basic components of mission, and exploring the issues of syncretism versus contextualization, Christianity and culture, the group and individual, and the term Christianisation; the second gives an short overview of mission in the early church, specifically the Matthean passage found in Matthew 28: 18-20; the third explores letters and hagiography from the early middle ages and

looks at the document *Conversio Bagoàriorum et Carantanorum* from a missiological perspective[61]; the fourth is the conclusion.

The second chapter, entitled Baptism, Mission, and Missiology, is divided into four main sections: the first explores the meaning and significance of baptism with subsections raising some questions about baptism, proposing components of acceptable baptismal practice in the early middle ages, baptism and the group and the individual, adult and infant baptism, and forced or voluntary baptism; the second explores the biblical basis for baptism in the early church; the third explores letters and hagiography from the early middle ages and looks at the *Conventus Episcoporum ad Ripas Danubii* from a missiological perspective; the fourth is the conclusion.

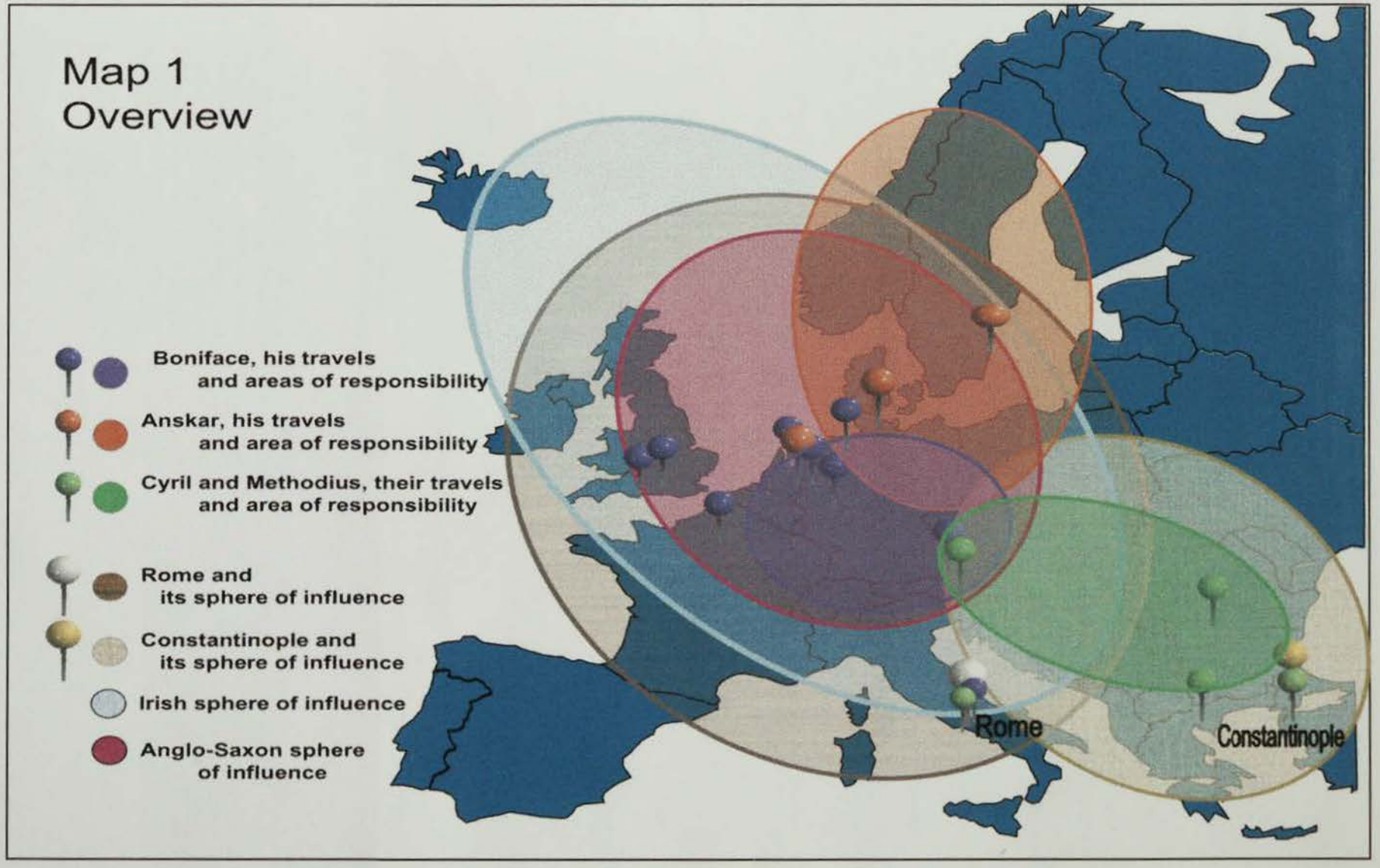
The third chapter, entitled Conversion, Mission, and Missiology, has four main sections: the first works towards a definition of conversion by exploring some of the background of the issue of conversion, proposing components of conversion, whether it is visible or invisible, how the group and individual influence conversion; the second explores the biblical basis of conversion in the early church; the third explores conversion in letters and hagiography in the early middle ages and what implications there are for forced or voluntary conversion; the fourth is the conclusion.

Part 2 entitled Case Studies from Saints' *Vitae*, has three main chapters, the case studies of Boniface, Anskar, and the brothers, Cyril and Methodius with an overall introduction. The case studies all have the same basic structure: the first section sets each of these figures in the historical context of the eighth and ninth centuries; the second section sets the basic narrative for each of the saints from the sources, for Boniface Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and the Bonifatian correspondence, for Anskar Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, and for Cyril and Methodius the *Lives* of *Constantine* and *Methodius* and some relevant correspondence; the third section explores the issue of the group and the individual; the fourth section the issue of syncretism versus

[61] This document is examined in the context of missional understanding therefore it is included in the first chapter. It will also be examined within the context of Methodius' movement into the Salzburg area in the case study of Methodius (chapter 6).

contextualization; and the fifth section summarizes the insights gained from applying missiology to these historical sources.

Part 3, entitled Summary, Discussion, and Conclusion, has four sections: the first an introduction; the second, draws some missiological observations from the case studies; the third, answering questions on the implications of this thesis; and the fourth, the final conclusion to the thesis.


Map 1
Overview
Boniface, his travels and areas of responsibility
Anskar, his travels and area of responsibility
Cyril and Methodius, their travels and area of responsibility
Rome and its sphere of influence
Constantinople and its sphere of influence
Irish sphere of influence
Anglo-Saxon sphere of influence
Rome
Constantinople

PART 1

MISSION, BAPTISM, AND CONVERSION

Chapter 1. Christian mission, History, and Missiology

The complex nature of mission is difficult to define as there is fluidity in the task of mission as well as in the understanding of the meaning of the word itself; but it is important to come to a working definition of the word in order to have some consistency when examining historical sources. Without a clear definition as a base it is difficult to follow the changes in usage and meaning. Thus, how one defines the word 'mission' determines a certain interpretation of historical sources.[1] For example, Padberg proposes a definition of mission as 'the first step of confrontation between the non-Christians and the Bible'. In this definition, as seen in his book, are the elements of a faith messenger, missionary, *conversio* and Christianisation, which is the resultant gradual implementation of the Christian life in terms of daily life and work.[2] But separating out Christianisation as a process disengaged from the proclamation of the Christian gospel message and the witness of the Christian community brings its own set of complications as there is a range of what 'Christianisation' actually means.[3]

Wood argues that there is clearly a difference between working in an area that has been officially Christianised and one that has not.[4] Although it was often true that once a ruler or leader aligned themselves with an ecclesial authority political and financial support were available for official missional work, however the basic task of missional work, that is, the proclamation of the core Christian gospel message with the expectancy of transformed lives and communities, needed to continually be proclaimed no matter whether the area was officially Christian or not. Thus to draw a

---

[1] For example: Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context* ; Bosch, *Transforming Mission* ; J. Samuel Escobar, 'Mission Studies Past, Present, and Future', *Missiology* 24, no. 1 (1996); Klaus Nürnberger, 'God's Mission in Practice: The Struggle for Liberation, Dignity and Justice in African Societies', *International Review of Mission* XCII, no. 367 (2003); Igor Ševčenko, 'Religious Missions Seen from Byzantium', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 12/13 (1990); Stanley H. Skreslet, 'Thinking Missiologically About the History of Mission', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 31, no. 2 (2007); John Van Engen, 'The Future of Medieval Church History', *Church History* 71, no. 3 (2002).

[2] Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 29.

[3] See the section below on Christianisation.

[4] Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 3.

line between mission and Christianisation[5] can be unhelpful as this then confines missional work to a planned intentional proclamation of the gospel message. This, however, brings an unnatural split between the visible result, that is some form of social or cultural change, and the invisible message which has brought about the change. Mission at its core is broader than just a planned journey by individuals or groups to a non-Christian or unconverted (whatever definition one uses) neighbour. Many times it was the unofficial, or the unplanned sharing of the gospel message that brought about the changes that both Wood and Padberg define as Christianisation. This is where a broader definition of mission can be helpful in seeing mission as a multifaceted process involving more than just an active proclamation of the gospel message.

The sources from the early middle ages use a variety of words which are usually translated into English as 'mission', but each one has a different nuance, bringing a different understanding to the task of mission. Therefore, first, in order to come to a working definition of mission, some general questions are raised regarding the ideology of mission. In this process, a set of basic components of mission needs to be laid out for the purposes of this thesis. In this chapter, then, although there are many aspects of missiology to pursue, an examination of the issues of syncretism or contextualization, the individual and the group, and the meaning of the term Christianisation have been chosen to establish a framework for defining mission. Secondly, on the basis of this work, there is a short overview of mission in the early church, then mission in letters and hagiography from the early middle ages, and how the above elements interacted are examined. The document *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* is briefly examined from a missiological perspective.[6] The chapter concludes with some observation on the definition of mission and its implication for the study of missions in the early middle ages.

---

[5] Ibid, 4.

[6] Ibid, 175. As Wood points out, this was written in Salzburg in response to Methodius' entry into the area in order to establish the primacy of Salzburg's authority. However, it is examined here in terms of mission and thus included in this chapter. Further examination of this document is made in Chapter 6 in the context of the case study of Cyril and Methodius.

1. Definition

1.1. Some questions

One way to define mission is to take the two most commonly used Latin words, *missio* and *legatio*, at face value; that is, for *missio*, 'a letting go', 'sending away', 'despatching'; and for *legatio,* 'the sending of an ambassador' or 'the office of an ambassador', 'an embassy', 'legation'.[7] These can be summarised as 'the sending out of a person with a message to communicate'. However, this does not fully embrace the nuances of use found in the sources in the early middle ages.[8] For example, these Latin words have been used to express the doctrine of the Trinity,[9] to describe a diplomatic envoy,[10] and for internal correction of teaching and practice,[11] to name just a few. Thus, the word 'mission' has had significance beyond the simple sending out of a message. So defining Christian mission simply as a message sent forth with some human form of authority only brings into focus one aspect of the complex nature of the historical understanding of Christian mission.

Another way to approach this dilemma of defining mission is to ask questions such as those proposed by Latourette, from an early to mid-twentieth century perspective, as a framework to his seven-volume work *A History of the Expansion of Christianity.*[12] Walls points out that Latourette saw the advance and recession, not

---

[7] Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, eds., *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1879, 1966).

[8] This term is found for example in Boniface's letter to Pope Zacharais to describe his task: Optantes catholicam fidem et unitatem Romanae ecclesiae servando dilatare; et quantoscumque audientes vel discipulos in ista legatione mihi Deus donaverit, ad oboedientiam apostolicae sedis invitare et inclinare non cesso. Boniface and M. Tangl, Briefe des Bonifatius Willibalds Leben des Bonifatius, nebst einigen zeitgenossischen dokumenten (Darmstadt, 1968), no. 50. All English translations unless otherwise noted from Boniface, The Letters of Saint Boniface, trans. Epharaim Emerton (New York, 1973). In other letters Boniface uses the term ministerium (Tangl, no. 80), peregrinationis (Tangl, no. 63), negotium salutis (Tangl, no. 17), predicationis (Tangl, no. 20, 88), labore (Tangl, no. 69), all of which Emerton translates as mission or missionary work; Other English translation of various letters found in Edward Kylie, The English Correspondence of Saint Boniface (London, 1911); C.H. Talbot, ed., The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany (London, 1954).

[9] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 389-90; Poitras, 'St. Augustine and the *Missio Dei*'.

[10] *Annales Fuldenses, MGH SRG*, ed. F. Kurze (Hanover, 1891), 848, 852, 858. English: *The Annals of Fulda*, trans. T. Reuter (Manchester, 1992).Unless otherwise stated all English translations from Reuter.

[11] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, 17, 25, 52, 58.

[12] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The First Five Centuries* (London, 1945), x-xv. His seven questions are: What was the Christianity which spread? Why did Christianity spread? Why has Christianity suffered reverses and at times met only partial success? By what process did Christianity spread? What effect has Christianity had upon its environment? What effect has the environment had upon Christianity? What bearing do the processes by which Christianity spread have upon the effect of

irreversible progress, as the pattern of Christian expansion.[13] From a more current historical and social outlook, Fletcher also proposes similar questions as a framework for his work *The Barbarian Conversion.*[14] These questions, however, still do not cover other elements of Christian mission such as the tension between top-down and bottom-up mission, what roles the group and individual have in mission, whether it is the goal of mission to establish ecclesial structures or communities of believers, as well as some newer questions raised by current missiological thinking.

Some of these newer questions are: Does mission mean a spiritual battle?[15] A power encounter?[16] A universal message of salvation?[17] An offer of healing (social as well as physical)?[18] A building programme of churches?[19] A spread of a particular ecclesial structure?[20] A dynamic interaction, for good or ill, with culture?[21] Evangelism? Baptism? Conversion?[22] Discipleship? Preaching and teaching?[23]

Christianity on its environment, and of the environment upon Christianity? For one analysis of these questions see, Walls, *The Cross-cultural Process*, 3-26.

[13] Walls, *The Cross-cultural Process*, 26.

[14] Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion*, 6-9.

[15] This and following footnotes in the paragraph only give one or two examples from the vast number of current writings. Gregory A. Boyd, 'God at War', in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA, 1999). Hereafter cited as *Perspectives.* Peter C Wagner, *Warfare Prayer: How to Seek God's Power and Protection in the Battle to Build His Kingdom* (Ventura, CA, 1992); Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 34-35. Padberg argues that the early medieval writers used the term heathen as a negative over against the positive of Christianity. Thus missional work was the battle between the devil and God, between idols and the true God.

[16] Charles H. Kraft, 'Three Encounters in Christian Witness', in *Perspectives*, ed. Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA, 1999). The interpretation of Boniface felling the tree at Geismar. Willibald, *VB*, §6. Gregory's description of St Martin's work in Gregory of Tours, *Decem Libri Historiarum, MGH, SRM I* (Hanover, 1951), X.31. English: Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London, 1974), 595.

[17] Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Middlesex, 1964), 14-15.

[18] John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Evangelism* (London, 1986); Lisa M. Bitel, *Isle of the Saints: Monastic Settlement and Christian Community in Early Ireland* (Cork; Cornell University, 1990), 178.

[19] *Conversio*; F. Losek, ed., *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum, MGH, Studien und Texte 15* (Hanover, 1997); Fridjov Birkeli, 'The Earliest Missionary Activities from England to Norway', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 15 (1971): 27-37.

[20] Rimbert, *VA*, §17; *Vita Methodii*, (Paris, 1968), §8. English: 'The Life of Methodius', in *Medieval Slavic Lives of Saints and Princes*, ed. Marvin Kantor (Ann Arbor, 1983); Birgit Sawyer, 'Scandinavian Conversion Histories', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 12/13 (1988/1989): 48.

[21] Alan R Tippett, 'Conversion as a Dynamic Process in Christian Mission', *Missiology, An International Review* V, no. 2 (1977); Anton Wessels, *Europe: Was it Ever Really Christian? The interaction Between Gospel and Culture*, trans. John Bowden (London, 1994); H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 1956 ed. (New York, 1951); Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity.*

[22] T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'Conversion to Christianity', in *After Rome*, ed. T.M. Charles-Edwards (Oxford, 2003); Robert L. Hefner, ed., *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological*

Performance of correct practice?[24] Consolidation? Translation?[25] Liberation?[26] Crossing cultural barriers?[27] Something that opposes or enhances culture?[28] Something imposed or something received? Something needed or just something that some people do as an occupation? Does the message target the individual, a group, or the individual in the context of a culture and society?[29] Does mission designate a point in time or an ongoing process which is current and still dynamic?[30] Does mission take place by the giving of a message whether there is a response, either positive or negative, or does the message need a response in order for mission to be taking place? In order to put these questions in the context of mission and work towards a definition of mission, several aspects of mission will be examined.

1.2. Components

Asking questions clarifies the range of usage and meaning of the word 'mission'. The next step in working towards a definition is to propose a set of components. Working out which components to list in order to clarify the mission task from first contact to living out a life of faith can be difficult, as no one set of components (or paradigm) will cover all aspects of the task of mission. There are many paradigms from different missiological perspectives which attempt to describe how an individual moves from no interest in Christianity to belief and inclusion in the Christian community and what is required by the missionary to produce this result.[31]

Perspectives on a Great Transformation (Oxford, 1993); James H. Kroeger, 'Naming the Conversion We Seek', *Missiology* 24, no. 3 (1996).

[23] Alcuin, *MGH Epistolae Karolini Aevi II* (Berlin, 1895), Ep. 110; *Conversio*, §8.

[24] Alcuin, *Ep.*, Ep. 110.

[25] Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* ; Sanneh, *Translating the Message.*

[26] Nürnberger, 'God's Mission in Practice: The Struggle for Liberation, Dignity and Justice in African Societies'; Nico Smith, 'From Missio Dei to Missio Hominum; En Route in Christian mission and missiology', *Missionalia* 30, no. 1 (2002). See also Norman K. Gottwald and Richard A. Horsley, eds., *The Bible and Liberation, Political and Social Hermemeutics* (Maryknoll, NY, 1993).

[27] Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY, 1994). See Winter paradigm in last section on E1, E2, and E3 evangelism.

[28] Sanneh, *Translating the Message.*

[29] Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures, An Applied Anthropology for the Religious Worker* (Pasadena, 1977), 118.

[30] Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* ; Sanneh, *Translating the Message.*

[31] For example see: Paul G. Hiebert, 'The Flaw of the Excluded Middle', in *Perspectives*, ed. Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena, 1999); Kraft, 'Three Encounters in Christian

The main issue with paradigms is that although they can be helpful, each has a different emphasis and even interpretation of what mission is, which goes back to the first questions of how to define mission. Hesselgrave outlines ten sets of paradigms, trying to bring a balanced approach to the overall issue of mission.[32] There are these and many others to choose from, but only one will be used here as an example of the advantages and disadvantages of applying a modern paradigm of mission to Christian mission in the early middle ages.

The paradigm introduced here understands missions as crossing cultural boundaries. Winter proposes the paradigm as a way of looking at barriers to mission work. His emphasis is on evangelism which he classifies into three categories, E-1, E-2, E-3, with barriers to communication the criteria.[33] He calls the evangelism that is done in the same language and culture, E-1, evangelism that crosses a barrier but is still very closely related to one's own position is E-2, and cross-cultural/cross-lingual evangelism is E-3.[34] One person's E-3 barriers maybe someone else's E-1. Winter argues that E-1 evangelism is the most effective as there are fewer barriers to cross, though he does not negate the importance of E-3 evangelism as there are times when it is easier for the E-2 or E-3 person to speak into a situation. [35]

Winter's purpose in setting this paradigm is to see viable churches established in new areas, "The master pattern of the expansion of the Christian movement is first for special E-2 and E-3 efforts to cross cultural barriers into new communities and to establish strong, ongoing, vigorously evangelizing denominations, and then for that

---

Witness'; Donald N. Larson, 'The Viable Missionary: Learner, Trader, Story Teller', in *Perspectives*, ed. Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena, 1999); David J Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Mission* (Grand Rapids, 2005).

[32] Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict.*

[33] Ralph D. Winter, 'The New Macedonia: A Revolutionary New Era in Mission Begins', in *Perspectives*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA, 1999).

[34] For example, if an American were to share the gospel with someone from the US who is of the same white-Protestant Anglo-Saxon background, they would be doing E-1 evangelism. If this same American were to do this in Scotland it would be E-2 evangelism, as there is enough of a cultural and linguistic difference so as not to be able to make the same assumptions as when in America. If this same American were to go to Japan, that would be E-3 evangelism since there are not only clear linguistic but also cultural barriers. A person does not need to travel overseas to engage in E-2 and E-3 evangelism as the task depends on how great the gulf is between the person doing the evangelism and the person listening, not distance traveled.

[35] For example, in Japan many people would accept words from a missionary that they would not accept from a Japanese. This observation is based on personal experience and conversations in 18 years of living in Japan.

national church to carry the work forward on the really high-powered E-1 level."[36] This conclusion of working towards a viable E-1 level national church is where this paradigm is unhelpful in the early middle ages, as those working in new territories were intent on spreading a certain form of ecclesial structure rather than encouraging indigenous churches. But the idea of looking at mission work in the early middle ages in terms of linguistic and cultural barriers is one which could be a fruitful study in the future.

The basic constraint of using paradigms is that there are always exceptions to the rules in any attempt to bring human history into some defined, organized framework. The desire to attempt this should not be discounted but there should always be the acknowledgement that history is fluid and that understanding can change drastically, depending on what information is gathered. For example, if one is reading history from the Salzburg perspective, Methodius was an intruder bringing discontent. However, if this same event is read from a Moravian, Bavarian or Bulgarian perspective, his work allowed them to play Rome and Constantinople off against each other and gain a certain amount of independence for the areas they controlled. Thus his presence and work were seen as valuable.

Missiologists, as well as sociologists, see the change or movement from outside of the community of believers to the inside, as having two aspects: the actions of the transmitter of a message and that of a receiver of the message.[37] Therefore, a minimum of two people need to be involved in order for mission to take place.

Here a scheme of five essential components, or stages, in the mission process is proposed. This list consists of the following: pre-evangelism, evangelism, conversion, consolidation, and passing the message on. It is understood that none of these stages is static, that is, all continue or should continue in overlapping cycles.

---

[36] Winter, 'The New Macedonia', 342.

[37] For example: Diane Austin-Broos, 'The Anthropology of Conversion: An Introduction', in *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion*, ed. Andrew Buckser and Stephen D. Glazier (New York and Oxford, 2003); Harry W Eberts, 'Plurality and Ethnicity in Early Christian Mission', *Sociology of Religion* 58, no. 4 (1997); Hefner, ed., *Conversion to Christianity*; Richard Peace, 'Conflicting Understandings of Christian Conversion: A Missiological Challenge', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28, no. 1 (2004); David A. Snow and Richard Machalek, 'The Sociology of Conversion', *Annual Review of Sociology* 10 (1984); Tippett, 'Conversion as a Dynamic Process'.

Pre-evangelism: This first stage covers all activities that build towards sharing the message. This covers the range from first contact to being in a relationship which allows the sharing of the gospel message, and this can be formal or informal, socially or politically top-down or bottom-up, aimed towards a group or an individual.

Evangelism: The second stage is the sharing of the core message (that is the life and work, death and resurrection of Jesus)[38] as clearly as possible. There was, and is, a clear consensus that without these elements there was, and is, no gospel message. The sharing of these teachings can be formal or informal, top-down or bottom-up, aimed towards a group or an individual.

Conversion: In order to move to the next stage, that of consolidation, a decision needs to be made either to align with, to accept the message that has been shared, or to reject it. This is the basic meaning of conversion, to accept something new and different,[39] which should lead to changes in thinking as well as in practice.

Baptism[40] becomes relevant in this stage as it can be understood as the crossover point between evangelism and conversion. Although others would put baptism as the start of consolidation, baptism is usually interpreted in Christian circles as an initiation, that is the leaving of one way of thinking and living and the moving into a new way of thinking and living. It is significant that from very early on many of the baptismal rituals contained a rite of exorcism.[41] Therefore inherent in the leaving of the old was not just a positive acceptance of the new, but also a negative, for instance, the rejection of spirits or gods.

Consolidation: In this stage the teaching and preaching which builds up a person in their faith for daily living as a Christian takes place. This is an ongoing process—to put an end-point to this stage is impossible, since this is the stage in which all Christians live once a decision to accept the gospel message has been made, and thus there is no end to this stage other than death. In the Carolingian era, Sullivan argues,

---

[38] See the discussion of this definition on page 9-11.
[39] For a more in depth discussion see Chapter 3 on Conversion.
[40] For a more in depth discussion see Chapter 2 on Baptism.
[41] Susan A. Keefe, *Water and the Word, Baptism and the Education of the Clergy in the Carolingian Empire, 1* (Notre Dame, IN, 2002), 3.

missionaries started with the understanding that the people they were going to were ready for, or already had been, baptised, whether by force or voluntarily.[42] If this argument is accepted, then the pre-evangelism and evangelism and even the conversion stages would have been seen to have been completed and mission workers would start their work at the consolidation stage.

Passing on the message: The final component is the passing of the message to a new group or individual. The new receiver of the gospel message can be within or without the society or culture of the communicator. This is one way to measure maturity of faith, though the sources mostly reveal the passing on of the message through official missionaries. This is the area that is difficult to track in the sources, as the unofficial passing on of the message is rarely documented. If, however, to be considered a Christian, it was merely enough to accept the message and live it out, there would be little incentive to pass the message on to someone new. However, Paul asks the questions in Romans 10: How can one hear without a preacher? And how can one preach without a message? And how can one understand the message of the gospel without a preacher?[43] Without the passing on of the gospel message the Christian religion would die out. Therefore, it can be argued that the passing on of the gospel message is a vital stage in the mission process.

These stages overlap as the individual who is in the consolidation state will be involved in the passing on of the message to a new group or individual, who will be at the pre-evangelism or evangelism, or even conversion, stage. Having considered these five components of mission, four major missiological issues will be introduced to move towards the definition of mission to be used in this thesis. These issues are contextualization or syncretism, Christianity and culture, individual and group, and Christianisation.

---

[42] Richard E. Sullivan, 'Carolingian Missionary Theories', in *Christian Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages* (Hampshire, 1994), 277.

[43] Romans 10: 14-15.

1.3. Syncretism or Contextualization[44]

These two terms, contextualization (or indigeneity) and syncretism,[45] are important concepts within missiology. As such, they need to be explored and defined in order to move towards an overall definition of mission. During the 1950s and 1960s the field labelled 'cultural anthropology in Christian mission' flowered. Two scholars of this era, Nida[46] and Luzbetak[47], still influence current thinking and research. Nida addresses this field from a Protestant perspective and Luzbetak from a Catholic one. The latter sees mission as introducing change which agrees with his work in cultural anthropology, as both are examining the methods, causes and consequences of change. Nida emphasises the linguistic aspect of conveying the gospel message.

The issue of when does the Christian message become so lost in translation that it loses its core values has been a burning one ever since the Scriptures were written about a God who reveals himself to human beings. When does adaptation move from promoting the message to a mixture of cultural values and concepts that demote the uniqueness of the message, so that it becomes just one of many messages saying the same thing?[48] When does adaptation or accommodation become syncretistic? Or in other words when is what is practised to be labelled

---

[44] These terms, syncretism and contextualization, are frequently used as opposites. However, this tension is not always viable and the current thesis introduces these two concepts as vital for understanding current missiological thinking while exploring their usefulness in examining historical sources. There is no attempt in this thesis to cover extensively the complex issues and thoughts surrounding these two terms. Rather, it is important to understand some of their uses in order to understand how missiologists interact with historical sources.

[45] For further discussion of this issues in using these terms see David J Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (Leicester, 1989); Tippett, 'Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity', 4-21; Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY, 1996), 375-77. For some historical examples see: Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion*, 253ff, 271; Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (London, 1986), 277-80; Douglas Hayward, 'Contextualizing the Gospel among the Saxons: An example from the ninth century of the cultural adaptation of the gospel as found in *The Heliand*', *Missiology* 22, no. 4 (1994): 452. Hayward asks whether the images in the *The Heliand* are complementary, compatible or contradictory with a biblical understanding of God and Christ as a framework to address the issue of contextualization.

[46] Eugene Nida, *Message and Mission* (Pasadena, 1990); Eugene Nida and Willam D Rayburn, *Meaning Across Cultures* (New York, 1981).

[47] Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures, An Applied Anthropology for the Religious Worker* ; Louis J. Luzbetak, 'Toward an Applied Missionary Anthropology', *Anthropological Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (1961); Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (Maryknoll, NY, 1989).

[48] Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures, An Applied Anthropology for the Religious Worker*, 5 Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*, 302-09; Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 36-46.

Christopaganism (or as in the middle ages, heretical) and when is it to be labelled indigenous Christianity?[49] Another phrase in this debate used to denote indigeneity is contextualization, that is for the gospel message to take on an outer cultural form that is appropriate without losing its core values.[50]

This concern with whether there is a difference between syncretism or contextualization can be seen among biblical scholars as well. Flemming[51], among others, argues that in the New Testament, Peter and Paul adapted, not syncretized, their message to the worldviews of their respondents. A comparison of Peter's message on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36), his message in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:34-43), Paul's messages in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:16-41) and his message on Mars' Hill in Athens (Acts 17:22-31) reveals Peter's and Paul's profound appreciation for the differences between monotheistic Jews and Gentile God-fearers, and between Jews and polytheistic heathen.[52] So the New Testament reveals contextualization of the gospel message in a variety of ways.

Flemming argues that the writers of the New Testament used some words and phrases that would have been open to misinterpretation by some of the receivers of the new gospel content, in order to convey the gospel message in understandable ways.[53] In fact, the usage of understood language to convey a new message in turn changed the language itself.[54] Visser't Hooft also argues that the messengers of the gospel were more concerned with making the message known and understood than

---

[49] For a discussion of this term see Tippett, 'Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity', 4-21 Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 375-77. Paul also dealt with these issues, for example Colossians 2:16-19. In the early middle ages the term 'heretical' was used at times to designate the mixture of beliefs, this is what Tippett terms Christopaganism; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 425-32 In these pages Bosch lists seven ambiguities of contextualization that remain as discussion of these terms continues.

[50] For a discussion of terms see Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 12; Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*, 19-20; Heideman, 'Syncretism, Contextualization': 41. Here Heideman states, "Contextualization assumes that the natural flow of mission is from an original text or orthodoxy to the incarnating of the faith into each cultural context."

[51] Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament.*

[52] Ibid, 152-81; David J Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1978), 130-31; Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, xvii.

[53] Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*, 144-46; Heideman, 'Syncretism, Contextualization': 40. Heideman argues that "[i]t may well be that Western missionaries can fully engage in contextualizing service only when they have entered so fully into the life of a culture that they are no longer aware that they are contextualizing."

[54] Flemming, Contextualization in the New Testament, 106ff.

they were concerned with linguistic misinterpretations.[55] However, along with a keen sense of conveying the message was also the concern that the uniqueness of the message would not get lost. These messengers of the gospel in the early church were very interested in the purity of the message as evidenced in the New Testament writings where the central message was reiterated in order to clarify and confirm the correct message,[56] but they were willing to risk a certain amount of linguistic redefinition in order to convey the message in a relevant way.

Whether one argues that the motive was to contextualize the message or that it was to draw the line against syncretistic ways[57], the end goal was to have people hear the message as containing unique material which would demand a response. Along these lines it can also be argued that the setting of the canon of scripture[58] was also a move against syncretistic thinking. The delineation given by the canon was to include only those documents which proclaim the gospel in terms which clarified the message. Those documents which distorted the message or gave prominence to foreign concepts were excluded.[59]

Why this issue is important can be seen, for example, in the case of Gregory's letter to Abbot Mellitus in 601[60] concerning whether to destroy existing traditional places of worship or to transform the sites into places of Christian worship. If this is interpreted as syncretism, then it and other such decisions are seen in a negative light, that is, the compromise with the current societal and cultural practices was so great that the uniqueness of the Christian message, and with it the correct practices, was lost. However, if this same letter is interpreted as contextualization, then the understanding is that the outer form of the worship site did not change, but the gospel message transformed the societal and cultural understanding of the meaning of the

---

[55] Visser't Hooft, *No Other Name*, 75-76.

[56] Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*, 89-117; Heideman, 'Syncretism, Contextualization': 41-46. Heideman gives an overview from the second century forward.

[57] Visser't Hooft, *No Other Name*. This is Visser't Hooft's basic argument.

[58] Which books should comprise the New Testament was an ongoing debate in early Church councils. Lists of acceptable New Testament books started to circulate in the second century, though these were by individuals. The first ecclesial councils to classify the canonical books were at Hippo Regius in AD 393 and Carthage in AD 397. Thus from the fourth century there was an agreed New Testament canon. However, the Roman Catholic Church did not officially set the canon until the Council of Trent in 1546. For more information on the canon see F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, 1988).

[59] Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 26.

[60] Gregory I, 'Epistola LXIV *Ad Augustinum Anglorum Episcopum*'.

place. This, then, would be a positive movement of the gospel message into a new society and culture.[61] Another such case can be seen in the responses to the Bulgars by Pope Nicholas I.[62] Is this to be interpreted as an insightful understanding that the key concern was not the outer, but the inner thinking and understanding, or did it allow for a compromise of the core gospel message within the Bulgarian culture?

The conclusion from the above discussion is that the goal of mission is to see the uniqueness of the gospel message with its corresponding correct practices uncompromised but at the same time to see this message worked out in a culturally appropriate way in the culture, society, group or individual into which it has been introduced. This allows for a variety of interpretations in terms of practice, ritual and other aspects of religious life. This is seen in the early middle ages in the variety of baptismal rites and conversion experiences.

1.4. Christianity and Culture

Missiologists have no issue with the understanding that Christianity changes culture and culture changes Christianity. Walls uses the phrases 'indigenizing' and 'pilgrim' principles to describe the fluidity of Christianity through the ages.[63] Sanneh[64] looks at the impact of Christianity on culture to understand the changes in Christianity over time. Cusack[65] comes to this same conclusion that Christianity and culture influence one another when looking at the Germanic tribes in the early middle ages, and Russell[66] argues this same point in his theory on the germanization of Christianity. The point where missiologists and historians differ is on how to describe the faith of an individual in the context of the group and culture set in history, and how to evaluate the changes that took place within a society and culture.

---

[61] McCulloch, 'Gregorian Adaptation in the Augustinian Mission to England', McCulloch argues for adaptation not syncretism as the outcome of Gregory's letter to Augustine; Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion*, 253-54. Fletcher also discusses the problems surrounding adaptation using Gregory's letter as an example.

[62] Nicholas, 'Nicolaus ad Bulgarorum consulta respondet (866)', in *MGH, Epistolarum VI* (Berlin, 1925).

[63] Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 7-9.

[64] Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 1-3.

[65] Carole M. Cusack, *The Rise of Christianity in Northern Europe, 300-1000* (London and New York, 1998), vii.

[66] Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity.* See also Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 40.

Cusack clarifies that the kingship in the Germanic peoples of the early middle ages was critical for the mass conversion movement, and argues for the validity of mass conversion.[67] This though is only one type of societal structure and culture to be found among the different peoples moving into the frontier areas in the early middle ages. Whether the mission process was top-down or bottom-up, or, most probably, a combination of both, missiology can help the historian in determining the faith aspect of the outcome of mission as it brings in anthropology, linguistics, sociology, cultural understandings, communication and other fields into the study of history. Missiology sees that it is individuals in history that pass on the content of the Christian gospel message, not the group, and, therefore, it is the individual who influences the flow of history. The individual may be the king, the bishop, the merchant, the slave, the priest or some other figure, but it is the individual who is the carrier of the message to either the group or another individual. How to understand this tension in the early medieval sources is where missiology can aid the historian as missiology brings into history the issues of Christ and culture and how faith interacts with cultures.

1.5. Individual and Group

Missiology, while recognising the tension between external practice and internal belief, is involved in working out how the Christian gospel message influences the individual in the context of a culture and society, and whether these are seen to be Christian or non-Christian. Markus states that Gregory I (590-604) was interested in the individual salvation of the soul which was part of the impetus of sending workers to Canterbury to work among the Angles.[68] Here is an example of someone at the top of a growing, powerful ecclesial structure who was concerned not just with correct external practice of groups, but also with the internal belief of the individual. The papacy would change with whoever was in charge, but the overriding

---

[67] Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, 173-79. See also, Arnold Angenendt, 'The Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons Considered Against the Background of the Early Medieval Mission', *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo* 32, no. 2 (1986); C. E. Stancliffe, 'Kings and Conversion: some comparisons between the Roman mission to England and Patrick's to Ireland', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 14 (1980). An older work but influential in this discussion see, Addison, *The Medieval Missionary*, 21-74.

[68] Markus, 'Gregory the Great's Europe': 24, 27; Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World*, 187; R.A. Markus, 'Augustine and Gregory the Great', in *St Augustine and the Conversion of England*, ed. Richard Gameson (Stroud, 1999), 42-43.

concern was with correct understanding of what it viewed as the core gospel message. For Gregory II (715-731) and III (731- 741) this concern was key in confirming the content of the message taken, and in sending Boniface to the Germanic people east of the Rhine.[69] Boniface was commissioned not only to bring the correct core message to those who had never heard it, but also to use this standard to correct those who already believed but had strayed from correct doctrine and practice. For the popes, those who had strayed meant anyone who claimed to be a Christian but who adhered to practices or doctrines not accepted by Rome.[70] Thus Boniface, when travelling about, was looking not only for first time believers, but also for Christian believers who also needed the gospel message. This attitude was also seen in Constantinople where they would set the standard in terms of correct doctrine and belief for the workers they sent out. Ecumenical councils debated new theologies and practices as they worked toward decisions on the content of correct doctrine, which would then be passed on down the chain of the ecclesial structure, both East and West. Even these councils and synods, however, were fraught with tension as both sides on an issue argued their point and at times the decisions overturned previous ones.

The tension of the individual as against a whole group coming to believe is seen in the Bible, which portrays individuals coming to faith, but then whole families and cities as well.[71] The individual is difficult to track in history unless he/she has written down his/her story as Patrick[72] or Augustine[73] have done, or they have been written about as much of the hagiography has done.[74] Other than these categories of people, the actual individuals involved in carrying the message, receiving the

---

[69] For example: Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 12, 17, 18, 19, 21, 28.

[70] See section on Boniface in Chapter 4.

[71] For example the story of Nicodemus in John 3:1-14, 19:38-39 and the story of the jailer and his family in Acts 16: 22-34; the story of Ruth in the book of Ruth; Rahab in Joshua 2 and 6; and the story of city of Nineveh in Jonah 1-4.

[72] Ludwig Bieler, ed., *Libri Epistolarum Sancti Patricii Episcopi* (Dublin, 1952); Patrick, *The Confession of Saint Patrick and Letter to Coroticus.*

[73] Augustine, *Augustine's Confessionum.*

[74] For insights on how to read hagiography see: Fouracre, 'Merovingian Hagiography'; Pádraig Ó Riain, 'Towards a Methodology in Early Irish Hagiography', *Peritia* 1 (1982); Ludwig Bieler, 'Ancient Hagiography and the Lives of St Patrick', in *Studies on the Life and Legend of St Patrick*, ed. Richard Sharpe (London, 1986); C. E. Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford, 1983); Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, ed. Joseph M. Kitagawa (Chicago, 1981); Alan Macquarrie, *The Saints of Scotland: Essays in Scottish Church History AD 450-1093* (Edinburgh, 1997), 230-31.

message and passing on the message remain among the vast nameless in history. But it is clear that history would not have been shaped as it has been without these nameless individuals, since the sources tell of people either asking for priests to teach about the Christian faith, or people who are at least prepared to listen to someone teach about the Christian faith, but they give no names to those who had first related the Christian message to these people.[75] So the question remains, who told these people on the ground, and who passed the message onto the high profile people, about the Christian faith in the first place? To acknowledge only official or recorded mission is to miss the whole of what was happening at the grass-root level. And something was definitely happening at that level in the early church and the early middle ages, since there are statements, given in passing, identifying some Christians as servants[76], slaves[77], prisoners[78], and merchants[79] or laymen.[80] These would be just the kinds of people involved in unstructured, unofficial, or bottom-up mission. Hoekendijk uses the phrase "gossiping the gospel"[81] to describe how Christian lay people played a central role in founding some churches in parts of Indonesia in the 1960s and 1970s where officially recognised missionaries were not allowed to work. This phrase can be aptly applied to various situations throughout history to explain how congregations seemed to have appeared suddenly. For example there is no clear

[75] See Rimbert, *VA*, §7,9; *Vita Constantini*, (Paris, 1968), §14. English found in: 'The Life of Constantine', in *Medieval Slavic Lives of Saints and Princes*, ed. Marvin Kantor (Ann Arbor, 1983); *VM*, §5; *Conversio*, §1; *Annales Regni Francorum*, ed. F. Kurze, trans. B. W. Scholz, *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories*, (Ann Arbor, 1970), ed. (Hanover, 1895), 805, p. 84; *AF*, 845.

[76] Sulpicius Severus, 'The Life of Saint Martin of Tours', in *Soldiers of Christ*, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and Thomas Head (University Park, PA, 1995), §2; Philip Carrington, *The Early Christian Church* (Cambridge, 1957), 253.

[77] Rimbert, *VA*, §38.

[78] Francis Dvornik, 'Byzantium, Rome, the Franks, and the Christianization of the Southern Slavs', in *Cyrillo-Methodiana: Zur Frühgeschichte des Christentums Bei den Slaven 863-1963*, ed. Olesch Helmann, Stasiewski, Zagiba (Köln, 1964), 107.

[79] Rimbert, *VA*, §12.

[80] Saint Adamnan, *Vita S. Columba, English & Latin. Adomnan's Life of Columba*, trans. Alan Orr and Anderson Anderson, Marjorie Ogilvie (Oxford, 1991), 12/13: Columba restores life to "the dead son of a believing layman"; 24/26 and 25/27: A young boy not approved by the congregation approaches Columba who blesses him. Only then is he named as Erneńe, Crasén's son; 60/61: Two brothers come to Columba to take monastic vows are given no names and no status.

[81] J.C. Hoekendijk, 'A Perspective on Indonesia', in *Christopaganism or Indegenous Christianity*, ed. Testunao Yamamori and Charles Russell Taber (Pasadena, CA, 1975), 52.

recorded history of how the church in Rome evolved, only information that a congregation existed by the late AD 40s early 50s.[82]

One Biblical example of an unnamed individual influencing prominent men is found in 2 Kings chapter 5 which has the title in some versions of "Naaman healed of leprosy". Naaman was the commander of the army in Aram even though he had leprosy.[83] On one of the raids the Aramean army had taken a young Israelite girl captive and she was serving Naaman's wife. This young servant commented, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria, he would cure him of his leprosy."[84] It was from this comment, that was obviously passed onto Naaman by his wife, that Naaman went to the king to receive permission to travel to Samaria to see Elisha the prophet. Naaman went and received instructions which he followed and was cured.

This story relates how one unnamed individual doing bottom-up mission was able to influence one military commander and two kings. Would not other unnamed individuals have the same potential to influence a master, leader, or neighbour by their words concerning their faith? The fact that their names are not recorded cannot argue against their existence. On the contrary, what little information that is recorded raises the question of how widely the Christian message was 'gossiped' before popes, bishops, and political leaders sent official workers into various areas. Granted the sources allow the tracking of official mission much more readily, but it is those few references to the unofficial, bottom-up mission in history that are most likely to hold the keys to the actual process of mission. However, since most of these stories were never written down, they are difficult to trace other than noting their effect

---

[82] Paul nowhere makes reference to having started the Roman church and no other New Testament author gives information about the start of a church there though they acknowledged a Christian church at Rome existed. There were Jewish believers from Rome at Pentecost (Acts 2:10); Paul met Priscilla and Aquila who had come from Rome (Acts 18:2) when Claudius ordered all the Jews to leave in c. AD 49. They joined Paul in spreading the new message about Jesus and then returned to lead the Church at Rome (Romans 16:3-4). Thus by the time Paul and Peter travel to Rome there was already a church existent.

[83] Concerning the use of the word 'leprosy' as well as a missiological perspective on this story see Walter C. Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a light to the nations* (Grand Rapids, 2000), 42-49; Walter A. Maier III, 'The Healing of Naaman in Missiological Perspective', *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 61 (1997); For how this passage was used by the Church Fathers see for example: Ambrose, *Des Mystères, SC 25* (Lyon, 1950), §3.16; Ambrose, *La Pénitence, SC 179* (Lyon, 1971), Book II, §II.2; Augustine, *De Civitate Dei, Libri XI-XXII, CC SL 47* (Turnhout, 1955), Book XXII. §29; Tertullian, *Contra Marcion, Livre IV, SC 456* (Lyon, 2000), Book IV §IX.

[84] 2 Kings 5:3.

when written in the sources, such as a request for teachers into a new territory.[85] In many ways this is an argument from silence, in that not much information can be documented about these unofficial missionaries, but it can be argued that they were active and influential. Therefore in order to balance the historical understanding of Christian mission, more prominence should be given to the bottom-up spread of the message, which many times involved individuals in difficult situations conveying the gospel message.

1.6. Christianisation

One final term to be examined before coming to a working definition of mission, is Christianisation. This was coined to acknowledge the process that takes place in a person or group from first contact with the gospel message to not just the acceptance, but to the implementation of a Christian worldview. As Keefe states, "...the Christianisation of Europe—not the superficial conversion of conquered peoples, but the slow replacement of one mindset with another...came about through the education of the people under the care of pastors."[86] For some groups this seemed to happen quickly, as in the case of Iceland c. AD 1000, but on closer inspection Iceland had had long years of contact with Christians and their message before taking a formal decision to make the Christian worldview their own.[87] What is unique about Iceland is the formal way in which this was done.[88] But even the formal acceptance of the Christian religion as the religion of their group did not necessarily mean that each person within that group firmly understood the content and implications of the gospel message. Thus although the decision to adopt Christianity appeared instantaneous, in reality there was a long history of a learning process before this decision was made, and there was a continued working out of the decision over the

[85] *Conversio*, §1, 8; *AF*, 867.
[86] Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 9.
[87] Jenny Jochens, 'Late and Peaceful: Iceland's Conversion Through Arbitration in 1000', *Speculum* 74, no. 3 (1999).
[88] Ibid; Niels Lund, 'Scandinavia, c. 700-1066', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History II c. 700- c. 900*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995).

course of time. This process is given by historians such as Ian Wood[89], Birgit and Peter Sawyer[90], and Alexandra Sanmark the name Christianisation.

Sanmark clarifies the range of meanings and issues[91] involved in the use of this term and ends with her definitions for conversion and Christianisation: "Conversion will be used to denote the actions taken by secular rulers and/or clerics to achieve the Christianisation of a society according to contemporary norms of Christianity.... Conversion has moreover been divided into two parts. Stage 1 involves missionary efforts, in a particular territory, with no or very little secular support. Stage 2 begins when a secular ruler takes charge over the spread of Christianity in a territory. The rulers can be either internal or external to the kingdoms."[92] This allows Sanmark to use political changes to measure Christianisation. However, there is room to argue that conversion and Christianisation are two different concepts and that her stage 1 is really missions at work while stage 2 is a consolidation of the work on a political level. Wood defines Christianisation as "evangelisation within communities that were officially or superficially Christian".[93] Again there is room to argue that this falls under consolidation. What is clear is that this term carries different meanings to different authors.

Having said this, there remain a few questions regarding the use of the term Christianisation, such as, did the implementation of a Christian law code by the elite in charge of a group equate to everyone in the group accepting Christianity? If Christianisation was on a group cultural level, where does this fit in with the New Testament understanding of individual decisions within a group? If there were no formal law codes does this mean no one in the group had accepted Christianity? And, could this process labelled Christianisation be better termed consolidation, especially

---

[89] Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 4 For Wood Christianisation is the larger circle of influence than mission which is limited to organised movement of individuals.

[90] Birgit and Peter Sawyer, 'Christianization and Church Organization', in *Medieval Scandinavia* (Minneapolis and London, 1993), 101. Sawyer defines Christianisation as the formal acceptance of the exclusive claims of the Christian God after a long process of influence by the Christian gospel message; See also Peter Sawyer, 'The Process of Scandinavian Christianization in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', in *The Christianization of Scandinavia*, ed. Birgit Sawyer, Peter Sawyer, and Ian Wood (Alingsås, Sweden, 1987).

[91] Alexandra Sanmark, *Power and Conversion: a comparative study of Christianization in Scandinavia* (Uppsala, 2004), 13-14.

[92] Ibid, 14.

[93] Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 3.

for the individual? Therefore, when to use, and what to label Christianisation, is still a matter of debate and clarification.

1.7. Working Definition

Having explored some of the issues related to missiology and mission, the final step is to come to a working definition of mission that has enough fluidity to embrace a variety of historical situations, cultures, and issues. The point is that how one defines mission, and its process, will determine how one reads history. For example, if church growth[94] is thought to be the primary goal of mission then documents will be read looking for how congregations came into being and how they functioned. This particular aspect of mission work can be quite difficult to explore, especially in the early middle ages, as many sources acknowledge gatherings, but give little more information than that a congregation existed. For example, the *Vita Anskarii* relates there were already Christians among the Swedes "who were held captive among them, and who rejoiced that now at last they were able to participate in the divine mysteries".[95] Therefore the coming of the priest allowed for a liturgy but there was already a group of believers existent. Thus, caution should be applied in evaluating the existence of a church building as equalling a worshipping congregation, especially in the early middle ages when buildings constituted in part territorial claims, which were not necessarily aligned with gathered congregations.[96] Thus reading mission history from the perspective of church growth may leave out questions, for instance, of the importance of baptism and other rites and rituals. Or if looking at Christian mission in history in terms of rites and rituals, emphasizing correct practice, the internal spiritual side of the mission message can be overlooked.

---

[94] The seminal work in this area is Donald A McGavran and Peter C Wagner, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, 1990); Also Peter C Wagner, *Strategies for Church Growth* (East Sussex, 1988).

[95] Rimbert, *VA*, §11. See also §14 which relates Gautbert working among the Swedes and building a church "and there was great rejoicing among the Christians who were living there...".

[96] For example: Ibid. Herigar was baptized and then "built a church on his own ancestral property", with no information regarding the gathered group for worship; Dvornik, 'Byzantium, Rome, the Franks', 98. Dvornik equals building of churches with the strengthening of Christianity using the example of Pribina who is given charge of a part of Upper Pannonia by Louis the German about 840. Pribina goes for a building program with many new churches being established, but with no specific information about gathered worshippers. This is interpreted by Louis as pro-Frankish and Christian zeal so Pribina is rewarded with property.

So each of the different emphases raised by the questions in the first part of this chapter,[97] has strengths and weaknesses. It is in a combination of all the different views, components and elements that the larger, balanced picture of Christian mission is seen. However, to try and keep all these in balance, without overlooking any, is cumbersome. Therefore, the main emphasis of this thesis will be on the issues of baptism and conversion, examined through the themes of group and individual, and syncretism or contextualization, with the acknowledgement that these are just a few of the many aspects of mission and missiology.

So, with these emphases chosen, what working definition of mission should be used? The essence of the above discussion suggests that the goal of Christian mission is to carry the message of the Christian gospel to new people while communicating it clearly. This may involve new language usage and acceptance of different external practices, but the key is to communicate the gospel message clearly enough for its unique core of beliefs to provoke a response. So, although mission at the basic level is to convey a message, the deeper aim is to create a situation where the hearer makes a response—positive or negative. Kroeger states, "Missionaries seek the conversion of the people they encounter."[98] This would be the positive response, with the negative one the rejection of the message. Thus the proposed working definition for this thesis is: "Christian mission is conveying the core message of Jesus' life and work, death and resurrection in a way that allows for different cultural forms without affecting the core message and the values it holds, with the goal of having people, whether individuals or groups, respond to this message." The carriers of this message can be official or unofficial, top-down or bottom-up. The key is an uncompromised core message conveyed in a way that requires a response.

---

[97] See questions on pp. 25-27.

[98] Kroeger, 'Naming the Conversion We Seek': 373, 376. Just what is meant by conversion will be addressed in the chapter 3; Roland Allen, *Missionary Principles* (London, 1964), 103-04. Allen gives this summation, "Missionary life begins with an act of reception; missionary zeal grows upon knowledge of the Spirit so received; missionary work is the expression of that Spirit in activity."

2. Mission in the early church

2.1. Matthew 28:18-20[99]

There are several key scripture passages used to promote the spread of the gospel message in the writings of the church fathers and others in the early middle ages.[100] One of these well used passages was Matthew 28:18-20, and this Scripture is still used in the twenty-first century to encourage mission and carries the label 'The Great Commission'.[101] The use of this passage for the purpose of promoting mission shows that the early church fathers were well aware of the teachings of Jesus on being witnesses to the ends of the earth,[102] though they did not use this passage exclusively to promote the proclamation of the gospel message. This Matthean passage was used in a number of different ways: for example, it was used to argue for going to the Gentiles, the non-believers, the barbarians,[103] and it was used to emphasize baptism and argue for correct baptism with a catechism, or that baptism should only be given once.[104] Some early medieval writers used the verse in the passage "Lo, I am with you always" to show God's protection and/or to give comfort to people.[105] Another way this passage was used by the early church fathers was to

---

[99] For discussion of this passage from various perspectives see: Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*, 244-50; Peskett and Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission*, 172-90; Wright, *The Mission of God*, 34-38, 213, 354-55, 512.

[100] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 208-209, 236. Bosch suggests that the text for the Greek patristic missionary paradigm was John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.", and for the medieval Roman missionary paradigm it was Luke 14:23, "and compel them to come in".

[101] David J. Bosch, 'The Structure of Mission: An Exposition of Matthew 28:16-20', in *Exploring Church Growth*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, 1983). At p. 220 Bosch argues that Pentecost, not this scripture is the motivation behind the early church mission. There is also ongoing research as to when this passage received the label of 'The Great Commission'; See also, Allen, *Missionary Principles*, 15-36; James LaGrand, 'The Great Commission', in *The Earliest Christian Mission to 'All Nations', In the Light of Matthew's Gospel* (Atlanta, 1995); Wright, *The Mission of God*, 58-61.

[102] 'Letter XCVIII, From the Synod of Chalcedon to Leo', in *The Letters and Sermons of Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Edinburgh, 1997), 72.

[103] For example: Tertullian, 'Prescription Against Heretics', in *CF-AN, Vol III*, ed. Rev. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, 1993), VIII, XX.

[104] For example: Cyprian, 'Epistles', in *Church Fathers--The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Rev. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, 1885, 1990), *Ep.* LXII.18; LXXII.5.

[105] For example: Cyprian, *Ep.* LXXX.1; Augustine, 'Confessionum Libri XIII', in J. P. Migne ed., *PL 32*, (Paris, 1861), §XII; *City of God*, Book XIII §24

argue the case for the Trinity.[106] Alcuin, in the eighth century, used this passage to lay out the correct order of teaching and baptism,[107] that was to teach the catholic faith first and then baptise. Interestingly, many early medieval writers did not use or emphasize the 'make disciples' part of the passage, whereas modern mission writers tend to see this as the key concept in the passage.[108]

3. Mission in the early middle ages

3.1. Letters and Hagiography

Though there are many relevant passages within the sources, just a few examples are chosen to highlight the issues of baptism, conversion, and syncretism versus contextualization. One of the tensions seen in the sources is that of the different sending authorities putting missionaries into common areas. For example, the *Annals of Fulda* in the year 867 reported that, "King Louis agreed to the Bulgarians' request and sent Bishop Ermanrich with priests and deacons to spread the Catholic faith among that people. But when they came there bishops sent by the Roman pontiff had already filled the whole of the land with preaching and baptising; for which reason they returned home with the permission of the [Bulgar] king."[109] Stephanus, in early eighth-century Northumbria, reported not just other workers, but a tension in the different ways of thinking, as he writes, "Now there are here in Britain many bishops whom it is not for me to criticize, but I know for a fact that they are Quartodecimans like the Britons and Scots; by them were ordained men whom the Apostolic See does not receive into communion, nor does she even receive

---

[106] For example: Augustine, *The Trinity*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (NY, 1991), XV.46, 51.

[107] Alcuin, *Ep.*, 113.

[108] For example see: Rose Dowsett, *The Great Commission*, ed. Clive Calver (London, 2001); Kevin McNamara, "Go Make Disciples'- The Implications for a Believing Community', in *The Church is Mission* (London, 1969); Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 50-51; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 73-83. A study of how this passage was used by early medieval writers is still to be done.

[109] *AF*, 867. *Rex Hludowicus Vulgarum petitionibus annuens Ermenrichum episcopum cum presbyteris ac diaconibus ad progagandam fidem catholicam praefatae genti destinavit. Sed cum illuc pervenissent, episcopi a pontifice Romano missi totam illam terram praedicando et baptizando iam tunc repleverunt; quapropter isti accepta a rege licentia redierunt in sua.* English translation by Reuter.

those who have fellowship with the schismatics."[110] Also Wilfrid (c. 634-709) met Boniface, the archdeacon, who taught him "the Easter rule, of which the British and Irish schismatics were ignorant, and many other rules of ecclesial discipline."[111] Thus a mixture of traditions and disciplinary practices can be seen in various geographical areas.

One letter of interest to an historian studying missions in the eighth century is that of Pope Gregory II to the German believers commending Boniface and his mission to them in 722.[112] This letter contains the aims of the mission, which therefore can give some insight to Gregory's understanding of the state of those living in the territory Boniface was sent to, as well as what he needed to do in order to perform missional work.

> *Sollicitudinem nimiam gerentes pro speculatione credita, quia in umbra mortis aliquas gentes in Germaniae partibus vel plaga orientali Reni fluminis antiquo hoste suadente errare et quasi sub relegione christiana idolorum culturae eos servire cognovimus, aliquos vero, qui necdum cognitionem Dei habentes nec baptismatis sacri unda sunt loti, sed conparatione brutorum animalium pagani factorem non recognoscunt: necessario pro utrorum inluminatione ad predicandum recte fidei verbum harum litterarum portitorem Bonifatium reverentissimum fratrem nostrum episcopum apud eisdem partibus dirigere studuimus, ut et illis predicando verbum salutis vitam provideat sempiternam et, si quos forte vel ubicumque a recte fidei tramite destitisse cognoverit aut astutia diabolica suasos erroneos repererit, corrigat atque sui edocatione ad portum reportet salutis eosque ex apostolicae sedis huius doctrina informet et in eadem catholica fide permanere instituat.*[113]

In light of the above discussion on mission, its definition and components, several observations can be made. Firstly, the geographical location of these

---

[110] Stephanus, 'VWilfridi', §12. *Sunt enim hic in Brytannia multi episcopi quorum nullum meum est accusare, quamvis veraciter sciam, quod aut quattuordecimani sunt, ut Brytones et Scottie, [aut] ab illis sint ordinati, quos nec apostolica sedes in communionem recipit neque eos qui scismaticis consentiunt.* Colgrave translation.

[111] Ibid, §5. *...et paschalem rationem, quam scismatici Brittanniae et Hiberniae non cognoverunt, et alias multas ecclesiasticae disciplinae regulas...*Colgrave translation.

[112] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 17. This letter is studied here in context of the discussion on mission. Other letters will be examined in the historical case study of Boniface in chapter 4.

[113] Ibid. "Knowing that some of the peoples in the parts of Germany that lie on the eastern bank of the Rhine have been led astray by the wiles of the devil and now serve idols under the guise of the Christian religion, and that others have not yet been cleansed by the waters of holy Baptism, but like brute beasts are blind to their Creator, we have taken great care to send the bearer of these letters, our revered brother and fellow-bishop Boniface, into these parts to enlighten them and to preach the word of faith, so that by his preaching he may teach them the way of eternal life, and when he finds those who have been led astray from the path of true faith or been misled by the cunning of the devil he may reprove them, bring them back to the haven of salvation, instruct them in the teachings of this Apostolic See and confirm them in the Catholic faith." Talbot translation, Letter 19.

Germanic peoples was in *partibus plaga orientalis Reni fluminis*[114], that is, they were in the region east of the Rhine with the Rhine being thought of as a divider or boundary over which Boniface was to go in order to spread the gospel message.

Secondly, the description of the spiritual condition of these people to whom Boniface was sent is described as, *antiquo hoste suadente errare.* This suggests that they were induced to go astray by the ancient enemy (one would suppose that this is referring to Satan as the writers are writing from a Biblical/Christian perspective). Gregory goes on to say *quasi sub relegione christiana idolorum culturae eos servire cognovimus*, that is, they were found to have been "[serving] idols under the guise of the Christian religion", so although some were calling themselves Christian and maybe observing some of the correct rituals, in reality they were worshipping idols, at least in the eyes of the Roman Church. So the issue of syncretistic practices was known in Rome, and Boniface was to rectify incorrect practice and belief with correct teaching and instructions.

Thirdly, there were others *qui necdum cognitionem Dei habentes nec baptismatis sacri, sed conparatione brutorum animalium pagani factorem non recognoscunt.* That is, they did not have knowledge of God and had not been washed under the water of sacred baptism, and therefore were to be classified as pagans, who were like stupid animals, not recognizing the Creator. These three elements seem to be connected in that if these people had had knowledge of God then they would have recognized the Creator and would have been baptised. One is reminded of Romans 10 where Paul describes the situation as "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"[115] and wonders if this was a passage in the mind of Pope Gregory II as he wrote this letter. It is clear in this letter that the papacy was distinguishing different levels of faith within the groups of Germanic people. The letter was addressed to the German believers, so there was a group of Christians already existing east of the Rhine. The fact that Gregory went on to describe various

[114] This and the following terms used in this discussion are all found in the above Latin quote with the English translation in footnote 113.

[115] Romans 10:14-15.

types of situations which Boniface would have to deal with, also shows that Gregory was not expecting Boniface to find all individuals believers in the gospel message.

The letter goes on to state that he, Gregory, was sending Boniface to preach: *necessario pro utrorum inluminatione ad predicandum recte fidei verbum harum litterarum portitorem Bonifatium reverentissimum fratrem nostrum episcopum apud eisdem partibus dirigere studuimus, ut et illis predicando verbum salutis vitam provideat sempiternam.* Thus, Boniface was to be accepted as the official bearer of the correct teaching, and this is confirmed by the phase, "...sending Boniface, the bearer of this letter into these parts."[177] The following phrase, *pro inhumation ad predicandum recte fidei verbum*, gives the aim for this work, that is, "for illuminating by preaching the true faith". This is very close to Paul in Romans talking about the need to send preachers in order for people to hear and believe. And the phrase *ut...illis predicando verbum salutis vitam provideat sempiternam,* gives the goal, that "by preaching the word of salvation to them they would be provided with eternal life".[178] There are several scriptures containing this message, for example Romans 10:17, which says, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." Thus the understanding driving the words in this letter can be seen to be scripturally based—the people east of the Rhine needed to hear the truth, the correct teaching according to Rome, in order to believe and have eternal life.

This letter also goes on to address the problem of those who claim to believe but are in error either through laxity or false teaching. So another task Boniface had was to correct false understanding,[179] and to promote correct doctrine according to Rome, as the source of correct understanding. So although Pope Gregory sent Boniface to the unbelieving in the first place, Boniface was to keep an eye out for those who had wandered away from the true faith. These latter he was to bring back to correct faith and to make sure they knew and abided by the doctrine of the Apostolic See, that is, Rome. This statement in the letter implies that Gregory II was aware of other teachings taking place in this area, which is why he was insistent that

---

[177] My translation.

[178] My translation.

[179] *si quos forte vel ubicumque a recte fidei tramite destitisse cognoverit aut astutia diabolica suasos erroneos repererit, corrigat atque sui edocatione ad portum reportet salutis eosque ex apostolicae sedis huius doctrina informet et in eadem catholica fide permanere instituat*

the correct doctrine, at least from his perspective, should be taught. It also shows the concern that whatever success Boniface might have had, the new believers should be tied from the very beginning to the church at Rome. This concern for correct teaching and understanding can be seen to be not only Rome claiming authority over new peoples and territory, but also the papacy having real concern that correct belief and practice were established to keep the core gospel message from becoming syncretic, at the individual level[119].

These few examples show that those in the early middle ages were well aware of issues concerning syncretism, correct teaching, and the clash of territorial claims by different ecclesial structures. The tension of the group and individual is also seen not just in the different groups of people highlighted—the pagan, those externally practising correctly, but in truth still in idol worship, and the group of those who were believing but had incorrect practice and understanding. Therefore, the top-down approach to mission in the early middle ages did not bring total conformity of belief and practice.

3.2. *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*

It is not possible to talk about mission in the early middle ages without referring to the source *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*[120]. This is one of very few sources that relate specific events in the movement of Christian mission into Bavaria. Wood shows that this text is very much a legal history, more than a history of mission work.[121] That is, this document is not out to share the how and what of mission work, so much as set out to prove territorial rights for the see of

[119] For discussion about public and private practices as well as what might or might not constitute paganism see: Henri Maurier, *The Other Covenant: A Theology of Paganism*, trans. Charles McGrath (New York and London, 1968); Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 32-4; Palmer, 'Defining paganism'; Richard E. Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', *Speculum* 28 (1953); Ian Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', in *The Christianization of Scandinavia*, ed. Birgit Sawyer, Peter Sawyer, and Ian Wood (Alingsås, Sweden, 1987); Wood, 'Pagan Religion and Superstition'.

[120] This was compiled about 870 and relates events of the late eighth-century into the ninth century. For background to this document see Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 168-73.

[121] Ibid, 172; Stuart Airlie, 'True Teachers and Pious Kings: Salzburg, Louis the German, and Christian Order', in *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard Gameson and Henrietta Leyser (Oxford, 2001), 92. Airlie argues that "the *Conversio* reflects the ambition of the Carolingian church to create a fully christianized landscape...Despite its focus on Salzburg's claims to authority in Pannonia, the *Conversio* is, at another level, less concerned with such particularities than with the all-embracing nature of the Christian community."

Salzburg. This is highlighted in the list of bishops, abbots, church workers and building projects.[122] There is only one saint in the account, that is, Rupert, and he is discussed in the very first chapter,[123] and thereafter is not given much space. The rest of the document is concerned with lists of churches founded and priests ordained, using the legal language of charters.[124] Wood concludes, "...the text is not concerned with mission as the work of holy men, or with saints as models, but with legal claims."[125] Wood also ties this into the *Notitia Arnonis* of 788-90 and the *Breves Notitiae* of 798-800[126] which could be models for the writing of the *Conversio.*[127] What light can missiology shed on the *Conversio,* bearing in mind that the purpose of the document was to argue for the legal jurisdiction of Salzburg over Pannonia? With a fuller discussion in Chapter 6, only a few observations will be made here in light of the above discussion of missiology.

In chapter one Rupert is portrayed as a man of God who was regarded as bishop in the city of Worms. His reputation came to the attention of Theo, duke of Bavaria, who requested Rupert to come to bring light to Bavaria by his sacred teaching.[128] Rupert is portrayed as unwilling to respond to this request himself, sending an envoy in his place, but then later went himself.[129] Whether this reluctance was to portray humility is not clear, but in the end Rupert travelled to Bavaria. The reported fact that he responded to Theo's request to enter Bavarian territory specifically to preach the gospel shows that the Bavarian leader had already heard enough, not only about Rupert but about the message, to be open to this being spread in his territory, though there are no further hints as to how and by whom this

---

[122] *Conversio*, §2, 3, 9, 12.

[123] Ibid; Wood gives a summary of his interpretation of Rupert's life in Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 146-50.

[124] Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 172.

[125] Ibid.

[126] 'Notitia Arnonis und Brevis Notitiae' in *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde* 130 (1990), pp. 5-191.

[127] Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 172-73.

[128] *Conversio*, §1. *provinciam visitando sacra inluminaret doctrina.* Herwig Wolfram, 'Frontier and Mission--the Role of Salzburg in the Ecclesiastical and Socioecomonic Structure of the Imperial Church', *The Iliff Review* 29, no. Spring (1972): 12. Wolfram argues that Rupert was a refugee fleeing from the Carolingian faction into the Agilolfing controlled Bavaria. Airlie, 'True Teachers and Pious Kings', 95, 97. Airlie argues that the account of Rupert's activity was shaped by hindsight and the concerns of the late ninth century. There is little portrayed of any opposition to his activities. Airlie uses the word 'serene' to describe the *Conversio* account of Rupert.

[129] *Conversio*, §1.

happened.[130] The *Conversio* has Rupert instructing Theo, who then converted to the catholic, or the true, faith.[131] It is interesting to note that the author[132] stresses that the *nobiles atque ignobiles,* that is the noble and commoner, were converted, so there was a sense of social difference in this area. But it is striking that the author includes this line, as it would have been acceptable to simply comment that many were converted to the catholic faith without discussing to which rank of society they belonged. Rupert is said to have regenerated the men of Bavaria by holy baptism and strengthened them in right practices.[133] The pattern laid out here confirms the understanding of the process from conversion to baptism to further instruction, as well as the concern that correct practices were not only performed but also passed on.

Rupert's return to Worms to bring back helpers[134] points to the lack of workers available within Bavaria and the need to bring in more workers to accomplish what he had set out to do. The seeming lack of Bavarians to take up this work may well point to the rapidity of Rupert's claim to territory and it would only be after a few more years that indigenous workers could be sent out.

The *Conversio*, having established the presence of a saint in Bavaria, lists bishops and abbots[135] to build on the claims of authority begun with Rupert's *Vita*. That there were both bishops and abbots in Salzburg points to an amalgamation of these two different systems of leadership with no sense of one better than another. The *Conversio* also relates that over the years Virgil, who was both abbot and bishop,[136] sent out, into that same area, several companies of priests with companions.[137] This leaves a sense of Salzburg being unable to establish a

---

[130] Wolfram, 'Frontier and Mission': 12-13. Wolfram argues that Theodo welcomed Rupert and saw in him a way to bring about the integration of the Frankish-Western traditions of the Bavarian ruling class with the Christianity of the Alpine-Roman population, thus bringing stability to the region.

[131] *Conversio*, §1. *Quem vir Domini coepit de christiana conversatione admonere, et de fide catholica inbuere; ipsum non multo post et multos alios istius gentis nobiles atque ignobiles viros ad veram Christi fidem convertit, sacroque baptismate regeneravit, et in sancta corroboravit religione.*

[132] Around 870 Adalwin, the archbishop of Salzburg either wrote or commissioned this work. For discussion on the authorship, Losek, ed., *Conversio Bagoariorum*, 5-8. And for fuller commentary on the text Wolfram, *Conversio.*

[133] *Conversio*, §1. *sacroque baptismate regeneravit, et in sancta corroboravit religione*

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid, §2.

[136] Herwig Wolfram, 'Virgil of St Peter's at Salzburg', in *Ireland and Christendom*, ed. Ní Próinséas Cathán and Michael Richter (Stuttgart, 1987), 419.

[137] *Conversio*, §5.

permanent, solid dominance in the area. The list of priests seems endless but it does give a clear indication of the impression Salzburgensian diocese desired to give that it had people on site, not just to evangelize but, more importantly, to consolidate the ecclesial structure and people's understanding of church rites and rituals, as several of the priests[138] are described as great teachers, or being well-known for their teaching. [139] This would confirm that the new workers into a region were sent for their teaching skills even when their presence underlined the political aspect of claiming territory for the see of Salzburg. Also these lists certainly allow for the interpretation that not only was Salzburg establishing its authority through these workers, but also that there were enough believers on the ground to require priests and teachers. What they taught and how much was understood is not addressed in this document.

This discussion only highlights a few insights into how Salzburg portrayed the missional work under its diocese. Although Wood and Airlie see this document as not specific to mission work the above observations do show some insights into how the different stages of mission can be found in it. Although it is most probably that this document was written in response to Methodius' entry into the area (and thus to bolster Salzburg claims to Pannonia and other regions to the east) it does use the idea of mission and especially the consolidation stage of mission to argue its point.

4. Conclusion

In order to apply the lens of missiology to historical sources to explore the issues of baptism and conversion, a definition of mission has been proposed as "conveying the core message of Jesus' life and work, death and resurrection in a way that allows for different cultural forms without affecting the core message and the values it holds, with the goal of having people, whether individuals or groups, respond to this message". The response to the message could be positive or negative but unless there was some kind of response recorded, the question of whether the

[138] Ibid, §11, 12.
[139] Ibid.

gospel message had been clearly conveyed remains. The response could be from a group as a group, or from individuals within a group who then influence the group, but a response is required. Therefore, Christian mission involves a core gospel message clearly conveyed and a response of either rejection or acceptance. The carriers of the message could be official or unofficial, they could be working from a top-down or a bottom-up approach, and they could be working at different stages of mission work. Another significant component of mission is that of passing on the message to new groups or individuals, and this can be seen in the saints' *Vitae* examined in Part II. There were, however, always the unnamed, unofficial, bottom-up carriers of the gospel message moving throughout the territory on the frontiers of the East Franks and Byzantines in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Another important theme, that of syncretism or contextualization, is raised by missiology. From the discussion in this chapter, the issue of compromise of the uniqueness of the core gospel message (shown especially with the concern of correct implementation of the sacrament of baptism as well as how to deal with lingering traditional religious practices) will be used in order to determine the line between syncretism and contextualization. At times the sources seem to focus more on practical issues, but it is clear that both Rome and Constantinople were concerned with not just the correct practice of liturgy and other rites, but also with the correct teaching and understanding of the Christian message.[140] For instance, as will be seen in the chapter on baptism, there was the issue, among others, raised by Boniface of whether a correct formula in baptism was enough to seal its meaning or whether baptism performed badly still meant a person had completed the requirement for full membership into the Christian community, that is full conversion.[141] Thus this emphasis on correct teaching and understanding can be seen in the issues of baptism and conversion. These issues also raise questions from a missiological perspective of whether the group or the individual was the focus, what meaning forced baptism conveyed, and whether conversion was an external or an internal change.

---

[140] Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200-1000*, Second ed. (Malden, Mass; Oxford, 2003), 423; Timothy Reuter, ed., *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on St. Boniface and the Church at Crediton* (Exeter, 1980), 81.

[141] For example: Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, 45, 68.

Having set the framework of missiology and a working definition of mission, the issue of baptism will be explored in chapter two as one of the key elements to understanding mission in the early middle ages.

Chapter 2. Baptism, Mission, and Missiology

Baptism in the early middle ages is an area of study large enough to spawn specialist studies into the actual practice and interpretation of the rite such as Johnson,[1] Fisher,[2] Keefe,[3] and Cramer,[4] though in each of these the effect of changes in mission on baptism, and vice versa, is still an area open for further detailed study. Only a basic introduction of some of the issues and questions can be explored here. Oden states that, "Christian orthodoxy in its ancient (paleo) ecumenical sense is summarily defined sacramentally by the baptismal formula (in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), liturgically by the eucharistic event, and doctrinally by the baptismal confession with its precisely remembered rule of faith as recalled in the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian creeds, and their subsequent consensual interpretations."[5] This emphasizes the interrelationship between baptism, the eucharist, and a confession of faith as all important parts of a whole. Although baptism and conversion are closely linked, here and in the next chapter they are examined separately in order to clarify the rite and ritual, or outer compliance, from the decision to believe involving an internal process.

The rite and ritual of baptism, being a physical act, is easier to trace in the sources as the changes and variety of practices are mostly argued among the writers of the Christian community. However, conversion is harder to track as this involves an internal change even though at times it can be accompanied by external change as well. Cusack argues for mass baptism equalling mass conversion as being the norm among the Germanic tribes, with little understanding of the individual undergoing a process.[6] However, Biblical writers, early Church Fathers and early medieval hagiography all give examples of individuals involved in a process.[7] Therefore,

---

[1] Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville, MN, 1999).

[2] J.D.C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation, Baptism in the Medieval West: A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation* (London, 1965).

[3] Keefe, *Water and the Word.*

[4] Peter Cramer, *Baptism and Change in the Early Middle Ages c. 200- c. 1150* (Cambridge, 1993).

[5] Thomas C. Oden, *Requiem: A Lament in Three Movements* (Nashville, 1995), 130.

[6] Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, 18, 22-23.

[7] See sections on Group and Individual and Letters and Hagiography.

although the individual might gain his/her identity from the group and the group might have had various motives for adopting the Christian religion,[8] in the end each and every person, as an individual, would have undergone a baptismal rite with water.[9] The individual may have been motivated by the group decision to undergo the baptism, but in the end the rite of baptism had to be administered at an individual level. In both baptism and conversion there were the situations where an external adherence, rite or ritual, took place before internal understanding but even so, in their essences, baptism remains an external rite and conversion an internal process.

1. Meaning and significance

1.1. Some questions

Why look at baptism in the context of mission in the early middle ages? Mainly because baptism, its practice and significance, played an important role in the understanding of mission,[10] and this is borne out in the numerous letters and conciliar decisions concerning baptism. Although there was a constant vigilance in order to keep the baptismal rite and meaning pure, this did not prevent an abuse of the rite such as forced baptism, or baptisms without understanding by parties involved, or even baptisms performed in mangled language and manner.[11] But overall there was a sense that if this was the rite that brought a person into the newly formed, or already existent Christian group or community,[12] there needed to be a certain level of

---

[8] See Chapter 3.

[9] Johnson, *The Rites*, 27. The four modes being submersion (complete submersion), immersion (water poured over the head of candidate while in shallow water and then the candidate's head is pushed partially under water), affusion (water poured over the head), and aspersion (sprinkling with water).

[10] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 86-89, 95, 98, 129, 131, 363; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 219; Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 94-109, 130, 188-89; Steven Hawthorne, 'Mandate on the Mountain', in *Perspectives*, ed. Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA, 1999), 111; David F. Wright, *What has Infant Baptism done to Baptism?. An enquiry at the end of Christendom* (Milton Keynes, 2005), 74-75.

[11] For example: Augustine, *Epistolae I-LV, CC SL 31* (Turnhout, 2004), Ep. XXIII2.,4; Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 26, 28, 68, 72; Cyprian, *Epistolarium, CC SL 3C*, ed. Diercks (Turnhout, 1996), Ep. XXII, LXXV; George Nedungatt and Michael Featherston, eds., *Council in Trullo Revisited* (Rome, 1995), Canon XCV.

[12] Tertullian, 'The Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas', in *CF-ANF Vol III*, ed. A Roberts and J Donaldson (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, 1886, 1993), §1. There is a clear difference between a catechumen and a baptised believer in the account of Perpetua's martyrdom in the early second century.

exactness involved. This is seen in the overwhelming concern with the rite of baptism in various sources.[13] Among other aspects, some issues or concerns addressed were, what to do with heretics (that is those of incorrect belief) when they returned to correct understanding of the faith and teachings of the church[14]; should infants be baptised (and if so why and how[15]); and does the efficacy of baptism remain even if the ritual was performed wrongly or without understanding.[16]

There are several ways to look at baptism[17]: Cramer sees it as a crisis where the ambiguities of moral and social values meet. [18] The impression here is one of collision of two forces which combine into a new entity. Baptism can also be seen as a demarcation or dividing line between the unbeliever and the believer, between the pagan and the Christian, between the inner community and the outer world.[19] There was the understanding that the rite became not just a symbol of Christ's life but an actual death and resurrection.[20] Elm states that Gregory of Nazianzus, in the fourth century, was contending that baptism was into Christ's incarnation, when others were arguing for baptism into Christ's resurrection or death.[21] Wright describes baptism as a drama, a dramatic enactment of both the gift of God's grace in Christ and human

---

[13] For example: Alcuin, *Ep.*, 110, 134; Augustine, *De Catechizandis Rudibus* (Cahors, 1991); Augustine, *Ep. I-LV*, Ep. XXV.3, LXIV.10, 13, LI. 4, 5; Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 56, 80; Cyril of Jerusalem, 'Catechesis III, On Baptism', in *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, ed. Leo P. McCauley (Washington, DC, 1969); Gregory of Nyssa, *Discours Catéchétique, SC 453* (Lyon, 2000), 'On Baptism', 295-315; Tertullian, 'On Baptism', in *CF-AN Vol III*, ed. A Roberts and J Donaldson (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, 1886, 1993); Theodulf Bishop of Orléans, 'On Baptism', in *PL, 105*, 223-40.

[14] For example: Alcuin, *Ep.*, 121; Augustine, *Ep. I-LV*, Ep. LI.4, 5; Cyprian, *Ep.*, LXXII; Gregory I, *Registrum Epistularum, SC 371* (Lyon, 1991), Book XI. Ep. LXVII; Gregory of Nyssa, *Discours*, 'On the Holy Spirit'; Nedungatt and Featherston, eds., *Council of Trullo*, Canon XCV.

[15] *Actes de la Conférence de Carthage en 411, vol 1, SC 194*, (Lyon, 1972), Canon LXXII, CX; Augustine, *Epistles, PL 33* (Paris, 1845), Ep. XCVIII, CLXVI, CLXVII as well as many other places; Cyril of Jerusalem, 'Catechesis III, On Baptism'; Tertullian, 'On Baptism', 18:15.

[16] Augustine, *Ep. I-LV*, Ep. XXIII, XXXV, XLII; Cyril of Jerusalem, 'Catechesis III, On Baptism', ; Gregory I, *Registrum Epistularum, SC 370* (Lyon, 1991), Ep. 45; Gregory of Nazianzus, 'Oration 40', in *CF-NPN 2, Vol 7*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Edinburgh, 1894), §26.

[17] For current views on baptism see: John H. Armstrong, ed., *Understanding Four views on Baptism* (Grand Rapids, 2007).

[18] Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 14.

[19] Ambrose, *De Officiis* (Turnhout, 2000); Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 16, 18; Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 68; R.A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), 53; Walls, *The Cross-cultural Process*, 35.

[20] Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 2-3.

[21] Susanna Elm, 'Inscriptions and Conversions: Gregory of Nazianzus on Baptism (Or. 38-40)', in *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (Rochester, 2003), 3.

response to it in faith.[22] In this sense, the early medieval people groups were participants in a visual drama that reinforced the unseen faith. Keefe argues that the Franks perceived baptism as a realignment of allegiances where a change of lords took place.[23] This would align with the way the Germanic tribes would understand authority and relationships with gods.

In all of the nuances of understanding, there was the official way, that is the theology and ideal of the synods and councils as well as the church fathers. In contrast to this there was the realistic way, which raised questions in terms of the practical aspects of performing baptisms in new territories, such as what constituted bad practices, and how to correct bad practices when found. At times the gap between the ideal and real situations sparked new discussions as to the significance as well as the correct practice of the rite.[24] Where in the process of conversion and living out the life of faith did baptism take place—was it the beginning, middle or end of a process, or was it just a superficial rite?[25] Was it a rite of initiation, purification or a combination of these?[26] With the generally accepted times for baptism given as Easter and Pentecost,[27] that is March/April and then May/June,[28] what happened when someone wanted baptism in July, October, or January? How was deathbed baptism of a long-term believer viewed?[29] Was baptism understood to be a seal on a person's life of faith?[30] Should only adult believers be baptized or could infants also be baptized?[31] If so, what did this baptism signify?[32] Did baptism

---

[22] Wright, *Infant Baptism*, 77.

[23] Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 3. See also, Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, 176-77; Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 179-85.

[24] For example see: Alcuin, *Ep.*, 110, 128, 226; Augustine, *De Catechizandis Rudibus* ; Cyprian, *Ep.*, 110, 113, 134; Leidradi, 'Liber de Sacramento Baptismi', in *PL, CII*, ed. J P Migne (Paris, 1864); Tertullian, 'On Baptism'.

[25] Alcuin, *Ep.*, 113. For discussion on how baptism might change in culture see Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 331-32. For an overview of differences in the church fathers see: Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 87.

[26] Elm, 'Gregory of Nazianzus', 1-35.

[27] Tertullian, 'On Baptism', §19; Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 18.

[28] The times are not set as Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Easter (counting inclusively), is calculated off of Easter and that date is set off a lunar calendar.

[29] Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 15-16; Elm, 'Gregory of Nazianzus', 3, 18; Rimbert, *VA*, §24.

[30] Gregory of Nazianzus, 'Oration 40', §IV. Gregory uses the Greek word σφραγισ in the phrase "we call...[baptism] the seal because it preserves us and is moreover the indication of Dominion."; Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 42, 47.

[31] See section below, Adult or Infant Baptism.

[32] For example: Elm, 'Gregory of Nazianzus', 3. Elm discusses the differences between being baptised into Christ's incarnation, Christ's resurrection, or Christ's death; Alcuin, *Ep.*, 110.

equal salvation?[33] Could, or should, a person be baptized more than once? If so, under what circumstances? [34] Was baptism for the individual or group?[35]

These questions and issues, as well as the understanding of where baptism would fall in the process of moving from a catechumen to a full member in the community of faith, would have affected how someone working at the local level would have understood the goal of their work. For example, if baptism was the end of the process, then the emphasis would have been on the process to acquire the goal. This could lead to a practice of longer teaching before the ritual was performed as seen in the ideal of a three-year preparation before baptism proposed in *The Apostolic Tradition*.[36] This, though, was not strictly adhered to as the issue of someone passing away during the process became more important than the time of the preparation.[37] Thus the issue of the efficacy of baptism as a seal of salvation would have been seen as more important than instruction in and understanding of the faith. This would change how mission was done since the goal then became baptism followed by instruction rather than a lengthy pre-baptismal process.

---

[33] Alcuin, *Ep.*, 110; Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 132; Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 48-49.

[34] Augustine, 'De Baptismo Contra Donatistas', in *PL 43*, ed. J P Migne (Paris, 1846), §4; Augustine, *Ep. I-LV*, Ep. XXIII.2,4; Gregory I, *Ep., vol 2*, Ep. LXVII; Leo the Great, 'The Letters and Sermons of Leo the Great', in *CF-NPN 2, vol 12*, ed. Philip Schaff (Edinburgh, 1889), Ep. 166. See also the controversy between Boniface and Virgil in Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 68. In this instance Zacharias agreed with Virgil that a second baptism was unnecessary. For further reading on the tensions between Virgil and Boniface see Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 80; John Carey, 'Ireland and the Antipodes: The Heterodoxy of Virgil of Salzburg', *Speculum* 64, no. 1 (1989); Wolfram, 'Frontier and Mission', ; Wolfram, 'Virgil of St Peter's at Salzburg'. The argument or disagreement between Virgil of Salzburg and Boniface can be seen in light of territorial authority claims but it is more than that as it touched on the whole essence of the baptismal rite and ritual—its correct usage and significance. Boniface, by questioning Virgil's acceptance of baptisms done without correct Latin, shows his concern with not only the correct formula but also with correct understanding. If the formula was not correct did how did this impact the efficacy of the rite as well as the correct understanding of the significance of the rite and ritual? That must have been behind Boniface's question. The Pope, by agreeing with Virgil, pushed the understanding that the formula, whether in correct Latin or other language, was the more significant over above correctly understanding the content. Therefore the Trinitarian formula became be seen as salvific in and of itself.

[35] See the section below on Group and Individual Baptism.

[36] Hippolytus, *La Tradition Apostolique de Saint Hippolyte*, trans. Bernard Botte, 3rd ed. (Münster Westfalen, 1963), §17. For the issues surrounding this text see: John F. Baldovin, 'Hippolytus and the Apostolic Tradition: Recent Research and Commentary', *Theological Studies* 64 (2003); John Cerrato, *Hippolytus Between East and West: The Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus* (Oxford, 2002); Johnson, *The Rites*, 72-85, especially 78ff where Johnson argues that the three-year period recommended by the Apostolic Tradition was the exception rather than the rule and that the general period of baptismal preparation was no more than forty days.

[37] Leo The Great, Ep VI; Augustine uses this argument for infant baptism in his letters above; 'Conventus Episcoporum ad Ripas Danubii', in *MGH, Legum Sectio III Concilia, Tomi II Pars I* (Hanover, 1906), 173.

If, however, baptism was seen as a step within a process, then once baptised, whether quickly or after a set period, whether forced or voluntary, there would have been the need for more instruction and teaching to consolidate the faith. This can be seen, for example, in Alcuin's concern for teaching, "It is the duty of bishops to correct monasteries, to direct the lives of the servants of God, to preach the word of God to the people and diligently instruct the common people in their charge."[38] There is the example in the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* where Rupert instructed Theo in the Christian way of life and the catholic faith resulting not just in Theo's conversion but that of nobles and commoners as well.[39] There was this emphasis on preaching and teaching in the Bonifatian correspondence, for example Pope Gregory's commission to Boniface:

> ...we...decree that with the word of God's grace, that flame of salvation which God came to earth to proclaim, you may go forth with His guidance to those peoples who are still in the bonds of infidelity. You are to teach them in the name of Christ, the Lord our God. You will pour into their untaught minds the preaching of both the Old and the New Testament in the spirit of virtue and love and sobriety and with reasoning suited to their understanding.[40]

And Pope Gregory's letter to all German Christians:

---

[38] For example: Alcuin, *Ep.*, 18, *Episcoporum est monasteria corrigere, servorum Dei vitam disponere, populo Dei verbum praedicare et diligenter plebem erudire subiectam*; See also: *Ep.* 287 "Conscientiously keep up your practice of reading. For a great light of knowledge has spread from you to various parts of our country.....let your light shine in the midst of a most barbarous nation..." ; *Ep.* 280 where Alcuin exhorts the church in Ireland to teach and train the young men so that "...the light of truth and knowledge may shine fruitfully in its accustomed manner through you and from you in Christian churches in many parts of the world."; *Ep.* 17 to Archbishop Ethelhard saying "..that by your devoted teaching the word of eternal life may spread apace and the numbers of the Christian people be multiplied...."; *Ep.* 110 where Alcuin encourages Charlemagne, "..in your wise and godly concern may you provide good preachers for the new people, sound in conduct, learned in the faith and full of the teaching of the gospel, intent on following the example of the apostles in the preaching of the word of God.". All translations: Stephen Allot, *Alcuin of York (c. A.D. 732 to 804)--his life and letters* (York, 1974).

[39] *Conversio*, §1. This chapter in the *Conversio* also says that Rupert went back to his own land to bring back associates "for teaching the evangelical truth." and he went around the whole area of his See "strengthening the souls of the Christians and urging them to remain strong in the faith, that which he taught in words he confirmed with wonderful deeds."; §3 has the phrase "...how the Slavs who are called the Carinthia and those bordering on them were instructed in the holy faith and were made Christians...."; §5 where Chietmar asked Virgil "...to visit the people of that tribe and to establish them firmly in the faith."; §6 Pippin gave Arno the responsibility of giving instruction to the people in the Christian way and the duties of services of the church; §7 the story of Ingo with the phrase, "...they rushed to be instructed in the holy faith and baptised." My translations.

[40] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no.12. *....praecipimus,ut in verbo gratiae Dei, quo igne salutifero quem mittere Dominus venit in terram, enitere videris, ad gentes quascumque infidelitatis errore detentas properare Deo comitante potueris, ministerium regni Dei per insinuationem nominis Christi domini nostri veritatis suasione designes et per spiritum virtutis et dilectionis ac sobrietatis praedicationem utriusque testimenti mentibus indoctis consona ratione transfundas.*

> ...certain peoples in Germany on the eastern side of the Rhine are wandering in the shadow of death at the instigation of the ancient enemy and, as it were under the form of the Christian faith, are still in slavery to the worship of idols, while others who have not as yet any knowledge of God and have not been cleansed by the water of holy baptism but as pagans, to be likened unto the brutes, do not acknowledge their Creator, we have determined to send...Bishop Boniface, into that country, for the enlightenment of both classes, to preach the word of the true faith, so that through his preaching of the word of salvation he may bring them eternal life.[41]

This is seen also in the wording of Prince Svatopluk requesting Methodius as a teacher and the results:

> And they sent to the Apostolic Father, saying: 'Since our fathers once received Baptism from Saint Peter, give us Methodius as archbishop and teacher.' And the Apostolic Father sent him at once. And Prince Svatopluk and all the Moravians received him. They entrusted to him all the churches and clergy in all the towns. And from that day forth, God's teachings grew greatly and the clergy multiplied in all the towns. And for that reason the Moravians began to grow and multiply, and the pagans to believe in the true God, casting aside their lies.[42]

Again among the several passages in *Vita Anskarii* it is clear that there was recognized the need for teaching in the passage relating to Harald and his companions,

> He [the emperor] bade them go with Harald and commanded them to devote the utmost care to his profession of faith and by their godly exhortations to confirm in the faith both Harald and his companions who had been baptized together with him, for fear lest at the instigation of the devil they should return to their former errors, and at the same time by their preaching to urge others to accept the Christian religion...Harald, to whom they had been committed, was as yet ignorant and untaught in the faith, and was unaware how God's servants ought to behave. Moreover, his companions who had been but recently converted and had been trained in a very different faith....[43]

These sources argue for an underlying concern for the passing on of correct teaching, first at the monastic level, but then also at the ground level.[44] This understanding did not cancel out the concept of baptism needing to be performed

---

[41] Ibid, no. 17. The Latin to be found in Chapter 1, p. 46.

[42] *VM*, §10.

[43] Rimbert, *VA*, §7. *...cum parefato Herioldo ire praecepit; denuncians, ut euis fidei maximam impenderent sollicitudinem eumque et suos qui simul baptizati fuerant pia exhortatione, ne ad pristinos reducerentur diabolo instigante errores, continue reborarent simulque etiam alios ad suscipiendam christianam religionem verbo praedicationis strenue commonerent...Herioldus quoque, cui commissi fuerant, adhuc rudis et neophitus, ignorabat, qualiter servi Dei tractari debuissent. Sui quoque, tunc nuper conversi et longe aliter educati...*

[44] This is Keefe's fundamental argument in *Water and Word*. She argues that Charlemagne's reform was not aimed at the elite so much as making sure the priest on the ground had a correct grasp of the fundamentals of the sacraments and their meanings in order to pass this knowledge onto the individuals in the parishes. Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 2-9; See also, R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms, 789-895* (London, 1977), xvii, xx, 207; Padberg also argues that Pope Gregory's letter to Boniface was concerned with educating the new believers in the faith. Lutz von Padberg, *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen: Theorie und Praxis der Missionspredigt im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 2003), 194.

with the correct formula, nor clear up doubts about the efficacy of the rite. In fact, in many ways it would have reinforced this way of thinking. Those undergoing quick baptism or forced baptism would have been seen as members within the Christian community, since the demarcation between Christian and non-Christian was generally accepted as the baptismal rite; but these people would then be in need of teaching or instruction to consolidate correct understanding of the faith that had been accepted, even though for many this would mean correct participation in the rites and rituals rather than deep theological understanding.[45] The argument here is not a need for a deep level of theological understanding so much as for a basic understanding of the expectations of the Christian church for the believer and community. Therefore a certain level of teaching and instruction was needed for the individual to be able to live as a follower of the new religion as opposed to the former religion. This could be as simple as regular, for the historical time, church attendance, the taking of the eucharist at least once or twice a year, changes in how marriage was viewed and other practices.[46] For those with a better grasp of learning they would be given further instruction into the deeper significance of the Christian rites and beliefs with an idea that they would pass the information onto others. The higher end of instruction would be for those chosen, or choosing, to be trained in the monastery either for remaining as a member or becoming a monk or priest in a local church.[47] Thus although instruction was taking place at many levels, the ideal was to have the group as a whole, and the individuals within the group, grasp some basics of the new faith.[48] This is what Alcuin was asking Charlemagne to implement,

> "Now in your wise and godly concern may you provide good preachers for the new people, sound in conduct, learned in the faith and full of the teaching of the gospel, intent on following the example of the apostles in the preaching of the word of God....Careful thought must also be given to the right method of preaching and baptising, that the washing

---

[45] For example: See above note; Nicholas, 'Nicolaus ad Bulgarorum consulta respondet (866)'. For a summary of the basic content of teaching sermons see Padberg, *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen*, 195.

[46] For example: Charlemagne, 'Capitulatio de Partibus Saxoniae', in *MGH, Cap. 1*, ed. A. Boretius (Hanover, 1883), §18; Gregory I, 'Epistola LXIV *Ad Augustinum Anglorum Episcopum*', 38; McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, 82-83, 101; Nicholas, 'Nicolaus ad Bulgarorum consulta respondet (866)'.

[47] Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 32-36.

[48] For example: 'Admonitio Generalis', §70, 82; Charlemagne, 'Letter to Baugulf of Fulda', in *The Middle Ages vol 1: Sources of Medieval History* ed. Brian Tierney and Sidney Painter (New York, 1998), no.28; McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, xx, 139ff, 206-08.

> of the body in baptism be not made useless by lack in the soul of an understanding of the faith....."[49]

Once a group was conquered and had submitted to baptism, or had voluntarily submitted to baptism, there was need for instruction which could only effectively take place on these various levels and ultimately at the local level.

1.2. Components

There were not only clear lists of what took place within the baptismal rite,[50] there were also grades in terms of where a person was in the process from unbeliever to fully accepted member within the Christian community. There are several lists of various lengths. Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636) listed the three grades as those of catechumens, competents and the baptized.[51] Beatus of Liébana describes four grades in the Prologue to Book II of his *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, written between 776 and 786.

> When anyone who is still a pagan comes to the faith, when he has been instructed so that he believes, he is called a catechumen. When rightly he has believed and he demands to be baptized, he is named a competent. When, indeed, he has been dipped in the water of baptism he is called a *fidelis*. When truly he is chrismated with chrism, that is, with an anointing, he is called a Christian.[52]

---

[49] Alcuin, Ep. 110. Sed nunc praevideat sapientissima et Deo placabilis devotio vestra pios populo novello praedicatores; moribus honestos, scientia sacrae fidei edoctos et evangelicis praeceptis inbutos; sanctorum quoque apostolorum in praedicatione verbi Dei exemplis intentos....Illud quoque maxima considerandum est diligentia, ut ordinate fiat praedicationis officium et baptismi sacramentum, ne nihil prosit sacri ablutio baptismi in corpore, si in anima ratione utenti catolicae fidei agnition non praecesserit. Allot translation.

[50] Johnson, *The Rites* ; E. C. Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, ed. Maxwell E. Johnson (London, 2003). Whitaker has gathered the baptismal liturgies and Johnson has interpreted them; Fisher, *Baptism in the Medieval West*, xii-xiii Fisher argues that there were three components intertwined around the baptismal rite: the rite of baptism, the rite of confirmation, and participation in one's first communion. These, in the West, became separated into infant baptism, confirmation as a young adult and first communion a week or so later. He traces this disintegration, as he calls it, and argues that the breaking of what had been united elements of the baptismal rite caused a loss of unity, understanding and significance. In contrast, he argues, even today the Eastern Church has preserved a unity of these three components in that the priests are allowed to confirm immediately upon baptism and then to have the person participate in the eucharist; Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 183-85.

[51] Alcuin, *Ep.*, 134; Isidore of Seville, 'De Ecclesiasticis Officiis', in *CC, SL, 113*, ed. Christopher Lawson (Turnhout, 1989), xi-xvii.

[52] Beatus of Liebana, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, ed. E. Romero-Pose (Rome, 1985), 202. *Cum aliquis iam paganus ad fidem venit, quum instruitur ut credat, catecuminus dicitur: cum recte crediderit et baptizari se postulat, competens nominatur: cum vero in aqua baptismi tinguitur, fidelis dicitur: cum vero chrismatur a chrisma, id est, unctione, dicitur Christianus...* Translation Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 100.

Thus there were three basic stages: a new believer became a catechumen when asking for baptism; he or she progressed to the competent stage which brought them closer to fulfilling the necessary requirements for baptism; then the third stage was the actual baptism. On top of these three stages Beatus added a fourth where the person was given the label *fidelis* after coming out of the water before being chrismated when the person was now a complete Christian with full rights of all the sacraments as well as various responsibilities. Thus baptism was part of the process of becoming a Christian and only those baptised and chrismated were to be called Christian.

Cramer introduces Hippolytus' process from the *Apostolic Tradition*,[53] from the early third century, arguing that this was the first explicit document of an institutional, ecclesial baptism, different from the more or less spontaneous faith baptisms reported in the Book of Acts.[54] The process is outlined as: a preliminary interrogation with witnesses to vouch for the candidate, which allows the person to begin a period of catechesis, usually three years. After this there was a second interrogation with witnesses and a setting apart of the catechumen as baptism approached. There were then several exorcisms performed culminating in an episcopal exorcism. These exorcisms were a testing for purity since the candidates were neither wholly pagan nor wholly Christian, which was the reason they were separated from both communities at this stage in the process. On Holy Thursday they bathed or washed and on Friday they fasted leading up to Saturday when the bishop laid hands on them one by one, blew on their faces and signed them on their forehead, ear and nostrils. Once this was done they spent all night receiving instruction and listening to readings and thus prepared they headed to water for baptism with only their post-baptismal eucharist offering. With a final anointing-exorcism they entered the water naked. When they came out of the water, before putting on clothes, they were anointed by the priest and/or bishop 'in the name of Jesus Christ' and 'in God the Father the Almighty and in Christ Jesus and in the Holy Spirit.'[55] With this being recommended as a three-year process, baptism would be the culmination of the long preparation. If there were three years of instruction given

[53] Hippolytus, *La Tradition Apostolique de Saint Hippolyte.*
[54] Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 9.
[55] Ibid, 10-14.

before baptism, there would, most likely, be little need for more instruction post-baptism which argues for the rite being a culmination of a process. If, however, the pre-baptismal period was three or four weeks, then post-baptismal instruction would be vital for the new member of the Christian community to be able to live out his/her new faith in a daily way.

Keefe gives a summary of the ceremony of baptism as including fourteen steps using a text which Keefe concludes is if not Alcuin's certainly an *ordo* that he endorsed.[56] These steps were: (1) *catecuminus et renuntiatio*, (2) *exsufflatio*, (3) *exorcismus*, (4) *sal*, (5) *traditio symboli*, (6) *scrutinia*, (7) *nares*, (8) *pectus*, (9) *scapulae*, (10) *trina mersio*, (11) *alba vestimentia*, (12) *caput, mysticum velamen*, (13) *corpus et sanguis domini*, (14) *impositio manus a summo sacerdote.*[57] One is struck by the detail and the process which includes a casting off of the old, or traditional, religions and an accepting of the new, in this case Christianity. Also the ideal was to have the candidate well versed in the meaning and understanding of baptism and the life of faith so that they could stand under the scrutiny of the priests or bishops before baptism. With the exorcisms and then the anointing of nostril, breast and shoulder blades there is a sense that baptism was seen very much as a dividing line between traditional and new religions as well as the sense that the priests and bishops were fully aware of the problem of people returning to, or mixing, traditional religious practices. So with the setting apart of the candidate, exorcisms, scrutiny, anointing, and creedal instruction, the believer passed from being a candidate for baptism to begin a member of the Christian community.

One specific set of questions having to deal with renunciation is found in the *Interrogationes et Responsiones Baptismales*[58]. This short formula consists of the questions: Do you reject the devil? Do you reject sacrifices to the devil? Do you reject the works of the devil? Do you believe in God the almighty father? Do you believe in Christ, God's son? Do you believe in the Holy Ghost?[59] The expected

---

[56] Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 81.

[57] Ibid, 81-82.

[58] 'Interrogationes et Responsiones Baptismales', in *MGH, Cap I, no. 107*, ed. A Boretius (Hanover, 1883).

[59] Ibid. *Forsâchistu diobolae? end allum diobolgeldae? end allum dioboles uuercum? gelobistu in got alamehtigan fadaer? gelobistu in crist godes suno? gelobistu in halogan gast?*English translation in Timothy Reuter, 'Saint Boniface and Europe', in *The Greatest Englishman* (Exeter, 1980), 76.

answers were all in the affirmative with some probable late additions to the third one[60]. This formula, Reuter argues, reveals the tension between inward and outward understanding of the Christian faith. The inner change would take place over time but there was the constant concern that Christianity would just co-exist with other traditional religious beliefs and practices. Therefore, the renunciation formula was significant in the process from outward compliance through baptism and the inner understanding.[61]

In summary, the actual length of the catechumenate preparation varied from a week, to forty days with a three-year period most likely the exception rather than the rule. There were several manuals or instructions on how to perform the rite of baptism[62] all of which contained some common elements. These were the rejection of whatever religious tradition the candidate had previously followed, witnesses who established the candidate's readiness for baptism, the candidate's testimony of their new faith, exorcism, baptism in the name of the Trinity, and then participation in the eucharist as a sign of communion and fellowship with the larger community of believers.[63]

1.3. Individual and Group

If the rite of baptism was a form of initiation into the Christian community, must this have been done on an individual level or were mass baptisms valid? In Acts

---

[60] Reuter, 'Saint Boniface and Europe', 76 and 90, footnote 37. The response in document is *ec forsacho allum dioboles uuercum and uuordum thunaer thunaer ende woden ende saxnote ende allum them unholdum the hira genotas sint.* Reuter translates this as "I reject them (and his words, and Donar and Wodan and Saxnot and all their evil companions)" with the probable later additions in the brackets.

[61] Ibid, 76. This formula in old Germanic lends itself to further analysis in the Winter paradigm (Winter, 'The New Macedonia') as moving from an E3 to an E2 or E1 movement in the understanding of the significance of baptism. The use of the vernacular is striking in this particular formula but it is not the first translation of such a formula into the vernacular (Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*). Work on the place of the vernacular, and the larger issue of language, and mission has been done by missiologist such as Nida (Nida, *Message and Mission*; Nida and Raybum, *Meaning Across Cultures*), but this has yet to be applied to the historical sources of the early middle ages.

[62] Susan A. Keefe, *Water and the Word, Baptism and the Education of the Clergy in the Carolingian Empire, vol 2* (Notre Dame, IN, 2002). Where Keefe has gathered 61 texts on baptism. In volume 1 of *Water and the Word* Keefe discusses the various *Ordo Romano* and others pp.42ff, the *Gelasian Sacramental* on pp. 43-46, 60-63 and other places; Augustine, *De Catechizandis Rudibus* ; Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy.*

[63] Fisher, *Baptism in the Medieval West*, 123-31. Fisher shows that even when the baptismal process is shortened to a few days, or even hours, these components are still evident.

2:41, at the end of the story of Pentecost, it is reported that those who believed were baptized, about three thousand in all. This number not only raises logistical questions, but also questions such as to how much understanding the people as a whole and individuals within a group actually had, or whether some accepted baptism because they were in a group. Cramer points to different interpretations of baptism in the book of Acts: Lydia (16:14-16) was baptized after teaching; Paul's conversion was in blindness and healing (9:17ff) and thus power manifestation; the eunuch was looking for clarity and once he understood he was baptized (8:26-36); there was also the baptism of fire (2:37-8). Therefore, Cramer argues, there were elements of understanding and power coming together in baptism.[64] Note that in each of these examples Cramer highlights the individual. However what does one do with passages such as Acts 2:41 where three thousand were baptised in one day and there were others added daily? With such great numbers one wonders if the individual was actually quizzed on his or her understanding of the rite of baptism beforehand, or is one to assume that, since most of these new believers in Jesus as the Messiah were Jews, that they already had an understanding so not a great deal of explanation was needed.[65]

In the early middle ages there are many records of leaders accepting baptism along with a number of followers, sometimes in small numbers, sometimes in large numbers.[66] This raises the question of whether the leaders were seeing baptism as a political expedient or an actual change of religious belief. If it was on the level of a political move, they would have had little understanding (and perhaps interest) in exploring the creeds and tenets of the Christian faith that were to go with baptism. Wright argues that "[just] as the church itself could be described as a baptismal community, so baptism was essential to the identity of the individual Christian."[67] Therefore, he would argue that although baptism was given at times to groups, it

---

[64] Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 40.

[65] Johnson, *The Rites*, 7-10. See below, The Early Church, also Chapter 1, The Early Church.

[66] For example: Adamnan, *Vita S. Columba*, §2, 3; *Annales Bertiniani, MGH SRG*, ed. G. Waitz (Hanover, 1891), 852, 863, 865, 867, 869, 873, 875; *AF*, 845, 852, 882; *Annales Regni Francorum*, 775, 776, 777; Robert Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria, A comparative study across the early medieval frontier* (London, 1975), 45; Fredegar, *Fredegarii Chronicorum Liber Quartus cum Continuationibus*, trans. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill (London, Edinburgh, 1960), §27; Sixth Chronicle §8; Stephanus, 'VWilfridi', §26, 41.

[67] Wright, *Infant Baptism*, 36.

would be at the individual level of a declaration of faith that the baptism had significance.[68]

Tertullian, in the second century, wrote in the introduction *On Baptism*[69] that the sacrament of water washed away sin and admitted the baptised into eternal life. He goes on to state, "A treatise on this matter will not be superfluous; instructing not only such as are just becoming formed (in the faith), but them who, content with having simply believed, without full examination of the grounds of the traditions, carry (in mind), through ignorance, an untried though probable faith."[70] This implies that Tertullian was well aware of the dangers of what he considered heretical teaching that would draw the individual away from the faith professed at baptism. This, then, argues for the individual to have an understanding of his/her faith even if the individual is seen as part of a group. In chapter 18 of this treatise Tertullian also states that baptism should not be administered rashly and argues that the individual should be old enough to understand the decision made reflected in baptism.[71] This, again, would argue for individual understanding as well as adult over infant baptism.

Augustine, in the late third and early fourth century, in his *De Catechizandis Rudibus* uses phrases such as, "the narration is full when each person is catechised",[72] "for faith is not a matter of the body which does obeisance, but of the mind which believes",[73] and "the man himself is to be interrogated" [74] which all argue for an ideal of each person as an individual being catechised and instructed, interrogated and then baptised.

Stephanus, in the eighth century, in his *Vita Wilfridi* records the incident in Friesland where Wilfrid was allowed to preach the word of God to the people with no indication that the focus was solely on the leaders. When there was a large catch of fish the people attributed it to Wilfrid's God with the result that "with a few

---

[68] See also Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 184. Padberg argues that the baptismal vows, especially the renunciation of the devil, were one of the few parts of the liturgy expressed in local languages and thus they represent an individual element in mass baptisms.

[69] Tertullian, 'On Baptism'.

[70] Ibid, §1. *instruens tam eos qui cum maxime formantur quam et illos qui simpliciter credidisse contenti, non exploratis rationibus traditionum, temptabilem fidem per imperitiam portant.* Schaff translation.

[71] Ibid, §18.

[72] Augustine, *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, §3.5. *Narratio plena est, cum quisque primo catechizatur*

[73] Ibid, §5.9. *Fides enim non res est salutantis corporis, sed credentis animi.*

[74] Ibid. *etiam ipse interrogandus est*

exceptions all the chiefs were baptized by him in the name of the Lord, as well as many thousands of common people."[75] Here the tension between the group and the individual can be seen. The crowds gathered to hear Wilfrid preach but did not respond until the chiefs took the lead in baptism, and this only after a display, in their minds, of greater power by Wilfrid's God. However, this record that baptism was done on a communal level does not negate individual understanding or belief. What it does show is that the group decision was decisive for all, those who might understand and those who might not understand underwent baptism following the leaders' example; but it does not clarify the level of understanding the leaders or the people had before baptism. The display of Wilfrid's God's power seems to have been the turning point, but the record clearly points to a period of teaching prior to this supposed miracle,[76] so there was a combination of teaching and power display, both of which could be interpreted on a group as well as an individual level.

In chapter 41 of the *Vita* Stephanus relates that Wilfrid was in Sussex where he began to proclaim the word of God to the king and queen and then to the people who had never been evangelized before. This resulted in "many thousands of pagans of both sexes were baptized in one day....They deserted idolatry and made confession of faith in Almighty God, some of them willingly and some being compelled by the king's command."[77] Once again the tension between the group and the individual can be seen. The king and queen obviously agreed to baptism and the people followed. It is interesting to note that there were those who willingly accepted baptism and there were those who were compelled, so at the individual level some understood and accepted Wilfrid's message of the gospel while others did not but were still compelled to accept baptism. This argues for understanding and conversion at the individual level, while acknowledging the influence of the leader and group on individual actions.

---

[75] Stephanus, 'VWilfridi', §26. *omnes principes, exceptis paucis, et multa milia vulgi in nomine Domini baptizavit*...Colgrave translation.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid, §41....paganorum utriusque sexus, quidam voluntarie, alii vero coacti regis imperio, idolatriam deserentes, Deum omnipotentem confitentes...in una die multa milia baptizati sunt Colgrave translation.

By the ninth century, Keefe argues, the education of the people of God began with baptism,[78] and that Charlemagne's main thrust in his *Admonitio Generalis*[79] was the education of the priests who would in turn educate the masses.[80] This again highlights the group and the individual nature of the understanding of baptism and its significance. The efficacy of baptism was not questioned, rather the correct procedure and understanding was emphasized and this at the local level. McKitterick argues that the whole thrust of the reform was to teach the whole of society in order to create a Christian society. The clergy were key to this process, as it was they who were to be educated in correct doctrine and ritual procedures and then pass these onto their congregations. The goal was to have "the whole kingdom, the whole of Frankish society, rulers and ruled,....full and worthy members of the *communitas fidelium*."[81] This is seen in the *Admonitio Generalis* which stated that the Christian faith was to be preached by the bishops and priests to the people,[82] and that the priest was to administer baptism, celebrate communion, teach the people to recite the Lord's prayer, and to sing psalms properly,[83] thus to ensure that the people understood their religion.

Therefore, throughout the early middle ages there can be seen a tension between the group and the individual in terms of response to the gospel message. One of the areas where this can be observed is the baptismal rite. Group or leader pressure did compel some to undergo baptism without understanding, but even in the groups there were individuals who underwent baptism willingly. This, therefore, argues that there was some understanding at the individual level of the significance of the baptismal rite.

1.4. Adult (believer) and/or infant

The above discussion has the underlying premise of adult baptism, but the church continued to struggle with the question of infant baptism: whether it should

---

[78] Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 2.

[79] 'Admonitio Generalis'.

[80] Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 90. See also McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, xx, 6; Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London, 1967), 6-7.

[81] McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, xx.

[82] 'Admonitio Generalis', §61. *Primo omnium, ut fides catholica, ab episcopis et presbyteris diligenter legatur et omni populo praedicetur.*

[83] Ibid, §70.

be performed as a regular practice or whether it should be for only exceptional cases.[84] Other issues were the motives for baptising infants and its significance, that is, for example, are infants pure or sinful[85]. The significance of infant baptism, as it grew to be the common place rather than the extraordinary,[86] is raised by David Wright in *What has Infant Baptism done to Baptism?*[87] The historical evidence shows that baptism was originally for adults, with infants added only in certain circumstances, usually when death was imminent,[88] and in these circumstances anyone, lay or clergy, could perform the baptism.[89] The argument for infant baptism is based on the Old Testament parallel of circumcision,[90] though in the New Testament the emphasis is on faith baptism.[91] Augustine's writings are the turning point in the understanding of infant baptism even though at that time infant baptism was not the norm. Augustine argued that infant baptism was necessary to deal with sin and the infant sinned even though not conscious of it.[92] Augustine argued that the true minister of the sacraments was Christ, so that its validity and efficacy were not dependent on the personal standing of the human agent. All that mattered was that water and the Trinitarian formula were used.[93] Out of this argument grew not just the

---

[84] David F. Wright, *Infant Baptism in Historical Perspective* (Milton Keynes, 2007).This collection of studies is very insightful.

[85] For example: Cyprian, *Ep.*, LVIII; Augustine, 'Contra Duas Epistolas Pelangianorum Libri IV', in *PL, 44*, ed. J P Migne (Paris, 1845), Book I.40; Augustine, 'De Gratia Christi et de Peccator Originali Libri II', in *PL, 44*, ed. J P Migne (Paris, 1845), Book II.1, 21, 44; Augustine, 'De Peccatorum meritis et Remissione Libri III', in *PL, 44*, ed. J P Migne (Paris, 1845), Book I.1, 21-24, 28; Book II.1, 41, 43, 46, 52; Book III.10. English translations found in Philip Schaff, ed., *CF-NPN, 1, vol 5* (Edinburgh and Peabody, MA, 1887, 1995); Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 125-29; Johnson, *The Rites*, 59, 65-68, 154-57, 213-16; Wright, *Infant Baptism in Historical Perspective*, Chapters 1, 2, 6.

[86] Michel Meslin, 'Baptism', in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (NY, 1987), 62.

[87] Wright, *Infant Baptism.* See also, Wright, *Infant Baptism in Historical Perspective.*

[88] *Carthage en 411*, Canon CX; *AB*, 875, 877; Augustine, 'Enchiridion', in *PL 40*, ed. J P Migne (Paris, 1845), §42; Augustine, *Ep.*, XCVIII; Augustine, *De Civitate Dei, Libri XI-XXII, CC SL 47*, Book XX.8; 'Conventus Episcoporum', 175.

[89] For example: 'Conventus Episcoporum', 173; Gregory of Nazianzus, 'Oration 40', §26, 27; Wright, *Infant Baptism*, 3.

[90] For example: Augustine, *Ep.*, Ep. XXIII, LXXXII; Cyprian, *Ep.*, LVIII, LXX; Gregory of Nazianzus, 'Oration 40', §28; Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses, CC, Series A* (Turnhout, 2006), Book I.XXVI.1, 2; III.X.2, 3; XII.7, 10, 11, 15; Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 42-45, 47, 119; Wright, *Infant Baptism*, 15.

[91] *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, (Geneva, 1982), 4; Johnson, *The Rites*, 28-30; Wright, *Infant Baptism*, 14, 31, 36.

[92] For example: Augustine, *Epistolae LVI-C, CC SL 31A* (Turnhout, 2005), Ep. XCVIII; Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 113-29; Johnson, *The Rites*, 65-68, 154-57.

[93] Augustine, *Ep. I-LV*, Ep. LIV Johnson, *The Rites*, 213-15; Wright, *Infant Baptism*, 25-27

practice but also the mindset that infants should be baptised as quickly as possible.[94] From the tenth and eleventh centuries onwards this led to a massive change in the history of the church. As Wright puts it, this shift within the church was "[f]rom being a company recruited by intentional response to the gospel imperative to discipleship and baptism, it became a body enrolled from birth."[95] That is, from a matter of decision to one of heredity.

One of the earliest unambiguous references to infant baptism with instructions is found in the *Apostolic Tradition*[96] dated ca. 220 although there is no trace of evidence that there were services designed around infant baptism, rather infants were accommodated within the believers' service[97]; and although infants were baptised, the formula and service, in general, continued to be the one for adults, by profession of faith.[98] The *Gelasian Sacramentary* is illustrative of this.[99] Wright raises the question of whether infant baptisms have been beneficial to the church as a whole, in that if the focus is on infant baptism, the whole idea of adults making a confession of faith and being baptized as testimony of their faith loses its meaning.[100] Although the *Capitulary for Saxony* declares, "It was also decided to include among these decrees a ruling that every infant be baptised within a year;...",[101] thus making it a crime for the Saxons not to baptise infants, there is more evidence for consenting adult baptism than for infant baptism.[102] The severity of the law code for the Saxons clearly demonstrates a policy of not only forced conversion, but also of the use of infant baptism as a means of controlling an area.[104] The imposition of infant baptism would have allowed Charlemagne to declare control of the people as he was the ruler

---

[94] As above note 85.

[95] Wright, *Infant Baptism*, 74; Johnson, *The Rites*, 213-16.

[96] Baldovin, 'Hippolytus and the Apostolic Tradition: Recent Research and Commentary': 21: 4-5.

[97] Wright, *Infant Baptism*, 41; Fisher, *Baptism in the Medieval West*, 123-31; Johnson, *The Rites*, 216-18.

[98] Wright, *Infant Baptism*, 47.

[99] Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, 212-43.

[100] Wright, *Infant Baptism*, 101-02; See also, Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 179-220.

[101] Charlemagne, 'Capitulatio de Partibus Saxoniae', §19. *Similiter placuit his decretis inserere, quod omnes infantes infra annum baptizantur...* English translation: P.D. King, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources* (Cumbria, 1987), 206.

[102] Alcuin, *Ep.*, 110; Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 42.

[104] Yitzhak Hen, 'Charlemagne's Jihad', *Viator, Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 37 (2006): 39-40. Hen argues the *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae* was controversial for its harshness, not its policy of forced conversion. And that in the end, it was not implemented but replaced by the more lenient *Captiulare Saxonicum* in 797.

of the 'New Israel' with a mandate to extend the Christian religion[105]; and having a person enter into the Christian community by baptism shortly after birth allowed Charlemagne and his successors to continue to claim authority to rule in Saxon territory.

1.5. Forced or voluntary

As seen, for example, in the *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, forced baptisms in early medieval history is an undisputed fact.[106] However, the theologians in the early middle ages, such as Alcuin, continued to argue the meaning of forced versus voluntary baptism.[107] This can be seen in the continuing concern with the efficacy of the Trinitarian formula in baptism. If baptising in 'the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit' did not seal someone within the Christian community, then did the significance of the whole rite come under doubt? The theologians continued to press the claims that there was only one baptism and it was done only once, therefore there should be no re-baptism unless in extraordinary circumstances which did not include forced baptism.[108] The discussion surrounding forced baptism was more along the lines of how to educate the now declared Christians, so that the faith that they had assumed unwillingly became a faith they adhered to with pleasure.[109]

McMullen argues that the influx of persons from other religious faiths from Constantine onwards brought about sociological and demographical changes on the basis that although these people were baptized, "they were poor and rural and hard to

---

[105] See discussion in the Case Study on Anskar, page 145, note 14.

[106] Hen, 'Charlemagne's Jihad': 37-44, especially 41 and 44. Hen does not dispute the fact of forced conversion. In the case of the Saxons there were mitigating circumstance which, which Hen argues, resulted in a harsh policy under Theodulf's influence. Hen also sees the *Capitulatio* and Alcuin's response as "part of an on-going discussion in Charlemagne's court on the forms and meaning of conversion..." See also Hen's footnote 54 for further readings on force and conversion; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 85-86.

[107] For example: Alcuin, *Ep.*, 6, 7, 110, 113; *Annales Regni Francorum*, 775, 776, 777; Augustine, *Epistolae*, XCIII, CV; Chrysostom, 'Homilies on the Gospel According to St. John', in *CF-NPN I, Vol XIV*, ed. Philip Schaff (Edinburgh, 1989), Homily X; Clement of Alexandria, 'The Instructor', in *CF-AN, Vol II*, ed. Rev. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, 1994), §6; Fredegar, *Liber Quartus*, Sixth Chronicle §8, 65.

[108] For example: Leo the Great, *Sermones et Epistolae, PL 54*, ed. J P Migne (Paris, 1846), CLIX §7, 8; Nedungatt and Featherston, eds., *Council of Trullo*, Canon XCV.

[109] Alcuin, *Ep.*, 2, 7, 9, 18, 35, 110; 'Conventus Episcoporum'.

get at, rarely to be seen in church."[110] Therefore, although they were seen to be members of the Christian community, their daily lives did not necessarily reflect a change stemming from a change in religion. Thus at the individual level, especially in the rural areas, the change of religion to Christianity had little influence on the daily lives of the people. This is a case where the group decision did not necessarily equal changes at the individual level. If people were being baptised and then counted as believers but were not true participants in the rituals and services, or even in understanding of the basic beliefs, then a tension between those who understood, promoted and followed the religion and those who only had a surface knowledge would become greater and greater. This is behind Keefe's argument that the Carolingian reforms were more than reforms from the top down, but rather the practical education of the local priest in a way that would allow him to pass clear teaching and understanding onto the individuals within his area of responsibility.[111]

This is seen in Alcuin's letter to Charlemagne[112] in which he argued that baptism should follow a period of teaching instead of following immediately after victory. This would imply that Charlemagne was using baptism as a territorial seal, that is, once conquered the people should be baptized whether they understood the significance or not. This was what Alcuin was pleading against.[113] If many were compelled to be baptized without understanding the basics of the faith, how could they receive the rite of baptism on any other understanding than that of compliance to a stronger leader. Thus baptism would be seen as a belonging to the Carolingian authority and was not a faith issue at all. This would weaken the significance of the whole baptismal process. Alcuin was raising this issue along with the one of mis-using the rite of baptism for political purposes. Thus Alcuin, even though he accepted the result of forced baptism, argued for voluntary baptism as part of a faith process over against forced baptism as part of a political process.

---

[110] Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven, 1997), 144.

[111] Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 2, 7, 9, 18, 35; See also, McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, xx, 6, 82-83, 207.

[112] Alcuin, *Ep.*, 110. For further insights into the *Capitultio de partibus Saxoniae* see Hen, 'Charlemagne's Jihad'. Hen argues that the harshness of the *Capitulatio* reflects Theodulf's influence from his experience with Islam in Spain. This is especially reflected, Hen argues, in the notion of forced conversion as stipulated in the eighth canon.

[113] Alcuin, *Ep.*, 110, 111; Hen, 'Charlemagne's Jihad': 43.

2. Baptism in the early church

2.1. *Biblical basis*

Although the Jewish community had initiation rites for those desiring to become a member of their religious community, the rite of water baptism became the mark of initiation into the new Christian community in the early church.[114] As John the Baptist called Jews to repent and be baptized, describing them as a "brood of vipers"[115]; he was sending the message that Jews could no longer rely on salvation solely on the basis of being one of God's elect, otherwise he would not have been calling them to repent nor to be baptized as only non-Jews were required to do this.[116] The reaction against such a message by the Jewish community, especially its leaders, should be of no surprise as they were firmly of the understanding of having the birthright into God's community because of their election by God in the Noahic, Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. But John's message of the need for baptism for all who wanted to be members into the new faith community that was being formed was confirmed by Jesus himself as he submitted to baptism by John.[117] For the non-Jews, especially the God-fearers,[118] this would have been good news as the main stumbling blocks for non-Jews were the dietary laws and, for men, circumcision. For the Jews, however, this would have been a stumbling block as they saw themselves as already saved by merit of birth into the Jewish community.[119] In many ways this new interpretation and understanding of the rite of baptism, on the basis of repentance and belief, would bring a universal aspect to the message that Jesus and his disciples were preaching.[120]

Johnson argues that the real significance of Jesus' baptism by John was the presence of the Holy Spirit. This makes the gift of the Holy Spirit inseparable from

---

[114] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 80; Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, 14; Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, 53; Nida, *Message and Mission*, 11.

[115] Matthew 3:7-11a; Mark 1:4-8; Luke 3:3, 7-9.

[116] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 25.

[117] Matthew 3: 13-17; Mark 1: 9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1: 29-34; Johnson, *The Rites*, 9-11.

[118] See Chapter 1, footnote 52; Acts 2:5; 10:2.22; 13:26; 17:4,17; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 25, 42, 521.

[119] Acts 22:3; Galatians 2:15.

[120] Johnson, *The Rites*, 10, 32.

baptism, and this was what made Christian baptism unique and more than a purification rite.[121]

The basic pattern of the New Testament was the proclamation of the gospel, a response to the gospel, baptism and then post-baptismal teaching and life within the Christian community.[122] The two main interpretations of baptism were a new birth and being united with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection.[123] According to Johnson, the actual mode of baptism in the early church is difficult to ascertain conclusively. Most likely either submersion or immersion were the basic modes with affusion and aspersion being more common later in the Western Church.[124] Thus the need for baptism is plain in the Gospel accounts and then in other New Testament writings, but the details of the rite and teachings are not recorded. All of this speaks to diversity and variety in baptismal practices from New Testament times onwards.[125]

The Matthew 28:19, 20[126] passage was used to present the correct formula for baptism, that is, it should be pronounced 'in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.' Whether this was at first more of a theological rather than a liturgical formula,[127] this passage quickly came to be used to argue for a Trinitarian formula as essential to the baptismal rite.[128] Having this formula was not enough as questions were raised about the efficacy of a baptism performed using a corrupted version of the Trinitarian formula, or even a different one altogether.[129] These are just a sample

---

[121] Ibid, 15-16, 26.

[122] Ibid, 29.

[123] Ibid, 31. For the first see John 3:5ff and for the second Romans 6:3-11.

[124] Ibid, 27.

[125] Ibid, Chapter 2, 3, 4. See these chapters for discussions about the baptismal rite in the first through the fifth centuries.

[126] "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

[127] Johnson, *The Rites*, 2, 27-28. Johnson argues that in the early church the Trinitarian formula was not so much liturgical as theological. That is, it shows the meaning of baptism to be baptized into a new relationship with Christ rather than to be used as a seal of salvation or initiation into a community.

[128] For example: Cyprian, *Ep.*, LXXII, LXXIV; Tertullian, 'On Baptism', VI, XIII; Alcuin, *Ep.*, 110 and 111.

[129] For example: Clement of Alexandria, 'The Instructor', Book I. VI; Cyprian, *Ep.*, LXXII; Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses, CC, Series A*, Book I. XXI. This continued to be an issue as seen in:Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1896), Book 1§27, question 8; Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 26, 28, 45, 60, 80.

of the practical questions that arose within the Church community, especially as missionaries, priests and others moved into new non-Christian territory.

3. Baptism in the early middle ages

3.1. Letters and hagiography

Sullivan argues Carolingian missions were involved in consolidation rather than evangelism[130], on the evidence that the Carolingians tended to compel conquered peoples to be baptised. This meant that the Christian workers started from the assumption that the people were part of the larger Christian community, since they had undergone the rite of baptism. Thus the main thrust of the mission work would be teaching a basic understanding and instructions in correct practices. This, however, approaches Christian mission in the eighth and ninth centuries from a singular Carolingian point of view. A larger perspective of mission work from Constantinople, Salzburg and other areas shows that evangelism, that is, the transmission of the core Christian gospel message, still had a role and as the *Conventus* of 796 shows, there was still episcopal concern with correct understanding of this before baptism, especially in territories that had little or no Christian gospel witness.

Even so, it would not be wrong to think that having spent so much time on the issue of baptism in the early church,[131] the basic practice and tenets would have been well established by the late eighth and ninth centuries. However, in his letters Alcuin continued to address issues of baptism,[132] Boniface asked questions regarding correct practice,[133] a synod was called in 796 to discuss how to deal with Avars who would be coming under pressure from the Franks,[134] and Theodulf's response to Charlemagne's request for information regarding baptism[135] are just a few of those who continued to address issues related to baptism. All of which points to the fact

---

[130] Sullivan, 'Carolingian Missionary Theories', 277.

[131] Among other works: Augustine, 'Enchiridion'; Augustine, 'De Baptismo Contra Donatistas'; Augustine, *De Catechizandis Rudibus*; Tertullian, 'On Baptism'; Tertullian, 'Prescription Against Heretics'.

[132] For example: Augustine, *Ep.*, 110, 111, 113, 128, 134.

[133] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 18, 23, 25, 26, 28, 30, 33, 42, 45, 51, 56, 60, 68, 72, 80, 87.

[134] 'Conventus Episcoporum'. For details on this synod see the next section.

[135] Theodulf Bishop of Orléans, 'On Baptism', 105: 223-40.

that baptism continued to be regarded as an important rite within the church and as such there was a continued need to clarify the baptismal practice as well as its significance.

As Cusack argues, the early middle ages saw the influence of the leader or ruler upon the larger group[136]; once the leader was baptised many of those within the group followed suit. However, there are few, if any, records of one hundred percent of groups undergoing baptism. The prevailing pattern was for the leader and a number of his close retainers to undergo baptism and then the leader to request priests and teachers to continue to spread the gospel message among the people.[137] On the other hand there were the cases where the rulers and leaders were baptised but then reverted to pre-baptismal religious or traditional religious practices.[138] It can be argued that these stories prove that these leaders did not understand the underlying faith before they underwent the rite; that is, they understood the political expediency of baptism but not the actual life style to which they were committing, as correct living was the main thrust of the church at this time.[139] However, just as there are records that leaders were forced to undergo baptism, whether from physical or political coercion, for clear political motives,[140] there are as many documents of leaders approaching Christian leaders and rulers for either baptism or teachers to come and teach in their territories.[141] These leaders, it can be argued, did not necessarily entirely follow this line for political reasons, since by allowing teachers into their territory they were allowing a new religion to be presented to the people.

Baptism and the role of the leader or ruler is just one of the many facets of what was happening with baptism in the early middle ages. Keefe argues compellingly that the baptismal *ordo* was used by Charlemagne with the clear

---

[136] This is the basic premise of her book, Cusack, *Rise of Christianity.*

[137] For example: *Conversio*, §1; Fredegar, *Liber Quartus*, Sixth Chronicle §9; Richard E. Sullivan, 'Khan Boris and the Conversion of Bulgaria: A Case Study of the Impact of Christianity on the Barbarian Society', in *Christian Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 1994); *VC*, §14. For a discussion of this pattern see: Angenendt, 'The Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons'.

[138] For example: *AB*, 875; Fredegar, *Liber Quartus*, Sixth Chronicle §66.

[139] This is one of the themes throughout the Bonifatian correspondence, and the Carolingian reforms as pointed out by Keefe and McKitterick.

[140] *Annales Regni Francorum, MGH SRG*, ed. F. Kurze (Hanover, 1895), 775, 776, 777; Fredegar, *Liber Quartus*, Sixth Chronicle §8, 27, 31.

[141] *AB*, 869, 873; Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 45; *Conversio*, §1; Fredegar, *Liber Quartus*, Sixth Chronicle §3, 9; Nicholas, 'Nicolaus ad Bulgarorum consulta respondet (866)'; Rimbert, *VA*, §7, 9, 25; *VM*, §5.

purpose of educating the local priests who could then in turn educate the local people.[142] So whilst Charlemagne had a clearly different use for baptism within the territory under his control, he also included it in the equation when he was preparing to add new territory, as was seen in the synod held on the banks of the Danube in 796.[143] In all of this, as Keefe points out, there is not much known about the local priest of Carolingian Europe—where he came from, what kind of training he had prior to his appointment, or his moral quality.[144] The one thing that is known is that these priests needed educating in the basics of the faith and one way Charlemagne did this was to use the *ordo* of baptism.[145] If there is little known concerning the local priest within the Carolingian territories, there is even less known about many of the workers in territories that were not as yet labelled Christian. There are just some hints that workers are in place in the *Conversio, Conventus,* and some hagiography.[146] No matter what tradition these workers came from, all were concerned with the rite of baptism as seen in the *Conventus'* discussion of various scenarios.[147]

How did this affect mission thinking at this time? Alcuin's letter[148] arguing for voluntary baptism is telling in that if forced baptism was promoted, then the missionary's main work would be to have as many people go through the baptismal rite as quickly as possible, since then they would all be considered Christian. However, Alcuin argued not just for voluntary baptism but the need to have comprehension of the faith the person was accepting before undergoing the rite.

> That also must be considered with the greatest diligence, that the office of preaching and the sacrament of baptism is done in order, lest the washing of sacred baptism profits nothing in the body, if knowledge of the catholic faith does not precede in the mind of one having use of reason...For it is not possible for the body to receive the sacrament of baptism before the mind receives the truth of the faith...Therefore, that order of teaching people of mature age diligently, I believe, must be observed which St. Augustine ordained in his book which he entitled, 'On Catechizing Those New to the Faith.' First one must be instructed concerning the immortality of the soul and the future life and the recompense of good and evil people, and the eternity of the lot of both kinds; afterwards, for which sins and crimes one suffers eternal punishments with the devil and for what good things or good deed one enjoys eternal

---

[142] Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 2-9.
[143] 'Conventus Episcoporum'. For further discussion of this document see the following section.
[144] Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 6.
[145] Ibid, 9, 35-36, 90, 126-27.
[146] 'Conventus Episcoporum', 175; *Conversio*, §11. See also the Case Studies of Boniface, Anskar and Cyril and Methodius.
[147] For this discussion see the next section. See also the Case Study of Boniface.
[148] Alcuin, *Ep.*, 110.

> glory with Christ. Then, the faith of the Holy Trinity most carefully must be taught, and the coming into the world of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of the human race must be set out. Then, as I said, the new mind must be fortified concerning the mystery of his passion, and the truth of the resurrection, and the glory of the ascension into heaven, and his future coming to judge all peoples, and the resurrection of our bodies and the eternity of punishments for the wicked and of rewards for the good. When one has been strengthened and prepared with this faith, one should be baptized.[149]

Therefore the Christian worker had the responsibility not only of performing baptism and other sacraments correctly, but also of passing on correct teaching, that is the core Christian gospel message. In order to do this the priests had to have a certain level of knowledge, as argued by Keefe and McKitterick.[150] This would mean that those performing the sacraments would continue to not only be seen as the educated elite but they would also have a good reason to be the educated elite.

3.2. *Conventus Episcoporum ad Ripas Danubii (796)*

This document illustrates the ongoing issues surrounding baptism, especially to a new group of people who are assumed to be without any understanding of or contact with the Christian gospel message. The fact that Pippin, most likely with the approval of Charlemagne, felt it necessary to call the Conventus is telling in and of itself. One wonders whether this was in reaction to the ongoing struggle with the Saxons which saw such fluctuations in acceptance and then rejection not only of Carolingian control, but also the Christian religion that came with that control. If so, then Pippin was asking for episcopal approval not just for the excursion into Avar territory, but also for wisdom on how to proceed with the rite of baptism within the territory. The bishops addressed the spiritual, not the political, aspects of baptism, as this document is more of a manual for priests and bishops than anything else.

---

[149] Ibid. *Illod quoque maxima considerandum est diligentia, ut ordinate fiat praedicationis officium et baptismi sacramentum, ne nihil prosit sacri ablutio baptismi in corpore, si in anima ratione utenti catholicae fidei agnitio non praecesserit...Non enim potest fieri, ut corpus baptismi accipiat sacramentum, nisi ante anima fidei susceperit veritatem...Igitur ille ordo in docendo virum aetate perfectum, diligenter, ut arbitror, servandus est, quem beatus Augustinus ordinavit in libro, cui de catecizandis rudibus titulum praenotavit. Primo instruendus est homo de animae inmortalitate et de vita futura et de retributione bonorum malorumque et de aeternitate utruisque sortis. Postea: pro quibus peccatis et sceleribus poenas cum diabolo patiatur aeternas, et pro quibus bonis vel benefactis gloria cum Christo fruatur sempiterna. Deinde fides sanctae Trinitatis diligentissime docenda est, et adventus pro salute humani generis filii dei domini nostri Iesu Christi in hunc mundum exponendus; et de mysterio passionis illius, et veritate resurrectionis et gloria ascensionis in caelos et futuro eius adventu ad iudicandas omnes gentes et de resurrectione corporum nostrorum et de aeternitate poenarum in malos et praemiorum in bonos, mox—ut praediximus—mens novella firmanda est. Et hac fide roboratus homo et praeparatus baptizandus est.* (Keefe translation)

[150] Keefe, *Water and the Word*; McKitterick, *The Frankish Church.*

In the summer of 796 Pippin called bishops together on the banks of the Danube before entering Avar territory. The point of this was to discuss and confirm the church's stance and understanding on certain of the many individual rites relating to the worship of God and the Christian religion.[151] The bishops described the Avars as dull and unreasoning, slow to learn and lacking in ability to understand the sacred mysteries.[152] They were different to the Jews and God-fearers in the Bible, as these groups had had a basic understanding of Scripture before hearing the message about Jesus, the Christ. The bishops, as they were to decide how to deal with a group of people who had no contact with Scripture, were attempting to cover all possible situations. This cannot have been the first time some of these bishops were preparing to preach to a new group of people considered ignorant, lacking understanding and with no Scriptural background. However, the document records their thinking and arguments concerning baptism: how, when and by whom it should be performed.

The set times were confirmed as Easter and Pentecost with the argument that the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost so it is appropriate to mark this with baptism of catechumens as well as reference to Acts 1:5 which relates Jesus saying that the disciples would be baptised with the Holy Spirit. For Easter the reference was to the three-fold immersion signifying the three days the Lord spent in the tomb with the third time signifying the resurrection with reference to Romans 6:3,4 which speaks of believers being baptised into Jesus' death.[153]

Once this guideline had been set the bishops moved on to discuss the exceptions to the rule. That is, if someone came to believe in the gospel message after Pentecost (the Sunday closest to 50 days after Easter Sunday) how long must they wait to be baptised as Easter (late March or April) would be almost a year away and there was no guarantee that the catechumen would wait that long or even be alive in a year. Also there was no guarantee that a priest would be close enough to be able to set up a catechumen class and perform the rite at Easter the next year. So two exceptions to the rule were confirmed: one, if the person was in danger of dying and

---

[151] 'Conventus Episcoporum', 173. *de plurimis quibusque rerum cerimoniis ad cultum Dei et Christianam propensius pertinentium religionem diligenti studuit curiositate clementibus explorare verbis*

[152] Ibid, 174. *...autem gens bruta et inrationabilis vel certe idiotae et sine litteris tardior atque laboriosa ad cognoscenda sacra mysteria invenitur.*

[153] Ibid, 173.

two, if a person was in the midst of war or other circumstances that might lead to death before Easter or Pentecost arrived,[154] and anyone could perform the rite. Thus, although the preferred times would be Easter and Pentecost, the importance of receiving baptism overrode the strict adherence to these set times.

One of the discussions concerned the rapidity of baptism for someone with no previous contact with Christian teachings. The concern was that the rite should not be devalued. Therefore, even though Bible passages record people being baptised with little or no teaching, the bishops recognised the preference to have catechumens taught before undergoing baptism as well as continued instruction after baptism.[155] Most of the examples, they argued, were of people who already had some understanding of Scripture,[156] and therefore were not valid for a people new to Christianity, that is, the Avars.

They used passages such as Mark 16:16[157] and Matthew 28:19, 20[158] to argue for the importance of baptism as well as the pattern of teaching, baptism and then more teaching.

> And after baptism in turn, *teach them to keep/observe all the things I have entrusted to you*, so that before baptism faith should be taught in order that the novis can understand what baptism is all about and have a ready understanding concerning the grace of baptism; because by means of this his sins are dismissed [forgiven] and he has become a new man [the new man has been reborn], because the old man with his deeds has been put to death in the waters of redemption [baptism]. He who was the son of sin, should begin by adoption to be a son of God and a sharer in the heavenly kingdom and after this mortal life obtain the blessedness of eternal life. After baptism he ought to be taught to keep all the commands of God, by means of which he ought to live in a godly and just way in this age.[159]

---

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid, 174. *Videamus, si tamen licet nobis ex considerationis intuitu humiliter perpendere, an etiam propter rudem ad fidem gentem noviter concurrentem praedicta duo tempora laudabiliter valeant anticipari,..*[also] *Huic autem genti, quemadmodum praefati sumus, sacris ignare eloquiis non convenit iuxta haec prolata scripturarum exempla tam citius baptismi mysterium indulgere, priusquam inbuatur fidei sacramento per aliquas protelationis moras* with quoting Matthew 28:19,20

[156] Ibid.

[157] Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit salvus erit.

[158] Ite, docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos in nomine patris et filii et Spiritus sancti, docentes eos servare omnia, quaecumque mandavi vobis

[159] 'Conventus Episcoporum', 174-75. *Et post baptismum rursus: Docete eos servare omnia, quaecumque mandavi vobis, ut in promptu daretur intelligi et ante baptismum fides esset docenda et ut intellegat novitius, quae sit baptismi gratia, quia per id peccata dimittantar et regeneratus novus homo, mortuo scilicet inter undas redemptionis vetere cum actibus suis, qui erat fillius peccati, incipiat per adoptionem filius esse Dei et particeps regni caelorum et post hanc mortalem vitam aeternae vitae beatitudinem consequatur. Post baptismum vero docendi sunt servare omnia Dei mandata, quibus pie et iuste in hoc saeculo vivere debeant.*(My translation)

Thus baptism should only be performed after the novice had an understanding of the meaning of the rite: he would become a new man, because the old man would be put to death in baptism and he would be raised out of the waters into the resurrection of Christ.[160] The consolidation of this knowledge and other teachings would continue after baptism.

The bishops also confirmed that the people should be persuaded with words highlighting the reward of eternal life against the punishment of hell and not by sword or compulsion.[161] They then declared that the number of days of pre-baptismal teaching should be left up to the priest but they should not be more than forty, since that might cause the "the flame of their desire to cool and become cold and quenched".[162] The appropriate day for baptism, whether at Easter, Pentecost or some other time of the year was Sunday, that is, the Lord's Day.[163]

There did not seem to be much discussion of infant baptism other than to conclude that unless the infant was dying, Easter and Pentecost, the two designated times, should be followed.[164] If death was imminent, then baptism should be given by anyone close to hand, as in the above section.

The bishops also addressed the issue of those already baptized by someone else. This acknowledges the fact that the others had already started the spread of the Christian gospel message amongst the Avars. Most likely the bishops were not agitating against this work, but wanting to confirm Roman ecclesial authority in the territory. There were several cases examined— the first was someone baptized by a priest, not a bishop: if upon examination he/she were approved, then no second baptism was necessary.[165] The second case was someone baptized by a cleric, but with water blessed by a priest and with witnesses: he/she needed no second baptism,

---

[160] Ibid.

[161] Ibid, 175.

[162] Ibid. *Dilatatio autem tarditatis usque ad quem dierum numerum praetendatur, in sacerdotis arbitrio aestimari debet iuxta mores prorsus audientium, quam velocius vel serius suscipiant verbum Dei et adspirante sancto Spiritu intellegant suae redemptionis augmentum. Infra quadragenarium tamen numerum protelationis summa persistat, ne forte longe protracti flamma desiderii eorum defervens inaniter refrigescat, ita dumtaxat, ut septenarius numerus in discendo non transgrediatur.*

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid. *De his autem, qui iam baptizati a sacerdotibus terrae istius in nomine sanctae trinitatis esse probantur, quemadmodum eorum professione, cum a nobis diligenti cura percunctarentur, didicimus, placuit, non oportere iterum baptizari.*

but received the spiritual gifts by the laying on of hands.[166] The third case was someone baptised by an illiterate or ignorant cleric, who had not professed faith as regulated in the manuals, as well as he had not pronounced the Trinitarian formula during baptism. Such a person was to be considered as unbaptised.[167] The argument here was 'water without the mingling of the Holy Spirit does not have the power to wash away anything except the physical dirt or other things like that.'[168] Thus baptism done with the proper understanding and proper formula was the only valid baptism.

4. Conclusion

Having examined baptism in a historical light, there are several conclusions to be made. First, though there was variety in the rite of baptism, its significance in bringing someone into the larger Christian community remained unchanged. Whether early medieval theologians saw the rite as the remission of sin, a new birth, or the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, the general understanding was that if someone was baptised they were Christian. This however, led to tensions between those who underwent baptism voluntarily because of belief and those who underwent baptism under duress.

If baptism was the only demarcation of Christian and non-Christian, then there were many seen as Christian who were not necessarily Christian in practice. This not only pertained to adults but also to infants who underwent baptism without understanding. Thus the institutionalised church was confronted with large numbers within its ranks who needed teaching at a basic level. Since they were no longer seen as outside the Christian circle, the work done amongst these nominal Christians falls

---

[166] Ibid, 176. *Hi autem, qui a clericis baptizati sunt, aqua tamen a sacerdote benedicta, in nomine sanctae trinitatis et adsunt praesentes ipsi baptistae, qui testimonium tali perhibeant, vel certe ipsi, qui baptizati sunt, valent de se taliter testimonium proferre, nec hos arbitramur recte iterum baptizari, sed per solam manus inpositionem tradantur eis omnia dona spiritalia,....*

[167] Ibid. *Illi vero, qui ab inlitteratis clericis baptizati existunt et, cum intinguerentur in aqua, nec illi fedem, quia nesciebant, professi sunt, nec ille, qui baptizabat, dixit: 'Baptizo te in nomine patris et filii et Spiritus sancti' nec 'in nomine Iesu Christi', ...hi profecto pro non baptizatis habendi sunt.*

[168] Ibid. *Sola enim aqua sine sancti Spiritus ammixtione nihil valet aliud nisi sordes carnium aut quarumcumque rerum abluere.*

under consolidation, though in some cases it could well be argued that evangelism was taking place.

Even with the emphasis having shifted towards consolidation, there were still those concerned with groups and individuals who had not as yet heard the Christian gospel message. This can be seen in the case studies of historical figures as well as in the *Conventus* and *Conversio*. The continued tension between the top-down and bottom-up approach can also be seen in baptism, as there is evidence that baptisms had already been performed before the 'official' Roman or Constantinopolitan ecclesial structure and authority were established. Thus the questions stemming from incorrect performance, mispronunciation of the Trinitarian formula, the state of the baptiser, as well as wrong belief, continued to be asked and answered in the early middle ages.

Baptism and mission continued to be intertwined during the eighth and ninth centuries as the issues surrounding baptism influenced how the church perceived the task of mission.[169] For example, with large numbers being baptised in a short space of time the task of the missionary became more post-baptismal teaching rather than pre-baptismal, that is, an evangelistic proclamation of the Christian gospel message. This is also intertwined with the issue of conversion, what it is and how to track it, which will be examined in the next chapter.

[169] There is more specific work to be done on how baptism and mission influence each other but this is beyond the remit of this thesis.

Chapter 3. Conversion, Mission, and Missiology

Having come to a definition of mission and explored some of the issues involved in the mission process, and then explored baptism, the ritual and its significance, the next fundamental issue to be explored is conversion. Although in the early middle ages the ritual of baptism became salvific in and of itself (and thus anyone who underwent a correct ritual of baptism was considered a Christian) there was still the tension between an internal understanding and the external ritual, as explored in the previous chapter. Here the discussion centres on the issue of what constituted becoming a Christian, both internally and externally, in terms of conversion. This is an ongoing debate not just for early medievalists[1] but also for contemporary writers in various fields of research.[2]

---

[1] For example: Addison, *The Medieval Missionary*; Andrew Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome*, trans. Harold Mattingly (Oxford, 1969); Robert T. Anderson, 'Constraint and Freedom in Icelandic Conversions', in *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion*, ed. Andrew Buckser and Stephen D. Glazier (New York and Oxford, 2003); Guyda Armstrong and Ian Wood, *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals* (Turnhout, 2000); Martin Carver, ed., *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe AD 300-1300* (York, 2003); Charles-Edwards, 'Conversion to Christianity'; Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*; K. Ericsson, 'The Earliest Conversion of the Rus' to Christianity', *The Slavonic and East European Review* 11, no. 102 (1966); N. J. Higham, *The Convert Kings: Power and Religious Affiliation in Early Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester and New York, 1997); Jochens, 'Late and Peaceful: Iceland's Conversion Through Arbitration in 1000'; Ramsay MacMullen, 'Two Types of Conversion in Early Christianity', *Vigiliae Christianane* 37, no. 2 (1983); Henry Mayr-Harting, *Two Conversions to Christianity: The Bulgarians and the Anglo-Saxons* (Reading, 1994); Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, eds., *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Seeing and Believing* (Rochester, 2003); Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*; Sawyer, 'Scandinavian Conversion Histories'; Sullivan, 'Khan Boris and the Conversion of Bulgaria', 173-76.

[2] For example: Austin-Broos, 'The Anthropology of Conversion: An Introduction'; F.F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame: The Rise and Progress of Christianity from its First Beginnings to the Conversion of the English* (Exeter, 1958); Raymond Firth, 'Conversion from Paganism to Christianity', *RAIN* 14 (1976); Hefner, ed., *Conversion to Christianity*; Anto Karokaran, 'The Relationship of Mission, Conversion and Baptism', *International Review of Mission* 72, no. 287 (1983); Kroeger, 'Naming the Conversion We Seek'; Rebecca Sachs Norris, 'Converting to What? Embodied Culture and the Adoption of New Beliefs', in *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion*, ed. Andrew Buckser and Stephen D. Glazier (New York and Oxford, 2003); Richard Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament: Paul and the Twelve* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999); Peace, 'Conflicting Understandings'; Meic Pearse, 'Soundly Converted?', in *Message and Meaning, Essays Presented to Peter Cotterell*, ed. Antony Billington, Tony Lane, and Max Turner (Carlisle, UK, 1995); Lewis R. Rambo, 'Conversion', in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: 1987); Lewis R. Rambo, 'Anthropology and the Study of Conversion', in *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion*, ed. Andrew Buckser and Stephen D. Glazier (New York and Oxford, 2003); Kenneth L. Schmitz, 'The Language of Conversion and the Conversion of Language', *Communio* 21 (1992); Marc R. Spindler, 'Conversion Revisited: Present Understanding of a Classic Missionary Motive', *Missiology* 25, no. 3 (1997); Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity, How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few*

One key to understanding what made a group, or an individual,[3] Christian is to understand the variety of ways the term conversion has been used in the early medieval sources.[4] This variance can be highlighted in two examples: Gregory, in the sixth century, saw *conversio* as the perfection of a Christian soul.[5] Adam of Bremen, in the eleventh century writing about the ninth century, saw it as acceptance of Hamburg-Bremen authority.[6] With just two examples it can be seen that defining conversion is close to proposing a stroll through a minefield, as each writer had their own concept of what the term should mean.[7] However, without a working definition there is no way to keep a clear focus when examining the sources. Therefore, in order to come to a working definition of conversion for this thesis, two aspects of conversion, the group and the individual, and whether conversion is visible or invisible, are explored. After proposing a working definition, conversion in the early church and the early middle ages will be explored. While this chapter does not attempt to answer all the questions surrounding the issue of conversion, what it does propose to do is to bring a balance to understanding group and individual conversion and to address some issues concerning visible (external) and invisible (internal) conversion.

Centuries (Princeton, N.J., 1996); Tippett, 'Conversion as a Dynamic Process'; Andrew F. Walls, 'Converts or Proselytes? The Crisis over Conversion in the Early Church', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28, no. 1 (2004); David F. Wells, *Turning to God: Biblical Conversion in the Modern World* (Exeter, 1989).

[3] Addison, *The Medieval Missionary*, 20. This seems to be in direct contradiction to Addison's assertion that "individualism was at a minimum". However, the proposal here is not to emphasis the individual over the group, but to balance the individual within the group.

[4] Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', 52. Wood states, "Definitions of what constituted a Christian varied greatly and the pope was likely to take a strict line, although Nicolas himself, like Gregory the Great, could show flexibility when dealing with a newly converted people."; See also: Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, 1-23; H. Newton Malony and Samuel Southard, eds., *Handbook of Religious Conversion* (Birmingham, AL, 1992); Rambo, 'Conversion'; Rambo, 'Anthropology and the Study of Conversion'.

[5] Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World*, 41.

[6] Sawyer, 'Scandinavian Conversion Histories': 47-48.

[7] For example: Wells, *Turning to God*, 85-88. Wells points out that in the sixth and seventh centuries conversion referred to joining a monastic community; Peter Lombard in the twelfth century used the word to describe the supernatural change in the eucharistic elements; Aquinas had three conversions: drawing of sinners by grace to God, entry of sinners into grace, and the habit of living in grace; Luther used the word in three ways: baptism, repentance and contrition, and the moment of dramatic personal transformation; Calvin saw conversion in two ways: continual turning from sin and self to God repentance), and the active the fruit of faith (sanctification).

1. Towards a definition

1.1. Some background

If one defines conversion as "the reorientation of the soul of an individual"[8], then the individual becomes the deciding factor in conversion and there is no room for groups to institute change. However, if conversion is interchangeable with Christianisation, "with no special interior or spiritual meaning attached"[9], then how does one account for the named individuals such as Herigar and Frideburg[10], as well as unnamed individuals, who are portrayed as having individual, internal convictions concerning their own faith and who felt the need to transmit the Christian gospel message to others.[11] To talk of conversion without including the possibility of an individual having an internal experience is to dismiss a biblical understanding of the term and leaves conversion on the level of sociological or anthropological interpretation.[12] However, if the only valid communicator of the gospel message is an individual (and the only valid response is on an individual level) then the decisions of the rulers and leaders of groups are dismissed as ineffective. Thus, there is a need to balance these two aspects of conversion in a way that allows for both to take place and both to be valid transmitters of the Christian gospel message.

Before going further two caveats need to be made. The first is that it is helpful to separate conversion from baptism even though it is acknowledged that many, if not most, writers in the early middle ages saw baptism as conversion:[13] the external act of undergoing the baptismal ritual became the indicator of whether someone was accepted into the Christian community or not. However, as seen for example in the account in the *Vita Anskarii*[14] there were some who delayed baptism

---

[8] A.D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford, 1933).

[9] Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, 22.

[10] Rimbert, *VA*, §19, 20 respectively. For more in depth discussion of these two people see the case study of Anskar.

[11] Rodney Stark, *One True God, Historical Consequences of Monotheism* (Princeton, N.J.; Oxford, 2001), 35. Stark argues that only monotheistic religions have an impetus to missionize.

[12] Spindler, 'Conversion Revisited: Present Understanding of a Classic Missionary Motive'. This article has insights into different approaches to conversion. See also: Firth, 'Conversion from Paganism to Christianity'; Rambo, 'Conversion'; Rambo, 'Anthropology and the Study of Conversion'; Stark, *One True God*, 5.

[13] This has been discussed in the previous chapter.

[14] Rimbert, *VA*, §24.

until their deathbed, although they were full participants in the Christian community. Thus it can be concluded that conversion did not necessitate baptism as a starting point to Christian faith and a Christian way of life. The second is that Christianisation—the politically supported establishment of a top-down ecclesial structure—is also not to be confused with conversion, especially if conversion includes the possibility of an internal change.[15] This is not to deny the influence of a group decision on an individual, but it is to clarify that the term Christianisation is to be used to specifically define the establishment of a top-down ecclesial structure for political purposes and thus the emphasis is on the group. In order, thus, to discuss what is commonly called mass conversion—usually meaning mass baptism or the external acceptance of Christianity and which some take as the start of Christianisation[16] —the phrase 'a mass movement of people into the Christian community' will be used, as this allows for both a top-down and a bottom-up response to the Christian gospel message as well as a broader interpretation of the time element involved.

As with *missio*, how one defines *conversio* determines how one reads history. For example, as seen above, if conversion means group baptism then the individual has little profile, whereas if conversion is at the individual level then the place of the group influence can be lost. When one enters the realm of conversion and the Christian faith, questions arise such as whether conversion is instantaneous, a process, only internal, only external, or a combination of the above.[17] Does it mean adhering to an ecclesial system or can it exist without structure? Is it personal or is it communal? One place to start answering some of these queries is a dictionary, which

---

[15] Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 3. Wood makes the distinction between Christianisation as evangelism within communities officially or superficially Christian, and conversion as a spiritual change of an individual.

[16] Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, 22-23; Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire A.D. 100-400* (New Haven; London, 1984), 29; Though Stark argues for social networking as the means of rapid growth. See Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, 14.

[17] Elm, 'Gregory of Nazianzus', 1-2. Elm argues that conversion was seen as a process in Augustine and Gregory of Nazianzus, "by combining the language of inscription (denoting the moment) with that of illumination (denoting the process),...Gregory...made it clear that such a moment and process denoted a very specific kind of change..."; Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 334-38; Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament*, 302. Peace agrees with Kraft that there is a process to evangelism while also recognising encounter evangelism as well. Peace highlights the strength of 'encounter' or instantaneous conversion is in the clarity of the presentation of the gospel message for a decision; the weakness of process evangelism is the possibility of losing sight of the aim, which is to decide to a full commitment to the gospel message and not just an endless spiritual pilgrimage.

yields a basic definition of first, a point of turning; second, a change of some kind in nature or form or function; and third, a change by substitution of equal value.[18] These definitions, although highlighting that a change takes place, do not address the quality or the content of the change, nor do they give a chronological timeframe for the change to take place. Logically a change also includes the element of leaving the current status in order to gain a new status, or at least to make adjustments in order to accept the change.

The Hebrew Scriptures have a different understanding of conversion. They start from the premise that the reader was part of the community of believers in the God of the Scriptures, with the main issue being how to keep in a right relationship with the God portrayed in order to receive the promised blessings. If the relationship was broken, which meant curses and difficulties, the question, then, was what process was needed in order to return to a correct relationship. Since the understanding was that the believer was already part of the faith community, there was little need for the word conversion, which implies an outsider joining the community. Rather the most common word used is *shuv*, which means a turning back or return, and is usually translated as repent, or repentance.[19] Thus the implication was that the believer had strayed away and needed to return to a correct relationship.

This parallels the growing attitude in the early middle ages of the seventh through the ninth centuries and beyond as more and more groups join the Christian community. Once a person was baptised they were considered a part of the believing community, but just like in the Hebrew Scriptures, the person could stray into wrong belief and practice and it was the responsibility of an established ecclesial system to bring the person back into correct understanding and belief. Thus there was less of an emphasis on those outside coming inside, in that the premise was that most were

---

[18] Ian Brookes, ed., *The Chambers Dictionary* (Edinburgh, 2003); 'The Oxford English Dictionary', ed. J. A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner (Oxford: 1989).

[19] *Hebrew/Aramaic to English Dictionary and Index to the NIV Old Testament*, ed. Edward W. Goodrick, John R. Kohlenberger III, and James A. Swanson (Grand Rapids, MI, 1999). The basic meanings are: [Q] to turn back, turn to, return; [Qp] to return; [Pol] to restore, bring back; [Polal] to be recovered; [H] to restore, recover, bring back; [Ho] to be returned, be brought back; from the base meaning of turning back comes the fig. extension of restoration of relationship, as when one returns in repentance to God; The other main word used is *nacham* which means to sigh, i.e. breathe strongly; by implication, to be sorry.

inside, and more of an emphasis on correct ways and an incorrect ways of life and religious practice.

The two main Geek words used to communicate the requirements to those who desired to join the new community were *epistrepho* (επιστρεπφω) which involves both repentance and faith, and *metanoeo* (μετανοεω) which is the decision to turn or break with the past. Faith needed to be combined with *metanoeo* to bring about *epistrepho*. The word *metamelomai* (μεταμελομαι) is close to the Hebrew *shuv* with the concept of feeling sorry for failure.[20] However, although there are parallels with the concept of repentance in the Hebrew Scriptures, the concept of conversion introduced by the events of Jesus' life and work, death and resurrection is different in that more was needed than feeling sorry for a failure or a break in a relationship: the focus was on something new and different. For the Jewish believers, the message of 'repent and believe' would have sounded familiar but the content of what they were being asked to believe had shifted from the familiar to the radical. Overall, the biblical concept of conversion speaks of a turning, or a changing of direction.[21]

Kraft adds one further insight of value to the study of conversion in the eighth and ninth centuries and that is the difference between cultural conversion and Christian conversion. He argues that cultural conversion takes place when the bearer of the message expects the receiver to take on the cultural trappings of the bearer's culture and thus takes the hearer/receiver out of his/her own culture. Thus the conversion equals the acceptance of a new culture, whereas a Christian conversion has at its core a transformational relationship with God.[22] Using this definition, what has been accepted as mass conversion in the eighth and ninth centuries can be argued to have been cultural, not Christian conversion.

This concept of cultural conversion may help the historian to evaluate the challenges confronting the established church as the traditional religious practices remained strong in the countryside[23] and even the elite of the society returned to the

---

[20] Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament*, 346.

[21] Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Guildford, Surrey, 1970), 183; Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 333; Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament*, 347; Matthew 18:3: "...unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."; See also below the section on the biblical basis of conversion.

[22] Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 339ff.

[23] For example: Maxims of Turin, *Sermo CVII* found in J.N. Hillgarth, ed., *Christianity and Paganism, 350-750: The Conversion of Western Europe* (Philadelphia, 1986), 55-57; Martin of Braga,

traditional religions.[24] If the change of religions was a cultural one then it would have little effect on the mindset of the individual, that is, it would have been more of a surface change and thus easily thrown off when the charismatic leader died or when it was politically expedient.[25] Also if conversion included a change of culture, then Christianity would be seen as something foreign and thus in some ways suspect.

As seen in this short discussion, the issues surrounding the use of the term conversion are complex. However, some definition needs be given in order to examine the historical sources. The next step in this process is to consider some of the components of conversion.

1.2. Components

Trying to define the components of conversion can be as complex as proposing a definition.[26] Knowing what was unique about the Christianity presented in the early Church and the early middle ages does not necessarily clarify the components of conversion. However, there is a need to propose some components in order to not just define conversion but also to trace how its meaning changes. Therefore, for this thesis the proposed components will be: preaching of the core Christian gospel message, the reception of this message, action taken on the basis of the reception of the message, and the working out of the change, or transformation, resulting from the above process.

Preaching the message: In order to change there needs to be an introduction of the new concept or idea in a way that is easily understood. In religious terms this would

---

On the Castigation of Rustics found in Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, 57-64; MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, 64-73.

[24] For example: Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, 29-47. Stark discusses the class basis for the spread of Christianity; Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, 2-3; Robert L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven; London, 1984), 201-02.

[25] For example: *AB*, 852, 863, 866; Bede, *HE*, II. 5; III.2, 22, 30; Nicholas, 'Nicolaus ad Bulgarorum consulta respondet (866)', §17-19.

[26] For example: Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament*, 25, 101. Peace argues for a paradigm of insight, turning and transformation; Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, xvi-xvii Green argues for repentance and faith in response to the proclamation of the gospel. See also: Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, Ch 1 for a helpful discussion on conversion; Malony and Southard, eds., *Handbook of Religious Conversion*. This book gives a variety of perspectives on conversion; Rambo, 'Conversion'; Wells, *Turning to God*, 64-65. Wells separates conversion into the objective, that is the gospel message, and the subjective, that is repentance.

be the preaching or declaration of the new message which would contain the reasons a change would be beneficial. For the Christian religion, this would mean the preaching of the core gospel message containing the key concepts of the incarnation, death, resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah or Christ, and the future hope found in the Scriptures.

Reception of the message: Not only must the message be given but it needs to be received before any change can take place either in understanding or practice.[27] If the message is rejected, there will be no possibility of change, though this action may well result in a change within the social unit. As discussed in the definition of mission, any reaction to the Christian gospel message has significance. However, a positive response is needed in order to move a person along the path to conversion.

Action taken: This can be anything from new ways of practices, to changes in patterns of living, to undergoing rituals such as baptism. It is through these actions that the decision is made known to others within the group. For the early middle ages, this would be the point at which there was a pro-active rejection of the old and an acceptance of the new.

Working out/in the change: This is the long-term change,[28] which brings about different ways of practical actions and lifestyle, but also ways of thinking and perceiving the circumstances of daily life. This is taking the message and applying it daily to various situations in light of the new message received.

1.3. Visible (external) or invisible (internal)

The whole question of whether conversion is internal or external is one that is found throughout the Bible.[29] The Hebrew Scriptures portray God as more concerned

[27] Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament*, 252, 310.

[28] This is usually where the term Christianisation is used, though as stated above the term Christianisation centres on an external change much more than an internal change. Here the change has an internal aspect that is transformational.

[29] This is discussed in section 2.1 in this chapter.

with internal motives than external action.[30] This is also a theme in the Greek Scriptures, for example Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia and James' letter to "the twelve tribes scattered among the nations"[31]. James states that 'faith without works is dead'[32], meaning that unless there is some external working out of the internal faith then there is a question of whether the internal change had actually taken place.

There are two distinct groups of external works in Galatians and James. These are the works having to do with social justice or ethical practices and ritual practice or external conformity. Social justice has to do with issues such as the carrying for the poor and widow[33], the correct use of wealth[34], or meeting the physical needs of food and clothing[35]. Ethical practices would include the correct use of the tongue such as not slandering another person or speaking ill of someone[36], not showing favouritism,[37] nor having wrong motives[38]. Over against these are the issue of external conformity that Paul confronts, with believers returning to, or insisting new believers needed to practice circumcision[39] and keep the Judaic laws[40]. Paul is arguing that these external practices do not stem from faith since God is more concerned with the internal than the external evidence of faith. Therefore, there is not

---

[30] See footnote 73for Hebrew Scripture references; For the Greek Scriptures see passages such as: Galatians 2:6 "...God does not judge by external appearance..."; Hebrews 9:9-10 "This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order."; Colossians 2:20-23 "Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 'Do not handle!' 'Do not taste! Do not touch!'? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.".

[31] James 1:1.

[32] James 2:17. "In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." In the NLT: "So you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. Faith that doesn't show itself by good deeds is no faith at all—it is dead and useless."; See also Acts 26:20 where Paul says, "First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.".

[33] James 1:27.

[34] James 2:6; 5:1-6.

[35] James 1:15-17.

[36] James 1:26; 3:1-12; 4:11-12.

[37] James 2:1-4.

[38] James 3:14-16, 4:1-3.

[39] Galatians 2:3-5, 11-13.

[40] Galatians 2:14, 15; 3:2, 10-14.

only the issue of tension between internal and external faith, but that of whether the external is related to social issues or to ritual practices.

The question, then, is how does one evaluate conversion, which has both an internal and external dimension? To look for external practice only can lead to the evaluation of a strong faith based on action which may have nothing to do with the internal understanding of the gospel message. However, to argue that 'as long as one believes inside, one is OK' stands in direct opposition to New Testament teaching where Jesus and the apostles were very concerned that the internal understanding of the gospel message should result in an observable external change.[41] So does the change go from the internal to the external or from the external to the internal? If it is the first, then the argument for Christianisation is quite powerful since the basis for this argument is that the group level decision—something external to the individual—will result, over time, in the internal worldview change which is the goal of the Christian gospel message.[42] However, working from the external to the internal has the basic problem of the people performing correct practices without any true understanding of the motivation behind the action, which can be a cultural rather than a Christian conversion.[43] If, however, conversion starts internally and moves to the external, then unless there is a clear change in custom or habit, it is difficult to track the change. Again, in the New Testament, these issues were addressed: Paul, in his letter to Galatians, comments that doing all the right external practices could mean one's faith was based on works and not on the gospel message.[44] James seems to be saying the opposite that is the internal change should result in changes in the external practices.[45] So are these two men in discord? A closer examination reveals that the Galatian churches and those congregations which James was addressing had gone to opposite extremes—that is, the Galatians focused on the external to the detriment of the internal and the churches James addressed focused on the internal to the detriment of the external. So the actual balanced picture is to put these two New

---

[41] For example: Matthew 5:13-16; 7: 15-20, 21-23; 13:18-23; Mark 7: 14-23; Galatians 5:13-15, 19-26; Colossians 2:20-23; 3:5-15; Wells, *Turning to God*, 43-44.

[42] This understanding is inherent in the use of the word Christianisation as discussed in the Introduction and Chapter 1.

[43] Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 339ff.

[44] Galatians 3:1-3; 4:8-12; 5:1-6.

[45] James 2:14-26.

Testament teachings together, like two sides of a coin, in order to bring a balance between internal belief and external practice.

In the early middle ages, as more and more people joined the Christian community for various motives, the overriding concern was with external conformity rather than with internal understanding.[46] This did not mean that there was no theological content to the teaching and instructions given by bishops, priests, and other Christian workers; rather that the major concern was with external conformity. This can lead the historian to interpret the sources primarily on the basis of the external practices, but this needs to be balanced with internal change brought about by the core gospel message that was continuously conveyed to all people throughout the first millennium and beyond. There are those who, as discussed in the previous chapter, return to the baptismal ritual formulas as the basis for internal change which should result in external practice.[47] However, to concentrate only on these sources ignores the influence of the larger group in decision-making and its call for conformity. Thus, the whole question of internal or external conversion is in many ways an issue that can be seen from the early church onwards. The early medieval sources are very much involved in working out correct teaching and practice which is both internal and external—the teachings transform the internal understanding and correct external practice reinforces the teaching. Certainly the external is easier to trace and evaluate, but there also needs to be room to account for the internal aspects of faith, conversion and baptism.

1.4. Individual and Group

Along with the tension between internal and external aspects of faith there is the tension between whether conversion is an individual or group decision and action. Walls states, "Conversion to Christ does not isolate the convert from his or her community: it begins the conversion of that community. Conversion to Christ

[46] For example: Alcuin, *Ep.*, 16, 18; Heideman, 'Syncretism, Contextualization'. He argues that the church moved from being concerned with obeying God to practicing orthodoxy.

[47] For example: Charlemagne, 'An Exhortation to the Faithful', in *Carolingian Civilization, A Reader*, ed. Paul Edward Dutton (Toronto, 1993). "Remember what you did promise God in baptism; you promised to renounce the Devil through all his works; do not return to what you renounced, but remain faithful to God as you vowed, and love him who created you and from whom you have all the good things that you love."; *VC*, §12.

does not produce a bland universal citizenship: it produces distinctive discipleships, as diverse and variegated as human life itself."[48] Here the tension between the group and the individual is clearly laid out, acknowledging the interplay between the group and the individual, as well as the understanding of a bottom-up spread of the gospel message. For Walls this results in an indigenization of the gospel message as he argues that it is impossible to separate the individual from his/her social relationships.[49] As seen in the chapters on mission and baptism, there is the continual need to balance the group and the individual in the historical sources. Although large numbers of people may have been baptised in a short period of time, this did not necessarily equal an internal change within the individual. The early medieval writers used the baptismal statements as the fundamental rejection of the former religion and the acceptance of the Christian religion.[50] Many times they argue on the basis of the baptismal rite for greater clarity in daily living and practice. There is the account of Cyril who travels to a group only to discover that they were still worshipping a tree even though they had undergone baptism.[51] Cyril uses their baptismal statements as a means to recall them to a purer understanding of the Christian gospel message.

Addison argues effectively that the role of kings/leaders in the conversion of the group was critical.[52] This is true if looking at history from the top-down perspective and examining the evidence in order to trace the establishment of an ecclesial structure. Although this is one thread of early medieval history, there is also the continuous thread of the bottom-up spread of the Christian gospel message that impacted not just individuals but groups as well. Fredegar records the account of the Persian queen Caesara who arrived in Constantinople and requested to be baptised by

---

[48] Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 51.

[49] Ibid, 7.

[50] For example: Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 183, 355-56; And the discussion in the previous chapter.

[51] *VC*, §12. See Case Study 3 for a more detailed discussion of this account.

[52] Addison, *The Medieval Missionary*. For further discussion on kings and their role in conversion see: Angenendt, 'The Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons'; Higham, *The Convert Kings*; Peter Sawyer, *Kings and Vikings: Scandinavia and Europe, AD 700-1100* (London, 1982); Stancliffe, 'Kings and Conversion: some comparisons between the Roman mission to England and Patrick's to Ireland'; For some insights into the role of queens see, Pauline Stafford, *Queens, concubines, and dowagers: the king's wife in the early Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1983).

John, the Patriarch.[53] She portrayed herself as "a private person"[54] and was baptised with the wife of Emperor Maurice standing as godmother. Her husband, the Persian emperor, sent messengers to request her return, but the Emperor Maurice did not know who she was as she had presented herself as a private person; however, his wife suspected the truth.[55] Caesara refused to speak to the ambassadors unless they became Christians.[56] Thus, on the basis of her faith she refused to even speak with ambassadors from her husband, Anaulf[57]. In response "[t]he ambassadors received baptism with willing hearts."[58] Caesara then went on to say that she would not return to her husband unless he also became a Christian.[59] In response to this message the Persian emperor requested John, the Patriarch, to travel to Antioch to meet him and baptise him along with sixty thousand of his subjects.[60] The account states that it took John and other bishops two weeks to deal with the sixty thousand Persians who wished to be baptised.[61] After this mass movement of people undergoing baptism with their emperor, Anaulf requested Maurice to give him bishops and clergy to baptise others within his territory.[62] There are several questions unanswered in this account: where did Caesara hear the Christian gospel message to the extent that she travelled to Constantinople, presented herself as just an ordinary person in order to receive baptism? How extensive was the bottom up spread of this message within the Persian territory before the mass movement of people submitting to baptism? And why were the Persian emperor and his followers so readily compliant with the

---

[53] Fredegar, *Liber Quartus*, Sixth Chronicle, §9. For insights into the problems with this source see, Walter Goffart, 'The Fredegar Problem Reconsidered', *Speculum* 38, no. 2 (Apr., 1963).

[54] se unam esse de populo

[55] Quam cum uir suos imperatur Persarum per legationis sepius repetiret et Mauricius emperator uxorem ipsius esse nesciret, tunc agusta uidens eam pulcerrimam, suspicans ne ipsa esset quam legati quaerebant, dicensque eis: 'Mulier quedam de Persas hic uenit, dixit se unam esse de populo. Videte eam: forsiten ipsa est quam queretis.'

[56] 'Ego cum istos non loquor, uitam illorum instar ad canis est. Si conuersi christiani sicut et ego sum efficiunter, tunc eis resondebo.'

[57] See Fredegar, *Liber Quartus*, 7, note 3 for further information on the name.

[58] Legati uero animo libenti baptismi gratiam accipiunt,

[59] 'Se uir meus voluerit fieri christianus et baptismi gratiam accipere, libenter ad eum reuertam, nam paenitus aliter ad ipso non repedabo.'

[60] Tunc Mauricius imperator infinitissimum adparatum Anciocam fieri iussit, ubi imperator Parsarum cum sexaginta milia Persus baptizatus est

[61] et par duabus ebdomadis a Iohanne et reliquis episcopis Persas ad plenitudinem suprascripto numero baptizantur.

[62] Anaulfus imperator Mauricio imperatore petens ut epsicopus cum clero sufficiente eidem darit quos in Persas estabelirit, ut uniuersa Perseda baptismi gratiam adhiberint. Quod Mauricius libenti prestetit animo, summaque celeritate omnes Perseda ad Christi cultum baptizantur.

queen's demand? Here one individual is portrayed has having great influence over a whole kingdom. Fredegar makes it clear in his account that there was no coercion or force applied other than queen Caesara taking a stand on the basis of her new Christian faith. The voluntary aspect of this faith change is seen also in Anaulf's request for bishops and clergy to enter Persia to spread the Christian gospel message and to baptise people. Therefore it can be concluded that the rest of the people, the group, were not compelled to accept baptism.

There is Notker's account of the northmen where it is clear these men had appeared year after year to receive baptism, but the motivation was more for the baptismal gifts than the baptism itself.[63] It is curious that these men could undergo baptism again and again without any seeming response to the Christian gospel message. This is a clear case of individuals undergoing baptism without any internal effect on their worldview. Notker uses this account to show how the northmen should not be trusted,[64] but the greater interest for the missiologist is that these men could undergo baptismal instruction, even if short, and undergo baptism again and again without any results in their understanding of the Christian faith. One wonders that they were allowed to do this on a yearly basis. This also points to the weakness in the argument that baptism equals conversion, as in this example it obviously did not.

These are just two accounts that show the group and the individual in contrast as well as the difference internalisation of the Christian gospel message makes in the lives of people. It seems that in order to bring about a conversion that has a balance to the internal and the external aspects requires not just the group consensus for a change in religion, but also a certain level of understanding at the individual level. This, again, is what Keefe and McKitterick are arguing in terms of the Carolingian reforms.[65] They argue that Charlemagne saw that unless compliance to the political decision to form a Christian society was worked out at the individual level, then a Christian society could not be formed. This, again, argues both for the group

---

[63] Notker, *Gesta Karoli Magni Imperatoris, MGH, SRG 12* (Berlin, 1962), Book II, §19.

[64] *Et quia de Nordmannis mentio incidit, quanti fidem habeant et baptismum, in temporibus avi vestri gestis paucis evolvam.* Thorpe translates this as: "As I am writing about the Northmen, I will show from a trifling incident which occurred in your grandfather's time how lightly those people valued religious faith and baptism."

[65] This is discussed in the previous chapter.

influence as well as the place of the individual. This does not mean that these groups were individualistic in the twenty-first century understanding, but that Charlemagne understood that in order to bring conformity throughout all levels of society, the individual needed to have a basic understanding of the fundamentals that the central government wanted implemented.

1.5. Working definition

From the above discussion it is clear that conversion is a concept that can have a variety of interpretations. In order to propose the working definition for this thesis, it must be understood that the broadest definition is the basic one of change, but to stop there does not bring Christian conversion into focus. The components discussed above centre on conveying a message and the reaction to the core Christian gospel message which, as discussed in the mission and baptism chapters, has the potential for internal, transformational change. Therefore, in order to include several aspects of conversion the proposed definition is: 'conversion is a positive response to the core Christian gospel message which has both an internal and an external aspect.' This change can be at the group or at the individual level; it can be a top-down or a bottom-up, or a combination of all of these. The key is a change in response to the core gospel message. There is a moment of decision to change which can be preceded by a short or lengthy time of teaching and instruction. Baptism was usually the external identifier of becoming a Christian, but the internal aspect of conversion continued after baptism since this involved the working out of the change to bring about an internal change of worldview. This also dovetails with the missional component of consolidation.

2. Conversion in the early church

2.1. Biblical basis

When it comes to Christian conversion certain images leap into one's mind. One is the story of Paul and how he changed from a persecutor of Christians to a

defender of their faith in three days.[66] If this is, as some claim, the only valid pattern of conversion,[67] then most people in history have not been converted. However, as Peace argues, there is a process of conversion seen in Mark's Gospel.[68] The main issue is whether the decision to accept the Christian gospel message is instantaneous, the middle of a process, or at the end of a process. Thus, one of the issues when discussing conversion is, where does the point of decision come and how can this be traced?

In order to trace how the understanding of conversion changed in the early middle ages it is necessary to start where the first believers and the Church Fathers started, that is the Bible, both the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) and the newer Greek Scriptures (New Testament). Under the Noahic, Abrahamic, and Davidic covenants, the people of Israel were born into the believing Hebraic community and thus all were considered believers in the God of the group. There was no initiation rite for females, but for males the rite of circumcision was the sign of their relationship with God.[69] Thus in the Hebraic community, the fundamental understanding was that in order to be part of the Israelite nation and religious belief system the males had to undergo circumcision. Even though there was no such rite of passage for the women, they were required to keep the domestic law code as set out in Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.[70] For the nation as a whole there was the

---

[66] Acts 9:1-19, the three days mentioned at verse 9; Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 193-94 Green argues that Paul's conversion, so far from its being exceptional was meant by Luke to be normative for all Christians everywhere. That is why Luke records three accounts of it. The encounter changed Paul internally: his mind was informed and illumined that Jesus was not, as he had thought, accursed, but was the Lord; his conscience was reached when he acknowledged his animosity towards the believers of Jesus as the Messiah; his emotions were stirred as he saw the implications of his rebelling against Christ; his will was bent in trusting surrender to Jesus who had called him; and his life was transformed: in direction, immediately, and in achievement as time went on.

[67] Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament*; Peace, 'Conflicting Understandings': 4, 25, 101. Peace gives insight into the differences of instant and process conversion; Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 165-80, 181-99. Stott contrasts Paul's conversion with that of Cornelius.

[68] Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament*, 4.

[69] Genesis 17: 10-14; Exodus 12:48; Genesis 34:14 and 22 where the requirement for the Hivites to intermarry with Hebrew women was to undergo circumcision. This was ideally performed on the eighth day after birth, but there are accounts where grown men underwent this rite; Genesis 17:12; Genesis 17: 24. Abraham was ninety-nine years old when circumcised; Exodus 4:25 where Moses wife circumcises her eldest, most likely in his thirties or forties as Moses had been in exile in Medina for forty years before he returned to Egypt; Exodus 12:44, 48 where male slaves and foreigners of all ages had to undergo circumcision before eating the Passover meal; Joshua 5: 2-8 where Joshua had all the male Israelites born during the forty years of wandering in the desert circumcised before crossing the Jordan.

[70] For the Law codes see Exodus 20-23; Leviticus 11-27; Numbers 5, 28-30; Deuteronomy 4-30.

sacrificial system which portrayed the need to understand the gap between God and man and then functioned as the bridge to maintain the correct relationship between these two.[71] The complex sacrificial commands laid out in Leviticus are precise and detailed and they end with a list of blessings and curses relative to the keeping or breaking of this law code.[72] What is interesting are the passages in the Hebrew Scriptures that then portray God as more interested in the internal motives and attitudes of the people than in the actual external performance of the sacrifices.[73] This was not saying that the sacrificial code was not important, but that the external performance was less meaningful if the internal thoughts, motives and attitudes were not correct.

How does this fit in with conversion in the early middle ages? As discussed above, the Hebrew Scriptures started from the premise that the reader was part of the community of believers in the God of the Scriptures, with the main issue being how to keep in a right relationship with the God portrayed in order to receive the promised blessings. This parallels with the teaching that Christianity will reward the believer in heaven and in order to receive these there was an emphasis on correct ways and an incorrect ways of life and religious practice.[74]

Although this parallel seems to bring the Hebrew Scriptures into the early middle ages in a continuous line, there was a major break in this line with the events recorded in the Greek Scriptures, that is the life and work, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah or Christ. These events moved the God of the Hebrew Scriptures out into the larger world and the word conversion appeared in the writings of the new

---

[71] Details of the sacrificial system are found in Leviticus 1-7, 9-10, 14-17:10. Sacrifice is referred to throughout the Scriptures. For example: Genesis 8:20; 22:2: 31:54; Exodus 3:18; 5:2,8, 17; 12:27, 22-23; Numbers 6:17-18; Judges 6, 11; I Samuel 1, 6; I Kings 8, 9; Ezra 3, 8; Isaiah 1; Mark 1:44, 14; Hebrews 7:27, 8-10.

[72] Lists of blessings and curses are found in Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 11, 27-28, 30; as well as other references to the blessing of God stemming from obedience. For example: Genesis 12:1-3, 22:18, 26:4-5; Psalm 1:1-2, 5:11-12, 33:12, 84:12, 89:15; Proverbs 10:6, 16:20, 20:7; Isaiah 56:1-2; Jeremiah 17:7.

[73] For example: Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:5, 10: 16, 30:6; Joshua 22:5; Job 22: 21-22; 1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 40:6-9, 50: 7-14, 51: 16-17; Proverbs 15:8, 21:3; Jeremiah 7: 21-25; Ezekiel 11: 19-20, 18:31, 36: 26-28, 44: 8-12; Hosea 6:6.

[74] For example: 'Admonitio Generalis', §82; Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, 11, 17, 19, 21; Padberg, *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen*, 197, 199. Padberg examines some of the pseudo-Bonifatian sermons. These are found as S. Bonifacius Moguntinus, 'Sermones', in *PL 89*, ed. J P Migne (Paris, 1850) and Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 146.

Christian community.[75] The struggle for the new believers in the early church was how to incorporate new people, without any background in the Hebrew Scriptures, into a newly formed community of believers.[76] Green discusses different kinds of conversion and what different groups would have understood by conversion, which highlights a variety of understanding and response from the very beginning of the spread of the Christian gospel message.[77]

In summation, the biblical understanding of conversion changed from that of the Hebrew understanding of correction within the believing community to that of receiving of new believers from a Greek or Gentile background, with little or no understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures. In both cases the biblical teaching was not only for a change of external practice but, especially, for an internal transformation.

3. Conversion in the early middle ages

3.1. Letters and hagiography

There is a great variety in the accounts of conversion in the sources of the early middle ages. However there is neither room, nor need, to do an extensive examination of all accounts, as a few examples will suffice to highlight the issues discussed so far in this chapter. Eigil in his *Vita Sturmi* gives an account of Charlemagne's interaction with the Saxons:

> His purpose was to bring this people, which had been fettered from the beginning with the devil's bond, to accept the faith and to submit to the mild and sweet yoke of Christ. When the king reached Saxony he converted the majority of the people partly by conquest, partly by persuasion, partly even by bribes, and not long afterward he divided the whole of the province into episcopal sees and handed it over to the servants of God to evangelize and baptize. The greater part of that territory with its people was entrusted to Sturm. He accordingly undertook the labor of preaching, employed every means in his power, and so gained a great harvest for the Lord. He seized every opportunity to impress on them in his

[75] Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 183; Wells, *Turning to God*, 33.

[76] This lead to the Jerusalem Council found in Acts 15. For insights into this council see: Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 44-46; Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*, 43-53; Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, 1994), 93-95; Melanie J. Wright, *Understanding Judaism* (Cambridge, 2003), 141-43.

[77] Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 177. "Christian conversion....called on Jews as well as Gentiles to put their faith in God's Messiah and join the company of his people. For the Gentile this would be conversion *to* a new faith; for the Jew it would be, in an important sense, conversion *within* the faith in which he had been nourished and of which Christ was the summit and goal." Italics Green's.

> preaching that they should forsake idols and images, accept the Christian faith, destroy the temples of the gods, cut down the groves and build sacred churches in their stead.[78]

There are several points of interest not just from a conversion perspective but a missional one as well. The first sentence suggests that Eigil understood that the Saxons were non-Christians as a whole group, as there is no mention of Christian believers in the account. On the other hand, the account clearly states that the majority, not all, of the Saxons were converted. Thus there was an understanding of voluntary response even though Eigil records that Charlemagne used various means such as conquest, persuasion and bribes to 'convert' the people. There was also work to be done after Charlemagne set up an ecclesial structure, as he appointed Strum to continue preaching the gospel message. These would come under the missional components of consolidation and evangelism. There are also the conversion elements of turning from the old idols and images, turning to the Christian faith and building churches. Thus in this short passage several of the issues surrounding mission, baptism and conversion can be seen.

Even Rome understood that there was a difference between practice and actual conversion as can be seen in Zacharias' letter to Boniface in 748 concerning priests who were not learned enough to pass on the basic faith to others. His advice was:

> You will strip them of their priestly functions and order them to spend their lives in penance under monastic rule. Thus disciplined in the body, if they ever turn to the right way and believe in their hearts, let a true confession with the lips witness to their salvation. But even if they shall not be converted, the justice of your decision shall not be denied.[79]

These priests needed to be converted even though they held a position in the church of teacher and instructor. If these priests, who should have had a basic understanding

---

[78] Eigil, 'Vita Sturmi', §22. *....ut gentem quae ab initio mundi daemonum vinculis fuerat obligata, doctrinis sacris mite et suave Christi iugum credendo subire fecissent. Quo cum rex pervenisset, partim bellis, partim suasionibus, partim etiam muneribus, maxima ex parte gentem illam ad fidem Christi convertit; et post non longum tempus totam provinciam illam in parochias episcopales divisit, et servis Domini ad docendum et baptizandum potestatem dedit. Tunc pars maxima beato Sturmi populi et terrae illius ad procurandum committitur. Suscepto igitur praedicationis officio, curam modis omnibus impendit, qualiter non parvum Domino populum adquireret. Sed temporibus instabat opportunis, sacris eos sermonibus docens, ut idola et simulacra derelinquerent, Christi fidem susciperent, deorum suorum templa destruerent, lucos succiderent, sanctas quoque basilicas aedificarent.* English translation by Talbot, Eigil, 'The Life of Saint Sturm', 184-85.

[79] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 80. *...et a sacerdotali honore privatos sub regula monachica et penitentia summissos vitam finire ordinabis, ut carne afflicti quandoque ad viam redeant rectitudinis, et si corde crediderint, oris eorum vera confessio illis fiat in salutem; si veto non fuerint conversi, tua predicantis non periet iustitia.*

of the gospel message, needed to be truly converted, how much more so the people on the ground. Therefore, the established Church saw that an external ecclesial position did not equal an internal conversion.

Another example is seen in the account of the Bulgarians arriving at Regensburg in 866 to announce that their king and many of the people had been converted to Christianity and to ask for "suitable men to preach the Christian religion."[80] Here again is the pattern of the Christian gospel message having penetrated an area and then an embassy sent to request educated workers to continue consolidating, as well as spreading, the gospel message in the territory. When the workers sent by Louis arrived they found that the bishop of Rome had already sent workers into the area and therefore they returned to Francia.[81] Therefore, in response to the acceptance of the Christian faith, the leaders did not force those under their control to convert, but rather requested Christian workers to enter their territory and preach and teach so people could hear the gospel message and respond by believing and undergoing baptism.

Ševčenko uses the phrase mass conversion in the case related by Cyril of Scythopolis in the early fifth century when an Arab tribal chief met the ascetic Euthymios, who healed his son.[82] As a result the chief and his family were baptised. The chief returned with men, women, and children asking to be given the word of salvation. This larger group was baptised after undergoing a process of preparation.[83] Although Ševčenko uses the phase mass conversion, a closer examination of the account reveals a time scale which includes a certain level of preparation and understanding before the people underwent baptism and thus there is an element of understanding of the gospel message before baptism. That is, there was an internal aspect to the external act of baptism. The fact that there was some level of catechism given would indicate that the Cyril of Scythopolis held to the position that there had to be some kind of understanding on an individual level before baptism was allowed

---

[80] *AF*, 866. *Legati Vulgarum Radesbonam ad regem venerunt, dicentes regem illorum cum populo non modico ad Christum esse conversum simulque petentes, ut rex idoneos praedicatores christianae religionis ad eos mittere non differet.* See *AB*, 866,where the further information is given that a number of Boris' leading men revolted at his decision to becoming a Christian and being baptised. Boris suppressed this revolt and then sent to Louis for Christian workers.

[81] *AF*, 867.

[82] Ševčenko, 'Religious Missions Seen from Byzantium': 15.

[83] Ibid.

and if an individual did not answer the questions correctly, they would be told to wait and undertake further study before undergoing baptism. Here can be seen the aspects of teaching before baptism, voluntary commitment to the new religion, and large numbers entering the Christian community in a short space of time.

Another example of the use of the word conversion is found in the accounts of Augustine's work among the Anglo-Saxons. There were already many Christians living in this area and they were loosely organised under a system different to that of Rome.[84] Wood argues that the great wave of people reported to have received baptisms in a short space of time may well have been those already Christian but not under the Roman mantle,[85] and some may well have been those who already believed but had not received baptism.[86] Therefore, Wood does not think that many of the thousands reported to be 'converted' were in reality first-time hearers of the gospel message, rather they were already moving along the path towards conversion/baptism when Augustine arrived.[87] Here, therefore, the gathering in of numbers should not be read as new converts, but rather a large portion of believers being organised under Roman ecclesial order. This, then, gives a different picture to Augustine's mission and its result.

These few examples give evidence of the variety of usages of the word conversion as well as the difficulty involved in studying conversion in the early medieval sources. Although the historian, sociologist, anthropologist, and missiologist all attempt to find patterns to compare and contrast, in many ways each case is an account of a unique process of the core Christian gospel message bringing external and internal change at the group as well as at the individual level.

3.2. *Forced or voluntary*

For Charlemagne the Saxons were a people who refused to submit to his authority and thus to the Christian faith. In the thirty-three years that he fought

---

[84] Gameson, 'Augustine of Canterbury: Context and Achievement', 15-17, 21; Anton Scharer, 'The Gregorian Tradition in Early England', in *St Augustine and the Conversion of England*, ed. Richard Gameson (Stroud, 1999), 189-90; Wood, 'The Mission of Augustine': 2.

[85] Wood, 'The Mission of Augustine': 12; Gameson, 'Augustine of Canterbury: Context and Achievement', 34-35.

[86] Wood, 'The Mission of Augustine': 12.

[87] Ibid; Gameson, 'Augustine of Canterbury: Context and Achievement', 21. Gameson argues for new converts.

the Saxons he came to the policy of forced baptism, although this did not necessarily equal conversion.[88] Thus the Christian workers sent into the territories under Carolingian control started from the premise that large numbers were already baptised,[89] whether voluntarily or by force. There are few sources to show that once the leaders and a certain numbers of their followers were baptised that they then forced others to undergo baptism.[90] However these seem to be less the pattern than that of newly baptised leaders and followers open to having the 'official' workers enter their territory and spread the gospel message.[91]

Therefore, the impression given of forced baptism by the sword, upon closer inspection, was very limited as a tool of compliance. Rather, the political pressure swayed the leaders/rulers to align themselves with either Rome or Constantinople. As discussed in the chapters on mission and baptism and the case study of Cyril and Methodius, Boris and Rastislav and other rulers were not against baptism, seen as submission to an ecclesial authority and the establishment of a structure within their territories; rather they were trying to achieve as much independence for themselves as possible. With such a calculated view of baptism, that is in terms of politics, the question of conversion was rarely raised. However, the writers of history were clearly aware of the difference between submission to baptism, external compliance,

---

[88] The constant rebellion of the Saxons is given in several accounts, for example: *ARF*, 776 "The Saxons came there with wives and children, a countless number, and were baptized..." Then in the year 777, Charles held an assembly at Paderborn where many gathered but Widukind was in revolt against the Franks. Once again a number of Saxons were baptised and pledged not to change their minds again. Then in the year 778, "When the Saxons heard that Lord King Charles and the Franks were so far away in Spain, they followed their detestable custom and again revolted, spurred on by Widukind and his companions." Scholz translations. See also the account in Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni, MGH, SRG* (Hanover, 1911), Book II, §8 "This war could have been brought to a more rapid conclusion, had it not been for the faithlessness of the Saxons. It is hard to say just how many times they were beaten and surrendered as supplicants to Charlemagne, promising to do all that was exacted from them, giving hostages who were demanded, and this without delay, and receiving the ambassadors who were sent to them. Sometimes they were so cowed and reduced that they even promised to abandon their devil worship and submit willing to the Christian faith; but, however ready they might seem from time to time to do all this, they were always prepared to break the promises they had made." Thorpe translation. For further insights into the Saxons policy see Hen, 'Charlemagne's Jihad'.

[89] Sullivan, 'Carolingian Missionary Theories', 277.

[90] Although there are few examples, one is from Stephanus, 'VWilfridi', §41. "many thousands of pagans of both sexes were baptized in one day....They deserted idolatry and made confession of faith in Almighty God, some of them willingly and some being compelled by the king's command." As seen here, even when coercion was used there were some people volunteering for baptism.

[91] For example the case of the Anaulf, the Persian emperor, Boris of Bulgaria, Rastislav of Moravia, Theodo of Bavaria among others.

and internal change due to an internalisation of the gospel message, that is conversion.

The struggle of the established ecclesial structures in the eighth and ninth centuries was how to convey or transmit the core Christian gospel message to those who already saw themselves as part of the larger Christian community, having undergone baptism. The forced compliance to baptism among certain groups, such as the Saxons, did not necessarily result in an internal change of worldview. On the other hand, the bottom-up spread of the gospel message almost always resulted in a decision for baptism based on a change of worldview.[92] Granted that the adherence of the leaders to a new religion had a positive effect on the spread of the gospel message, but the gospel message would have continued to be transmitted whether the leaders took action or not. Thus the forced submission, mostly of the Saxons, to baptism on a political level did not necessarily result in an internal worldview change, which then allowed for abuses in the ecclesial structure to be practised in the name of Christianity. It can be argued that those who worked in transmitting the gospel message without regard to a structure were the workers who saw a deeper change in the individual than those who worked within the political and ecclesial structures.

Therefore, within the context of forced and voluntary conversion there are the elements of the contrast between the top-down and the bottom-up spread of the gospel message. Which was purer is a question that can only be answered case-by-case. There are clear examples of political leaders grasping the core fundamentals of the Christian gospel message[93] and there are examples of garbled content in the bottom-up spread of the gospel message[94]. So whether by force or voluntary submission, the baptismal rite did not always equal conversion. On the other hand, it would be wrong to then declare that all baptisms were purely a surface response to political pressure. This is the problem when discussing conversion, which has an internal aspect as well as the external evidence of change. It would be wrong to negate the individual but it would be equally wrong to negate the group; it would be

[92] For example: 'Conventus Episcoporum', 175. Here the argument is that the preaching should be kind and persuasive and the people should come to baptism not out of compulsion but from a belief in and a basic understanding of the gospel message, with visible results in their daily lives.

[93] For example, Boris of Bulgaria and Theodo of Bavaria.

[94] As seen in the Bonifatian correspondence discussed in Case Study 1.

wrong to interpret forced baptism as a purely politically motivated response, but it would be equally wrong to assume that all baptisms equalled conversion; it would be wrong to interpret the top-down spread of the gospel message intertwined with the ecclesial structure, as a purely imposed set of rule and regulation upon a people, but it would be equally as wrong to deny the effect of the bottom-up spread of the gospel message as a transformer of the individual. So the historian's task is to balance these two dichotomies in such a way as to bring a better focus to the historical situation. This is where missiology can aid the historian as it tackles some of the issues from a different perspective and allows for an internal, faith response to the Christian gospel message that may sometimes be missed if one reads the sources from a standard historical interpretation.

4. Conclusion

In the early middle ages, there were as many motives to undergo the ritual of baptism as there were interpretations of conversion. The Christian ideal is to encourage and instruct a person so they move through the five stages of mission: pre-evangelism, evangelism, conversion, consolidation, and passing the message on. When the student becomes the teacher for the next generation of believers, then the mission process has come full circle. Since each person is unique, the speed in which one goes through this process will differ; rapid change is easy to track, but slow change may not be observed until time has passed and one can look back. Thus, in the middle ages it is not feasible to dismiss all mass movements of people into the Christian community through baptisms as not being accompanied by conversion experiences, but neither can the opposite be stated. There is no question that when a ruler and a group of companions became Christians this facilitated the spread of the Christian gospel message, and often, the establishment of a top-down ecclesial structure. However, the existence of an ecclesial structure does not necessarily equate with an interpretation that all within the group were converted to believers in the gospel message. One has only to read a few accounts in the sources of sons persecuting the Christians and attacking the ecclesial structure put in place by their fathers to see the reality that the gospel message had not been passed on to the next

generation.[95] This is a fundamental principle of the transmission of the core Christian gospel message: that there can be no assumption that the Christian gospel message will be passed onto the next generation. Although an ecclesial structure may remain from generation to generation, the actual transformation of a societal belief system takes place at the individual level. It is only when the individual understands and accepts the validity of a new worldview that the worldview begins to transform the society. This does not negate the role of a top-down structured transmission of the gospel message, but it does argue for a counterweight with a bottom-up spread of the same gospel message.

[95] Angenendt, 'The Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons': 748-54. Angenendt proposes that one of the king's sons deliberately did not convert in case there was a reaction to the decision to take on the Christian religion.

PART 2

CASE STUDIES FROM SAINTS' *VITAE*

INTRODUCTION

Having explored the issues of mission, baptism and conversion, part 2 will take four well-known saints of the seventh to the ninth centuries, their *Vitae*, correspondence and other sources, as case studies to demonstrate the perspective missiology can add to historical research.[1] Each of these figures came from a different background and way of thinking, in terms of missions, ecclesial structure and how they relate to power structures; each significantly influenced the church in what is now thought of as central Europe[2], that is the territory that was on the eastern Frankish and on the western Byzantine frontier. The questions that arise from a missiological perspective of the group and the individual, and syncretism versus contextualization, intertwined with how and what was recorded about baptism and conversion will be the major part of each case study, based either in their own words or in the perception of their actions by other authors. The *Vitae* were produced close to the lifetimes of the saints, but the extant manuscripts have a later dating.[3] The maps in front of each of the case studies give a visual overview of the overlapping of the various Christian traditions in these areas.

Boniface (c. 672-754) brought clarity to, and laid the foundation for, a strong ecclesial structure for the Frankish Church that influenced mission into new

---

[1] One area of study not covered in this thesis is the question of just who were the 'heathen' or those being targeted for mission work. This is another complex question with various interpretations but beyond the remit of this thesis. Some works of interest on this topic are: Maurier, *The Other Covenant: A Theology of Paganism*; Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, especially pp 32-41; Palmer, 'Defining paganism'; Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan'; Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia'; Wood, 'Pagan Religion and Superstition'. This is the context for the discussion of 'Indiculus Superstitionum et Paganiarum', in *MGH, Cap 1*, ed. A Boretius (Hanover, 1883). English translation as 'A List of Superstitions and Pagan Practices', in *Carolingian Civilization*, ed. Paul Edward Dutton (Peterborough, Ontario, 2004).

[2] For discussion of the term Central Europe see for example: Francis Dvornik, 'The Mediaeval Cultural Heritage of the Mid-European Area', *The Review of Politics* 18, no. 4 (1956); Robin Okey, 'Central Europe/Eastern Europe: Behind the Definitions', *Past and Present*, no. 137, The Cultural and Political Construction of Europe (1992).

[3] For dating and manuscript discussion see: Willibald, *VB*, §1. All English translation from Willibald and Talbot, 'The Life of Saint Boniface'. The consensus is the *Vita* was written within 13 years of Boniface's death. Rimbert, *VA*. The consensus is that the *Vita* was written by Anskar's pupil and successor, thus shortly after his death. For Cyril and Methodius see Kantor, *Medieval Slavic Lives of Saints and Princes*, 17. "Most scholars agree that both *Lives* were written in Moravia shortly after the death of their respective protagonists; but the individual authorships still remain in doubt."

territories in the ninth century. Coming from an Anglo-Saxon background, he is also an example of the influence of the Anglo-Saxon mindset on the continent and his mission career, which ranged over the Thuringian, Hessian, Bavarian and Frisian areas. Anskar (801-865), born and bred on the continent, went north to the Danes and Swedes under a strong Carolingian rule, in response to various requests from the leaders of these groups. This brought a Roman involvement into these territories while also allowing the Franks a political claim as well. Overlapping the lifetime of Anskar were the brothers Cyril (c. 826-869) and Methodius (815? - 884/5) from Byzantium. They were sent by the Patriarch of Constantinople, in response to a request from Rastislav, into Moravia. The influence of the Slavonic scriptures and liturgy that they introduced into this area extended into Bulgaria, Bohemia, and eventually into the territory of the Rus'.

The frontier area between the east Franks and the Byzantines in the eighth and ninth centuries, saw various ecclesial, sacramental, teaching, and liturgical patterns introduced into the same areas within a short space of time.[4] Some of the groups migrating and settling within the frontier area had enough solidity and power, as well as able leaders, to enable them to negotiate so that Rome, Constantinople, and the Franks were played off against each other. This allowed the group to have semi-independence politically, as well as some control over how the Christian gospel message was worked out in practice within their territories. Examples of this are the Moravians and Bulgarians, who will be studied through the *Lives* of Cyril and Methodius.

For other groups, like the Thuringians seen in the Bonifatian materials, there were several waves of advance and retreat, or the ebb and flow, of mission work before a strong Franco-Roman ecclesial structure was established. For other groups, the mission work of the eighth and ninth centuries was only the beginning of a process that saw fruition, in terms of committing to an ecclesial structure, years later, such as the case of Iceland, or the Rus', or the Swedes. The work among the Danes and Swedes, from a Roman perspective, is seen in the *Vita Anskarii*. For other groups, the acceptance, or encouragement of the spread of the Christian gospel

[4] See map 1 on page 21 for an overview of the overlapping of Christian traditions in the frontier areas.

message, very much depended on the leaders, as seen in the case of the Saxons, where there was a pattern of acceptance and then denial of the Christian message, depending on the strength and proximity of the Frankish rulers.[5] For many of these groups there was great pressure to establish strong ties with either Rome or Constantinople as they found themselves caught between the interests of the Franks and the Byzantines, who were struggling for control over the frontier territory, which translated into control over groups settling within the frontier. This translated to spiritual control by either Rome or Constantinople, even though there was Irish influence in this area as well.

An example of the complexity of the situation in the frontier areas can be seen in Bavaria. Part of Boniface's work was in lower Pannonia reforming the church structure.[6] With Duke Odilo's consent, Boniface divided the province of Bavaria into four dioceses and appointed four bishops.[7] This took place even though Salzburg was already firmly established as a monastic and mission centre. Thus there was a clash between these two, and Rome's attempt to establish direct control over the area failed.[8] Salzburg was to remain independent until Charlemagne put it under his control in the late eighth century, and thus the Frankish clergy held the upper hand in the area under Salzburg's see.[9] The *Conversio*, written from a Salzburgensian perspective, mentions Methodius as an intruder into their territory, since it saw his work as another type of Christianity being introduced into the

---

[5] For this struggle from a Frankish perspective see, *ARF*; Einhard, *Vita Karoli*; Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum, MGH, SRM 1* (Hanover, 1885). For other insights see, Wolfert Van Egmond, 'Converting Monks: Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Frisia and Saxony', in *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, ed. Guyda Armstrong and Ian Wood (Turnhout, 2000); Green and Siegmund, eds., *The Continental Saxons*; J. Hines, 'The Conversion of the Old Saxons', in *The Continental Saxons from the Migration Period to the Tenth Century*, ed. Dennis H. Green and Frank Siegmund (Suffolk, 2003).

[6] Willibald, *VB*, §7, 8.

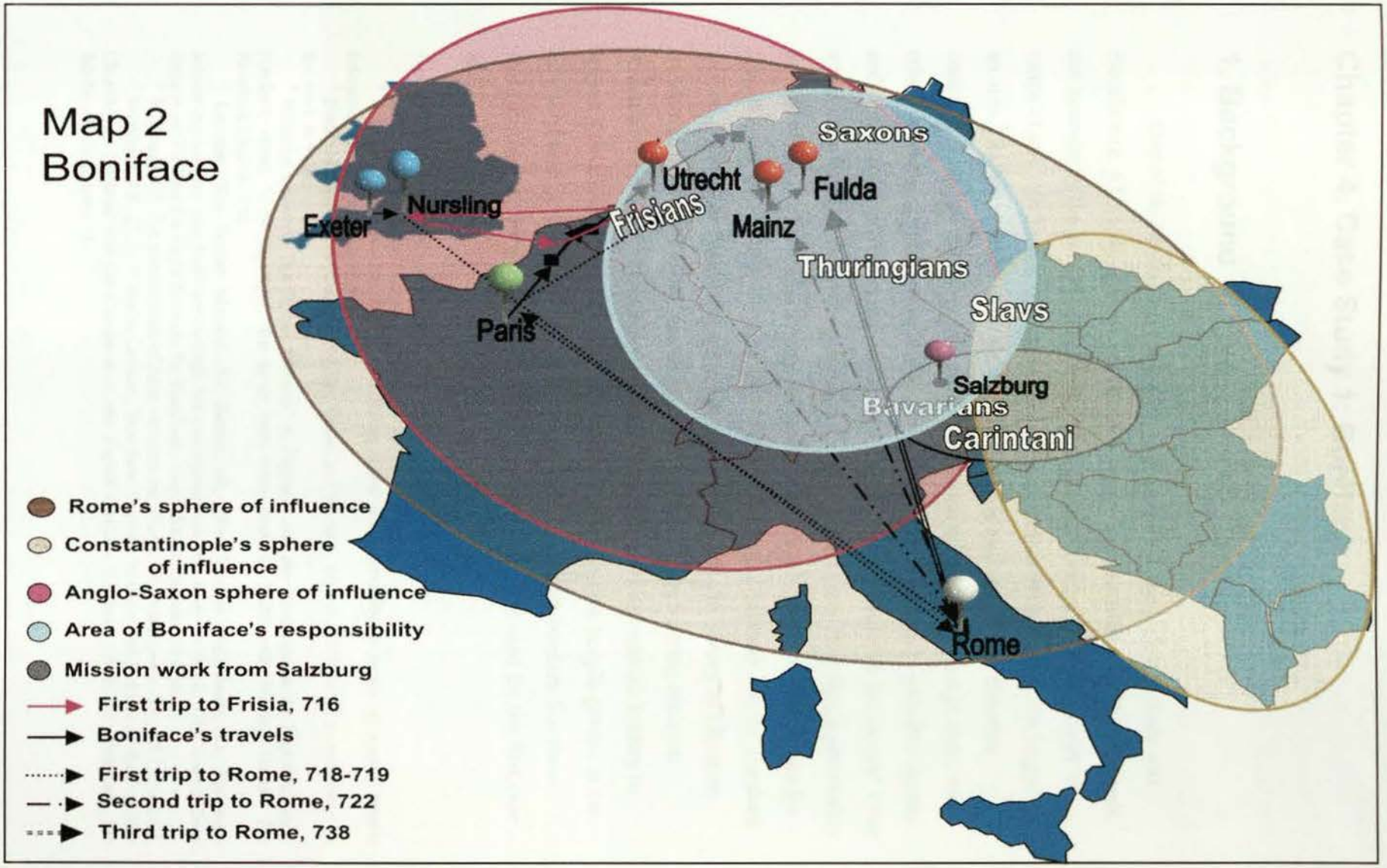
[7] Ibid, §7. Willibald records that Boniface appointed four bishops, but in reality Bishop Vivilo of Passau was already in place. So in fact Boniface appointed three bishops, not four; Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 44. Vivilo is on the list of bishops of Bavaria and Alemannia c.738; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 157-58. Wood argues that Arbeo was writing to give a different history of the bishoprics of Bavaria in response to Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*.

[8] Timothy Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages c. 800-1056* (New York, 1991), 54-60; Julia M. H. Smith, 'Fines Imperii: The Marches', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History II c. 700-c. 900*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), 170, 173; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), 154, 416-17; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 148, 155-59.

[9] Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, Book II.§10, 11; Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion*, 343-50; Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton, 1987), 453, 458; Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages*, 79; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, 181.

territory already claimed by the see of Salzburg. This is just one example of the complexity of Christian mission work in the eighth and ninth centuries in this frontier area.

While acknowledging these complexities, the following case studies will focus on the *Vitae* and other sources to examine baptism and conversion, applying the lenses of the issues of group and the individual, and syncretism versus contextualization.


Map 2
Boniface
Saxons
Utrecht
Fulda
Mainz
Nursling
Exeter
Frisians
Thuringians
Slavs
Paris
Salzburg
Bavarians
Carintani
Rome
Rome's sphere of influence
Constantinople's sphere of influence
Anglo-Saxon sphere of influence
Area of Boniface's responsibility
Mission work from Salzburg
First trip to Frisia, 716
Boniface's travels
First trip to Rome, 718-719
Second trip to Rome, 722
Third trip to Rome, 738

Chapter 4. Case Study 1: Boniface

1. Background

One of the central figures in Christian mission in the eighth century was Boniface (c. 672-754). He was not the only Anglo-Saxon working on the continent,[1] nor necessarily the person who saw the most success[2] (though this may differ in terms of one's definition of success) nor even the person who worked the longest in an area.[3] Rather, it is the sheer volume of materials available to the historian concerning his life and work that give significance to Boniface. Though there were others working on the Continent who were also in correspondence with their homes and Rome, their letters are not preserved.[4] The documents available are several *Vitae* and a large body of correspondence, which allow insights into Boniface's personality as well as his work.[5] Of the several versions of Boniface's *Vita*, the one chosen for this thesis is Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii,* edited by Levison, because it is the standard edition.[6] The other reason Boniface has a central place in the history of Christian mission in the eighth century is for his work in establishing a strong ecclesial structure in Frankish controlled territories.[7] This allowed the Frankish leaders to spread a strong top-down ecclesial structure, closely tying the people groups in the new territories to themselves as they pushed back the eastern borders. For these reasons, the *Vita Bonifatii* and Bonifatian correspondence are used for the first case study.

---

[1] Talbot, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany.*

[2] Willibald, *VB*, §4. His first trip to Frisia ended unsuccessfully in terms of seeing people interested in the gospel message.

[3] Boniface travelled in Frisia, Thuringia, Hesse, and Bavaria, whereas Willibrord concentrated on the work in Frisia.

[4] Wilhelm Levison, 'The Frisian Mission', in *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), 53-54 highlights this as an issue when studying Willibrord; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, 150.

[5] Levison, 'The Frisian Mission', 61; Reuter, ed., *The Greatest Englishman*, 13; For some interesting insights into Boniface through his correspondence see Andy Orchard, 'Old Source, New Resources: Finding the Right Formula for Boniface', *Anglo-Saxon England* 30 (2001).

[6] Willibald, *VB* For examination of other versions see Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 58-73, 102-07.

[7] Willibald, *VB*, §7, 8; Wilhelm Levison, 'Boniface: German Mission and Reform of the Frankish Church', in *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), 75; Addison, *The Medieval Missionary*, 14.

Winfrid, better known as Boniface,[8] was only one of many Anglo-Saxons moving onto the European continent in the seventh and eighth centuries. He was following in the footsteps of others, such as Ecgbert,[9] Willibrord,[10] and Wilfrid,[11] who saw those on the Continent in need of the gospel, which they had. Boniface was from an Anglo-Saxon culture, which influenced his worldview especially in terms of his faith. One feature of the Anglo-Saxon Church was its strong ties to Rome.[12] Bede emphasized this not only in his report of the Whitby Synod,[13] but he created the understanding that travel to, or at least correspondence with, Rome to receive ordination of a bishopric, should be standard practice.[14] Boniface saw himself as part of this tradition and travelled to Rome three times.[15]

One other feature of the Anglo-Saxon mindset was that of *peregrinatio* although the understanding of its meaning differed from that of the Celtic tradition. For the Celtic monks, *peregrinatio* was a penitential affair where preaching and mission might take place, but these were not central to the purpose of their *peregrinatio*. In contrast, the Anglo-Saxons undertook *peregrinatio* for the purpose of mission, that is spreading the gospel message. Thus their focus was outward, the

---

[8] For background on Boniface see: David Keep, *St. Boniface and His World* (Exeter, 1979); James T Palmer, 'The Frankish Cult of Martyrs and the Case of the Two Saints Boniface', *Revue Bénédictine* 114, no. 3-4 (2004); Reuter, ed., *The Greatest Englishman*; C.H. Talbot, 'St. Boniface and the German Mission', in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith*, ed. G.J. Cuming (Cambridge, 1970); Talbot, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*; E. W. F. Tomlin, *The World of St. Boniface* (Exeter, 1981); J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'A Background to St Boniface's Mission', in *England Before the Conquest*, ed. Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge, 1971).

[9] Bede, *HE*, V.9. English translations of Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People with Bede's Letter to Egbert and Cuthbert's Letter on the Death of Bede*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price and revised by Latham and Farmer (London, 1968) and Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People: The Greater Chronicle and Bede's Letter to Egbert*, trans. R. Collins and J. McClure (Oxford, 1994).

[10] Bede, *HE*, V.9-11.

[11] Ibid, V.19.

[12] Addison, *The Medieval Missionary*, 14, 119; Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, 124; Levison, 'The Frisian Mission', 57, 59; Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 74-75.

[13] Bede, *HE*, III.25.

[14] Ibid. For example: Mellitus visited Rome (II.4); Pope Boniface V sent pallium to Justus (II.8); Pope Honorius sent pallium to Paulinus and Honorius (II.17); Wighard to Rome to be made archbishop, but died so Theodore consecrated and sent (III. 29 , IV.1); Cadwalla and Ini made pilgrimages to Rome; V.11 Willibrord consecrated in Rome (V.7); Wilfrid and Benedict to Rome (V.19).

[15] Willibald, *VB*, §5, 6, 7. For some insights into 'The Bonifatian Circles and Rome' see James T Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690-900* (Turnhout, 2009), 227-34.

salvation of souls, whereas the Celtic *peregrinatio* had an inward aspect, the salvation of the soul of the *peregrinus*.[16]

The *Vita* records that Boniface's first visit to Frisia took place only after he pleaded for permission to travel,

> After long deliberation on the question of forsaking his country and his relatives, he took counsel of Abbot Winbert...frankly disclosed the plans...he had carefully concealed. He importuned the holy man with loud and urgent requests to give his consent to the project, but Winbert, astounded, at first refused to grant his permission, thinking that delay might turn him away from carrying out his proposals. At last, however, the providence of God prevailed and Boniface's petition was granted.[17]

Thus, impetus for his mission was seen to be individual and personal, but he would not leave the monastery without permission. In the end he not only received permission but also practical and spiritual backing as well: "So great was the affection of the abbot and brethren, with whom he had lived under the monastic discipline, that they willingly provided the money for his needs and continued long afterward to pray to God on his behalf: and so he set out upon his journey...".[18] His first visit to Frisia ended quickly and without much result, with the reason given that he was caught up in Radbod's rebellion against the Franks.[19] Willibald relates that Boniface had taken stock of the situation and saw the potential to return in the future, but that there was not much to be done at that time, so he returned home.[20] This is most likely the reflection of the author as he looked back on Boniface's life. What Boniface felt is not recorded. However, when, after eighteen months to two years, he set out again for the continent, he went first to Rome with a letter of introduction

---

[16] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 124; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 235.

[17] Willibald, *VB*, §4. *Sed cum sic longo temporis intervallo secum sollertissime deliberaret, ut patriam parentesque desereret, tandem, arrepto beatae memoriae et praedicti patris consultu, cuncta animi sui secreta intra conscientiam ante ea abscondita patenter aperuit et magna precuum instantia ad consensum suae voluntatis sancti viri animum provocavit. Qui etiam, magna primitus admiratione obstupefactus, poscenti sane supplicantique desideratum ad tempus contradixit iter, ut cepti propositi sedaret industriam; sed ad extremum, invaliscente omnipotentis Dei providentia, convaluit etiam sermo petentis.*

[18] Ibid. *Et tanta abbatis fratrumque suorum secum sub regulari disciplina viventium devotione adoptatum inchoaverat iter, ...ut ei etiam humani sumptus solacia libenter inpenderent et magna cordis commotione lacrimarum diutius infusiones orationumque supplicationes pro eo ad Dominum fuderent.*

[19] Ibid. Willibald portrays Radbod as destroying Christian churches and rebuilding pagan shrines thus restoring the worship of idols. If this interpretation is adhered to then Radbod would be an example of someone who allied himself to Christianity for political purposes and not as a result of faith. The account, however, is written in terms of the tension between Christianity and paganism rather than political intrigue. Paul Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (Harlow, 2000), 53 Fouracre shows that Radbod's rebellion was political not religious; Palmer, *Frankish World*, 106-07.

[20] Willibald, *VB*, §4.

from Bishop Daniel.[21] After a papal audience with Gregory II and lengthy discussions, Boniface was commissioned by Gregory in 719 to teach "the mystery of the faith among the Gentiles"[22]. This was a change in strategy from an independent missionary sent from his monastery, to a missionary commissioned by the pope, which would have given him more support and authority. Why Gregory chose to commission Boniface, an unknown Anglo-Saxon, with this work is unknown. Wallace-Hadrill speculates that Gregory, anxious to know the state of the mission work in the Rhineland and beyond after a generation of Franco-Irish workers in that area and the condition of the Frankish church, saw the potential of Boniface in the role of observer and reporter.[23] Whatever the reason, the dispatch of Boniface into these regions under papal authority guaranteed that the churches founded by Boniface would have strong ties to Rome.[24]

This time he did not return to Anglo-Saxon England but remained on the Continent for the rest of his life, though his strong ties to his home country are seen in his correspondence.[25] Boniface travelled north from Rome into Thuringia and then into Frisia where he met up once again with Willibrord. Radbod had died, so the way was open for the re-establishment of the Frisian Church, under Frankish control.[26] Boniface and Willibrord worked together for three years, 719-722, and saw many new believers added to the Christian communities and many churches built.[27]

Even though Willibrord asked him to remain and continue as his successor, Boniface moved south into Hesse where the Franks and Irish had been, but the existing state of affairs saw Christianity barely distinguishable from traditional religious practices.[28] The resultant success of thousands undergoing baptism and

---

[21] Ibid, §5.

[22] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 12...*in laborem salutiferae praedicationis ad innotescendum gentibus incredulis mysterium fidei*...

[23] Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, 151; Willibald, *VB*, §5, 6.

[24] Levison, 'Boniface', 72-73; Levison, 'The Frisian Mission', 57, 59. See also: Addison, *The Medieval Missionary*, 14, 119; Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, 124; Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 74-75.

[25] For the collection of these letters see: Kylie, *The English Correspondence of Saint Boniface.*

[26] Willibald, *VB*, §5. It records that after Radbod's death, Boniface and Willibrord were able to return and *doctrinae caelestis semina ministravit et, verbi Dei fame expulsa, familicam paganicae superstitionis multitudinem aeternae praedicationis reficit pabulo.* (....scatter abroad the seed of Christian teaching to feed with wholesome doctrine those who had been famished by pagan superstition.).

[27] Ibid.

[28] Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, 51.

accepting the Christian faith saw Boniface sending a report to Rome.[29] The messenger returned with the request for Boniface to travel to Rome and report first-hand. Gregory "interrogated him on his teaching, on the creed and on the tradition and beliefs of his church."[30] In response, in 722, Boniface penned an oath,[31] was elevated to bishop and given the name Boniface,[32] and sent back with letters of commendation to all German Christians,[33] to Thuringian leaders,[34] and to Charles Martel.[35] With these letters in hand Boniface returned to continue the work in Hesse and Thuringia for another decade, this time as bishop but without a specific see.[36]

Boniface spent approximately fifteen years working with the leaders of the Franks institutionalising the Frankish Church.[37] The *Vita Bonifatii* informers the reader that he worked with Charles, Carloman and Pippin:[38]

> The temporal rule of the glorious leader Charles eventually came to an end and the reins of power passed into the strong hands of his two sons Carloman and Pepin. Then by the help of God and at the suggestion of the archbishop Saint Boniface the establishment of the Christian religion was confirmed, the convening of synods by orthodox bishops was instituted among the Franks and all abuses were redressed and corrected in accordance with canonical authority.[39]

In 732, Pope Gregory III sent a pallium to Boniface addressing the letter "[t]o our very reverend and holy brother and fellow bishop, Boniface sent...to enlighten the people of Germany and those in surrounding countries who are still lingering in the shadow of death and involved in error...",[40] and giving praise for his work. There was, again, no see attached to the archbishopric. Rather, the work was to continue

---

[29] Willibald, *VB*, §6.

[30] Ibid. *...iam de simbulo et fidei ecclesiasticae traditione apostolicus illum pontifex inquisivit.*

[31] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 16.

[32] Ibid, no. 18.

[33] Ibid, no. 17.

[34] Ibid, no. 19.

[35] Ibid, no. 20.

[36] Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, 152.

[37] Levison, 'Boniface', 72. For interpretations of these reforms see: James T Palmer, 'The 'Vigorous Rule' of Bishop Lull: Between Bonifatian Mission and Carolingian Church Control', *Early Medieval Europe* 13, no. 3 (2005); David Keep, 'Cultural Conflicts in the Missions of Saint Boniface', in *Religion and National Identity*, ed. Stuart Mews (Oxford, 1982).

[38] Willibald, *VB*, §7, 8.

[39] Ibid, §7. *Cumque Carli ducis gloriosi temporale finitum esset regnum, et filiorum eius Carlomanni et Pippini roboratum est imperium, tunc quippe, domino Deo opitulante ac suggerente sancto Bonifatio archiepiscopo, relegionis christianae confirmatum est testamentum, et orthodoxorum patrum synodalia sunt in Francis correcta instituta cunctaque canonum auctoritate emendata atque expiata.*

[40] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 28. *reverentissimo et sanctissimo fratri Bonifatio coepiscopo ad inluminationem gentis Germaniae vel circumquaque in umbra mortis morantibus gentibus in errore constitutis*

among the peoples east of the Rhine. Wallace-Hadrill sees this appointment by Gregory as Gregory desiring to create "a strong provincial-diocesan framework controlled by Rome and operating in the field through missionary-monastic units."[41] This can be seen in Boniface's work in Bavaria after his third visit to Rome in 738. He was sent into Bavaria as a Roman representative with no ties to the Franks.[42] There, with Duke Odilo's consent, he divided the province of Bavaria into four dioceses and appointed four bishops.[43] This would establish the Roman form of ecclesial structure and lessen the influence of the Irish abbatial influence, especially seen in Salzburg.[44] Boniface also promoted the Benedictine rule.[45] Thus his reforms in Bavaria would establish Rome's claims to authority in the area, although Salzburg was to remain the centre of actual influence in the area.[46]

In 744 Boniface founded the monastery at Fulda that was to be a place of retreat as well as a base for future work in Saxony.[47]

> There is a wooded place in the midst of a vast wilderness and at the center of the peoples to whom we are preaching. There we have placed a group of monks living under the rule of St. Benedict, who are building a monastery. They are men of strict abstinence,... but content with the labor of their own hands....Here I am proposing, with your kind permission, to rest my age-worn body for a little time and after my death to be buried here. The four peoples to whom we have spoken the word of Christ by the grace of God dwell, as is well known, round about this place, and as long as I live and retain my faculties, I can be useful to them with your support.[48]

Thus a centrally located monastery for mission work among the surrounding peoples was established under the Benedictine Rule. Its first abbot was Sturm (715-779), from a noble Christian family in Noricum who was accepted for training by

---

[41] Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, 153.

[42] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 45; Willibald, *VB*, §7, 8.

[43] See footnote 7 of the case studies introduction for the discussion of the appointment of bishops.

[44] For Salzburg's case for authority in the region see the discussion of the *Conversio* in chapter 1 and in the case study of Cyril and Methodius; Boniface and Virgil of Salzburg (from Irish background) came to loggerheads on two occasions. See Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 68, 80; For further insights into these controversies see resources listed in the chapter on baptism, footnote 34; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, 154.

[45] Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, 152, 154.

[46] Ibid, 154.

[47] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no.86. The charter for Fulda is found in no. 89.

[48] Ibid, no. 86. *Est preterea locus silvaticus in heremo vastissimae solitudinis in medio nationum predicationis nostrae, in quo monasterium construentes monachos constituimus sub regula sancti patris Benedicti viventes, viros strictae abstinentiae,....proprio manum suarum labore contentos...In quo loco cum consensu pietatis vestrae proposui aliquantulum vel paucis diebus fessum senectute corpus requiescendo recuperare et post mortem iacere. Quattuor etenim populi, quibus verbum Christi per gratiam Dei diximus, in circuitu loci huius habitare dinoscuntur, quibus cum vestra | intercessione, quamdiu vivo vel sapio, utilis esse possum.*

Boniface.[49] Despite Lull desiring Utrecht[50] to be the place of his burial, in the end Boniface's body rested in Fulda.[51] How he died, as a martyr, was what gave him sainthood in the eyes of the hagiographer.

With fifty[52] or so others in his group in Frisia, Boniface was martyred in 754.[53] Willibald reports that he

> traversed the whole of Frisia, destroying pagan worship and turning away the people from their pagan errors by his preaching of the Gospel....Many thousands of men, women, and children were baptized by him, assisted by his fellow missionary and suffrage bishop Eoban, who, after being consecrated bishop in the city which is called Trecht [i.e. Utrecht], was summoned to Frisia to help Boniface in his old age....[they] pitched a camp on the banks of the river Bordne,...Here he fixed a day on which he would confirm by the laying-on of hands all the neophytes and those who had recently been baptized;...when the appointed day arrived....enemies came instead of friends, new executioners in place of new worshipers of the faith.[54]

What actually happened is still a mystery. The two interpretations that are most prevalent are either that Boniface and his group were attacked by bandits who killed them for their possessions,[55] or that the group was attacked by Frisians who were angry at their methods and ways of missions.[56] For the hagiographer the importance was in the fact that Boniface was killed on a Church mission, thus making him a martyr.[57] Although Boniface was celebrated as a martyr, his impact was felt through the reforms he instituted for the church, rather than because of the manner of his death.

2. Boniface and Missiology

Boniface, coming from an Anglo-Saxon background with its strong ties to Rome, established churches and ecclesial structures tied to Rome, which gave

---

[49] Eigil, 'Vita Sturmi', §2. English translation by Talbot, Eigil, 'The Life of Saint Sturm'.

[50] For insight into the relationship between Boniface and Lull see Palmer, 'The 'Vigorous Rule' of Bishop Lull'.

[51] Willibald, *VB*, §8.

[52] Ibid. For a discussion of numbers see Levison, 'Boniface', 90.

[53] Levison, 'Boniface', 90.

[54] Willibald, *VB*, §8.

[55] Ibid. "Suddenly, after the mortal remains of the just had been mutilated, the pagan mob seized with exultation upon the spoils of their victory (in reality the cause of their damnation).."

[56] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no.111; Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 76; Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, 127.

[57] Palmer, 'The 'Vigorous Rule' of Bishop Lull': 255; Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 111, 112; Willibald, *VB*, §8.

prominence to orthodoxy.[58] The outcome of this emphasis can be seen in the work Boniface did with the Frankish Church in laying a foundation for a strong, centrally controlled ecclesial structure,[59] and one closely bound to the political structure. One of the great papal concerns was with the correct way of thinking and practice according to the Apostolic See. This put mission work in the frontier territory in tension with any bottom-up growth that may have occurred. From the missiological perspective, how to deal with those within these areas who already saw themselves as Christian as a result of a bottom-up spread of the Christian message was an ongoing tension for the papal-backed mission supported by the Franks.

This resulted in an emphasis in the mission work on the need to re-educate those believers who were in error, that is either involved in incorrect practices or abiding by a teaching or a tradition other than that ordained by Rome. This can be seen in the Bonifatian correspondence. Part of Pope Gregory's commendation of Boniface to all German Christians (722) states, "If perchance he shall find there some who have wandered from the way of the true faith or have fallen into error by the cunning persuasion of the devil, he is to correct them and bring them back into the haven of safety, teach them the doctrine of this Apostolic See and establish them firmly in that same catholic faith.".[60] And Pope Gregory III writes along the same lines in his letter to the nobility and people of Hesse and Thuringia (c.738), "...if perchance he should find any who had wandered from the way of the true faith or the canonical teaching...".[61] Clearly the popes saw the consolidation of correct doctrinal teaching and understanding as an important component of mission work. Boniface himself made this observation in his letter to Bishop Daniel, "But when someone from our ranks, priest, deacon, clerk, or monk, leaves the bosom of Mother Church

---

[58] Heideman, 'Syncretism, Contextualization'.

[59] Willibald, *VB*, §7, 8; Levison, 'Boniface', 75, 78ff; Addison, *The Medieval Missionary*, 14.

[60] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 17. *...si quos forte vel ubicumque a recte fidei tramite destitisse cognoverit aut astutia diabolica suasos erroneos repererit, corrigat atque sui edocatione ad portum reportet salutis eosque ex apostolicae sedis huius doctrina informet et in eadem catholica fide permanere instituat.*

[61] Ibid, no. 43. *Et quos forsitan deviantes invenerit a recte fidei tramite seu canonica doctrina eosque prohibuerit,...*; See also no. 28 which has the phrase "Boniface, sent....to enlighten the people of Germany and those in the surrounding countries who are still lingering in the shadow of death and involved in error."

and departs from the true faith, then he breaks out with the pagans into abuse of the sons of the Church. This is a terrible obstacle to the gospel of the glory of Christ."[62]

The Bonifatian correspondence is clear that his mission field was to be in a Germanic area east of the Rhine[63] where the people were described as: 'in bonds of infidelity',[64] 'wandering in the shadow of death at the instigation of the ancient enemy',[65] 'under the form of the Christian faith, [but] are still in slavery to the worship of idols',[66] 'who have not as yet any knowledge of God and have not been cleansed by the water of holy baptism but as pagans, do not acknowledge their Creator',[67] and 'fettered by pagan errors, many of them still lost in the darkness of ignorance'[68]. There is seen here a distinction between those caught in the error of paganism, that is, an incorrect but recognizable religious practice, and those in ignorance, that is not having any knowledge of any religious practice. So there are two types of people that Boniface was to preach to, those who were worshipping wrong gods and those who had no concept of a god at all. One wonders whether Boniface approached these two groups differently. Pope Gregory, in his letter of 15 May 719 described Boniface's task as:

> You are to teach them the service of the kingdom of God by the persuasion of the truth in the name of Christ, the Lord our God. You will pour into their untaught minds the preaching of both the Old and the New Testament in the spirit of virtue and love and sobriety and with reasoning suited to their understanding.[69]

Thus the thrust of Boniface's work was not only to those who needed to hear the gospel message for the first time, but also to correct wrong teaching. From a missiological perspective, Boniface was involved in all the components of mission: pre-evangelism, evangelism, conversion, consolidation and passing the message on.

---

[62] Ibid, 63. *...quando quis de gremio matris aecclesiae presbiter vel diaconus, clericus vel monachus, discedit a fide et veritate, tum deinde prorumpit cum paganis in contumelias filiorm aecclesiae. Et erit obstaculum horrendum evangelio gloriae Christi...*

[63] Ibid, no. 17, 20, 50.

[64] Ibid, no. 12. *...ad gentes quascumque infidelitatis errore detentas...*

[65] Ibid, no. 17. *...antiquo hoste suadente errare...*

[66] Ibid. *...et quasi sub relegione christiana idolorum culturae eos servire cognovimus...*

[67] Ibid. *...aliquos vero, qui necdum cognitionem Dei habentes nec baptismatis sacri unda sunt loti, sed conparatione brutorum animalium pagani factorem non recognoscunt...*

[68] Ibid, no. 20. *...consistentibus gentilitatis errore detentis vel adhuc insipientibus, multis adhuc ignorantiae obscuritatibus prepeditis necessario destinare...*

[69] Ibid, no. 12. *...ministerium regni Deo per insinuationem| nominis Christi domini nostri veritatis suasione designes et per spiritum virtutis et dilectionis ac sobrietatis praedicationem utriusque testamenti mentibus indoctis consona ratione transfundas...*

There is, however, continuing controversy over whether Boniface should be classified as a missionary at all. Wood uses the consideration of evangelism to evaluate mission work. On this basis Wood argues that Boniface was only truly evangelistic twice, the earliest years of his time on the Continent working in Thuringia circa 716 and the last year or so when he travelled to Frisia in 754.[70] Thus Wood would not classify Boniface's work with the Frankish Church as part of mission work. However, as argued above, consolidation is very much an important stage in mission, thus Boniface should be classified as a missioniser.

Consolidation, however, was not the only agenda Boniface had. The unbeliever was clearly in Gregory II's mind when he recommended Boniface to Charles Martel in 722, "...[Boniface] has been sent by us to preach to the German peoples dwelling on the eastern side of the Rhine, fettered by pagan errors, many of them still lost in the darkness of ignorance."[71] This is also seen in his reply to Boniface's report in 724, "We have perceived the fragrance of the ministry of the Word arising from your gift of obedience and we have learned that through the broadcasting of your preaching[72], as you have reported, the unbelieving people are being converted."[73] And the unbelieving were still on Boniface's agenda in 753 when he wrote to Pope Stephan II to argue for Utrecht to remain directly under papal authority giving as a reason the greater part of Frisia was still pagan.[74] Thus, though it can be argued that Boniface's main work was consolidating Christians under Roman ecclesial authority and structure, neither the popes nor Boniface ever lost sight of the need to transmit the Christian gospel message to those seen as outside the Christian community.

---

[70] Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 59. Wood states that Boniface was "always a Christianiser, but only occasionally a missionary."

[71] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 20....*informatum ad predicandum plebibus Germaniae gentis ac diversis in orientali Reni fluminis parte consistentibus gentilitatis errore detentis vel adhuc insipientibus, multis adhuc ignorantiae obscuritatibus prepeditis necessario destinare.*

[72] One source of preaching content that deserves further attention are the so-called psuedo-Bonifatian sermons. Moguntinus, 'Sermones'. James Palmer has helpfully pointed out that Padberg has addressed some of this content in Padberg, *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen*, 195-202. Padberg sees these mainly as teaching sermons primarily addressed to those who were already baptised. There is more work to be done on this group of sermons in the context of mission.

[73] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 24. *Quod quia ex oboedientiae munere ministerium verbi cernimus adolere et praedicationis praeconio populum infidelem, ut innotuisti, audivimus converti...*

[74] Ibid, no. 109.

How much front-line evangelistic work Boniface actually did, not just the reported results, is harder to track. The *Vita* relates that many were added to the church in Frisia: "When he saw that the harvest was abundant and the laborers were few the holy servant of God offered his services for three years to Archbishop Willibrord and labored indefatigably. He destroyed pagan temples and shrines, built churches and chapels, and with the help of Willibrord gained numerous converts to the church."[75] However, it does not clearly state how many of those brought into the church were new converts. The lack of any mention of baptism would lead one to conclude that most of these people were former believers who had strayed from the faith, but again that is not clearly stated, and in the paragraph before this Willibald describes the district as "hitherto...untouched by the preaching of the Gospel."[76] Even the phrase used in chapter six to sum up this work—"When he had converted to the Lord a vast number of people among the Frisians and many had come through his instruction to the knowledge of truth,...."[77]—is unclear. What is clear is that there was a response to his preaching and teaching which resulted in churches being established. How large a proportion of these communities were new Christians, hearing the gospel message for the first time, and how many were returning Christians who had been persecuted under Radbod, or how many were those who had become unclear in the orthodox doctrine, cannot be stated.

In other places, Willibald sums up Boniface's work in Frisia and Hesse with the phrase, *[m]ultisque milibus hominum expurgata paganica vetustate baptizatis...*[78]. Clearly these were new believers who needed to undergo baptism, so this would indicate people had passed through the evangelism to the conversion stage of mission. There was also the account of the cutting down of the oak at Gaesmere, which resulted in people turning from their former gods to belief in the Christian

---

[75] Willibald, *VB*, §5. *Sed quia messe quidam multa operarios inesse paucos cerneret, sanctus hic Dei famulus cooperator etiam factus est per tres instanter annos Willibrordi archiepiscopi multumque in Christo laborans, non parvum Domino populum, destructis delubrorum fanis et extructis ecclesiarum oratoriis, praefato pontifici opitulante, adquisivit.*

[76] Ibid. *quidem fluminis, magno gavisus gaudio, navigio ascendit, optans, quod etiam Fresia recipisset verbum Dei, et ad incultas caelesti praedicatione terras pervenit.*

[77] Ibid, §6. *Cumque ingentem Domino populum in Fresonis adquireret, multique ab eo spiritali doctrine, edocati ad agnitionem veritatis, inradiantibus verae lucis radiis,...*

[78] Ibid. "Having converted many thousands of people from their long-standing pagan practices and baptized them,..."

God.[79] Thus, although the emphasis of his work may have been on the re-education of believers in orthodox Roman doctrine, there was always an element of new believers being added to the Christian community. This means that Boniface was not just engaged in consolidation, but that he was also engaged in evangelism.

That there was constant need for consolidation is seen in Boniface's return journey to Thuringia where he "addressed the elders and the chiefs of the people, calling them to put aside their blind ignorance and to return to the Christian religion that they had formerly embraced".[80] Here, clearly Boniface's mission was to re-educate the population who had been misled by religious leaders when the political leaders had been destroyed, and the Thuringians had been under Saxon domination. This was slow work: "Little by little the number of believers increased, the preachers grew more numerous, church buildings were restored and the Word of God published far and wide."[81] This consolidation work brought the response of a large number of holy men coming from Britain to aid the work. These men were involved in both consolidation and evangelism.

> Of these a considerable number put themselves under his rule and guidance, and by their help the population in many places was recalled from the errors and profane rites of their heathen gods. While some were in the province of Hesse and others scattered widely among the people of Thuringia, they preached the word of God in the countryside and in the villages. The number of both peoples who received the sacraments of the faith was enormous and many thousands of them were baptized.[82]

Here, again, is evidence of the combination of consolidation and evangelism. When the word of God was preached there was response from both the believers who needed further instruction and those who heard the gospel message for the first time. Thus Boniface's work had both the elements of consolidation and evangelism.

It may be valuable to evaluate Boniface's work in terms of the paradigm introduced in the mission chapter, that of E1, E2 and E3 evangelism. Even though

---

[79] Ibid. Even thought this may well be only a figurative, rather than literal, account, several interesting insights into how missional work was portrayed can be gained; For a different understanding of this account see: Palmer, 'Defining paganism': 410-12.

[80] Willibald, *VB*, §6. *Et seniores plebis populique principes affatus est eosque, relicta ignorantiae caecitate, ad acceptam dudum christianitatis relegionem iterando provocavit...*

[81] Ibid. *Sed cum credentium paulatim pollesceret multitudo, praedicatorum quoque multiplicatus esset catalogus, tunc etiam ecclesiae repente instaurantur et praedicatio eius doctrinae multiformiter emanavit,..*

[82] Ibid. *Quorum quippe quam plurimi regulari se eius institutione subdiderunt populumque ab erratica gentilitatis profanatione plurimis in locis evocavere. Et alii quidem in provincia Hessorum, alii etiam in Thyringea dispersi late per populum, pagos ac vicos verbum Dei praedicabant. Cumque ingens utriusque populi multitudo fidei sacramenta, multis milibus hominum baptizatis...*

the goal of this paradigm is an indigenous multiplying church, which was not the goal of Boniface's work, this paradigm does help to evaluate Boniface's work in terms of crossing cultural and linguistic boundaries. His letters show that he felt called to take the gospel to the 'old Saxons'[83], that is the part of the Saxon peoples that remained on the Continent living in the Frisian and Thuringian areas. Therefore, since Boniface was himself Anglo-Saxon, the 'old Saxons' would have been closely related in terms of language and culture.[84] Boniface's letters rarely make reference to using a translator which can be interpreted as either using translators was so common that many writers failed to mention it, or that a translator was unnecessary as the dialects were close enough to be easily understood. Therefore, though most scholars agree that Boniface was not crossing major cultural and linguistic barriers,[85] so would not be doing E3 evangelism, his move into old Saxon territory could be seen as either E1 or E2 evangelism depending on how close these two cultures and languages were. This in no way lessens the value of his work, but this paradigm can aid in clarifying the precise type of missional work Boniface was engaged in.

Thus missiology brings different questions to the Bonifatian sources, such as how the different groups within in an area were perceived, what instructions were given in terms of mission work, and how he promoted the Christian message by preaching and teaching as the main means not only to evangelise, but also to consolidate. Missiology also gives consolidation work a place in the complete understanding of mission.

3. Individual and Group

The Bonifatian correspondence does not dwell on issues of mass movements of people into the Christian community through baptism or conversion, but it does point to some issues of practice raised by Boniface as he moved through different territories. Some of these, for example, had to do with marital practice,[86] with abuse

[83] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 46.
[84] Boniface, *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, 15.
[85] Ibid, 16; Addison, *The Medieval Missionary*, 14, 15; Green, *Language and History*, 341-56; Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages*, 63; Julia M. H. Smith, *Europe After Rome, A New Cultural History 500-1000* (Oxford, 2005), 25, 37.
[86] For example, Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 18, 26, 32, 33.

of the priesthood,[87] and, as seen above, with correct practice and understanding according to the Roman See. The rite of baptism is one of the themes running throughout the Bonifatian correspondence. [88] Even though it was the actual performance of the rite of baptism rather than its significance that Boniface questioned, the responses he received from the popes brought the significance of the rite to the fore.[89] Boniface's questions ranged from how effective the rite of baptism would be if the person performing the rite did not know the proper Latin formula, or was drunk,[90] to how efficacious the Trinitarian formula was.[91] With his questions on language and baptism, Boniface understood that the proper Latin phrasing of the Trinitarian formula would seal the baptism, not the actual immersion in water. This question concerning the efficacy of the baptismal rite was not a new one, as Augustine, for one, addressed it in the fifth century.[92] What this does say is that Boniface understood the salvific component of baptism as the performance of the Trinitarian formula and this points to one variety of baptismal understanding. The answer he received was that the rite, no matter who performed it, was a seal of salvation on the baptized.[93] This reinforced the understanding of baptism that instead of it being a rite that sealed a declaration of faith in a conversion process, it was the rite itself with the Trinitarian formula that contained the means of salvation. Therefore, anyone undergoing baptism, whether voluntary or under duress, would be seen as saved and therefore a Christian. But this cannot have also equalled total conversion since the Bonifatian correspondence, as discussed above, contains phrases concerning correction of wrong understanding and teaching of those already seen as Christian and these ranged from leaders, bishops, priests to the larger public.[94] Rome saw the influence of the secular and ecclesial leaders as key to

[87] For example, Ibid, no. 24, 26, 28, 44, 45, 51, 60, 64.
[88] Ibid, no. 18, 25, 26, 28, 45.
[89] Ibid, no. 26, 28, 45, 68.
[90] Ibid, no. 45, 68.
[91] Ibid, no .28, 80.
[92] For example see Augustine, *Ep.*, Ep. XXIII.4; LXXXIX.5; XCIII.47,48; XCVIII.5; Augustine, 'Contra Litteras Petiliani Donatistae Cortensis Episcopi', in *PL 43*, ed. J P Migne (Paris, 1846), Book II.33.78; Augustine, 'De Baptismo Contra Donatistas', Book III.14.19; Book IV.4.7; Book VI.36.69-70; Augustine, *Ep. I-LV*, Ep. LIV.1.
[93] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 26, 45, 60, 68, 80.
[94] Ibid. For examples regarding leaders see no. 19, 4382, 83; for bishops and clergy no. 16, 21, 28, 38, 78, 80, 86, 87, 90; and for laity no. 17, 78, 86, 84.

maintaining correct teaching, but the Bonifatian correspondence also addresses the issue of the local priest and the larger public.

This also raises the question of whether baptism and conversion was seen as a group or an individual action. The Germanic people[95], the Old Saxons[96] and others[97] were addressed as groups, but it is clear that within these groups there were those who were believers and those who still needed to the hear correct preaching and teaching in order to join the community of the faithful under the Roman Apostolic See. Boniface was able to report success in bringing people to faith either from the state of ignorance to belief, or from incorrect doctrine to that approved by the Apostolic See.[98] Boniface and the popes raised questions concerning certain groups within a society, such as drunken priests, or leaders with unacceptable attitudes or practices, those who were ignorant, and those who continued idol worship.[99] Though the language used sets these problems in terms of groups, the solutions were aimed at individuals. Thus drunken priests were condemned, but this did not lead to the condemnation of the priesthood; though abuses of the episcopal office were condemned, the office itself was not, and the same can be said for other issues addressed in the Bonifatian correspondence. Here, again, the tension between the group as a whole and the individual within the group is evident.

In 724, Pope Gregory II commended Boniface to all the people of Thuringia, not just the leaders. Boniface's task was to baptise and teach the doctrine of Christ in order to lead the people out of error into the way of salvation and eternal life.[100] The fact that this was addressed to all the people meant that the pope was seeing the whole group, not just the leaders, as important receivers of the gospel message. At the same time, there was the understanding that not every person would accept the message and be baptised. This is seen also in his letter c. 738 to all the nobles and people of the German provinces and all dwellers east of the Rhine,[101] where the believers were urged to accept Boniface's appointment of bishops and priests, but it

---

[95] Ibid, no. 17, 28, 38, 43.
[96] Ibid, no. 21, 46, 47.
[97] Ibid. For example: Thuringians in letters no. 19, 25, 43, Bavarians in letters no. 45, 50, and Franks in letters no. 22, 50, 60.
[98] For example: Ibid, no. 50, 57; Willibald, *VB*, §6, 7.
[99] As discussed above.
[100] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 25.
[101] Ibid, no. 43.

also contains a paragraph on the heathen practices they are to avoid. Therefore, though the Christian message was influencing the larger group, and smaller groups within the society, it was still seen as needing to be worked out on an individual level.

Thus mission work was being done on an individual level even though Boniface's remit was to an area settled by people groups. Most of the correspondence dealt with problem cases rather than those already following acceptable practice, but this did not mean that there were no strong worshipping congregations of Christian believers in the area. It simply meant that the problems and their solutions were the cause behind the correspondence, and were of enough interest to others that these pieces of correspondence were kept and passed on.

The tension with the top-down and bottom-up mission work can be seen in the letter Pope Gregory wrote promoting Boniface to the rank of missionary archbishop in 732. In the letter Gregory says, "But, since you declare yourself unable to impart the means of salvation to all who are converted to the true faith in those parts, since the faith had already been carried far and wide, we command you, in accordance with the sacred canons and by authority of the Apostolic See to ordain bishops wherever the multitude of the faithful has become very great."[102] Thus the papacy was forced to acknowledge that the gospel message had spread faster than Boniface's actual work, and, in order to control the territory, bishoprics were established wherever there were a large number of believers. This is one example of the top-down approach taking over the work of the bottom-up spread of the gospel message. One benefit the organized top-down approach could bring to these scattered groups would have been to bring them into formal contact with the larger Christian community. The negative side of joining the top-down ecclesial structure was the conformity sought not just in liturgical and sacramental practices, but also in terms of government, finances, and monastic rule.

It is clear that there were pluses and minuses in top-down mission work. As it was the top-down work that Boniface was promoting, the bottom-up spread of the

---

[102] Ibid, no. 28. *Quia vero turbas Domini gratia in eisdem partibus ad rectam fidem asseruisti conversos, nequire te occurrere omnibus ea quae salutis sunt impendere aut intimare, cum iam longe lateque gratia Christi eius fides in illis partibus propagetur: precipimus, ut iuxta sacrorum canonum statuta, ubi multitudo excrevit fidelium, ex vigore apostolicae sedis debeas ordinare episcopos...*

gospel message was seen as a negative unless harnessed into the Roman ecclesial structure and understanding. In the Bonifatian *Vita* and correspondence there is no mention of large groups, even though large numbers are reported, being baptised as groups into the church but rather the impression is of individuals—whether leaders, clergy of some kind, or the people on the ground— over time accepting and working out the Christian faith.[103] The above discussion of his work in Frisia tells of thousands being converted and baptised but there is no time frame given in the *Vita.* However, since Boniface worked from 719-722 with Willibrord and then moved into this area, and he received a pallium in 732 on the basis of the report of the work sent to Rome, then the thousands mentioned were spread over ten years. This does not in any way diminish the impact of the mission work in the Thuringian area, but it does indicate that there were no reports of group baptisms and group conversions. The only time there is the impression that Boniface needed help in baptising large numbers in a very short space of time, is in the story of his last trip into Frisia, when Bishop Eoban came to help.[104] Therefore, using a term such as mass conversion would be unhelpful in evaluating most of Boniface's work.

Boniface's top-down approach is exemplified in Willibald's comment on how Boniface carried out the pope's mandate in Thuringia.

> He spoke to the senators of each tribe and the princes of the whole people with words of spiritual exhortation, recalling them to the true way of knowledge and the light of understanding that for the greater part they had lost through the perversity of their teachers. By preaching the Gospel and turning their minds away from evil toward a life of virtue and the observance of canonical decrees he reproved, admonished, and instructed to the best of his ability the priests and elders,..."[105]

Boniface was not only approaching the leaders, he was correcting them, as they were already seen as believers. He was also correcting the priests who had strayed ethically. Their response would be, however, varied according to their understanding, and thus was at the individual level.

Pope Gregory II also acknowledged the tension between the group and the individual in his letter of 722 to the Thuringian leaders and all faithful Thuringian

---

[103] Willibald, *VB*, §5, 6.

[104] Ibid, §8.

[105] Ibid, §5. *...senatores denique plebis totiusque populi principes verbis spiritalibus affatus est eosque ad veram agnitionis viam et intellegentiae lucem provocavit, quam olim ante maxime siquidem ex parte, pravis seducti doctoribus, perdiderunt. Sed et sacerdotes ac presbiteros....sermonibus euangelicis, quantum potuit, a malitiae pravitate ad canonicae constitutionis rectitudine correxit, admonuit atque instruxit.*

Christians. "The report of your glorious loyalty to Christ, how, when the heathen were pressing you to return to the worship of idols, you answered, full of confidence, that you would rather die than break the faith in Christ you had accepted, was received by us with the greatest joy...".[106] Here there were individuals standing for the Christian faith in spite of the opposition of others in the group. The leaders are actually named, Asulf, Godolaus, Wilareus, Gundhareus, and Alvoldus, which means these individuals stood out from the group. But it was not just these five leaders who refused to give into the opposition, there were the unnamed others who fell under the greeting 'all faithful Thuringian Christians'.

Thus the group and the individual influenced one another in the process of growing in faith. It can be said that Boniface was more concerned with correct doctrine than with evangelism, but this would undermine the passages which relate that large numbers of people heard the gospel message and responded with a desire to be baptised. So there was always the element of reaching new people with the gospel message while correcting those who had strayed from the Roman understanding of orthodoxy.

Thus, exploring these sources from a missiological perspective allows the historian to gain a clearer picture of mission work during the time of Boniface. For Rome this was a time of consolidation, but this never negated the communication of the gospel message to new people, either in groups or to individuals. The individual was still important, as observed in the questions asked and answered in the correspondence, such as on marital issues, which would be individual cases. There is also seen the tension between top-down and bottom-up mission in the strong evidence of the bottom-up spread of the gospel message already existent in the areas of responsibility given to Boniface by Rome. Therefore the challenges were not only to correct the doctrine of church leaders and individuals, not only to battle against traditional religious practices, but also to bring those believers from either a prior bottom-up spread of the gospel, or from a different strain of Christian understanding, into the Roman ecclesial structure.

---

[106] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 19. *Insinuatam nobis magnificae in Christo fidei vestrae constantiam agnoscentes, quod paganis conpellentibus vos ad idola colenda fide plena responderitis magis velle feliciter mori quam fidem semel in Christo acceptam aliquatenus violare...*

4. Syncretism or Contextualization

The issue of syncretism and contextualization can be seen throughout the Bonifatian *Vita* and correspondence on the two themes of baptism and correct teaching and practice. Boniface spent little time concerned with whether baptism was a necessity or not, but rather spent his energy on how it should be performed in order to remain pure and to comply with Roman standards. There is no sense of syncretism, that is an undermining of the core message, at this level.

In the Bonifatian correspondence, of more concern than the external performance of the rite, was the fear of a degradation of meaning and significance of the rite, if not performed correctly. This stemmed from the validated understanding that the rite itself, performed with the Trinitarian formula, was salvific in and of itself.[107] In the discussions held throughout the correspondence, there was less concern with the baptised, than with the baptiser, that is, there seemed to be the understanding that the individuals undergoing baptism were purposeful in their actions, but the baptisers may not have been.[108] However, if the baptismal rite became degraded, then the accompanying message could also be compromised. This could arise from people undergoing baptism with insufficient preparation and understanding, and also from incorrect understanding of the rite itself.

This is where the concern with the baptismal rite entered into the realm of syncretism. The rite itself could be performed in various ways and, it was concluded, by various people and still be valid. However, if the accompanying message was not correctly understood, then it was quite possible that the person undergoing baptism would have an incomplete faith, and thus leave open the door to a breaking down of the core message, leading to syncretism, which would then be revealed in external practices. This is seen, for example, in Pope Gregory's letter of 722 commending Boniface to all German Christians. It contains the phrase, "certain peoples in Germany on the eastern side of the Rhine are wandering in the shadow of death at the instigation of the ancient enemy and, as it were under the form of the Christian

[107] See above footnotes 90, 91.
[108] For example: Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no.28, 45, 60, 68, 80.

faith, are still in slavery to the worship of idols...."[109] These people, as seen in the next phrase in the letter, "while others who have not as yet any knowledge of God and have not been cleansed by the water of holy baptism..."[110], were not put in the category of those who had not as yet been baptised. Therefore, it can be concluded, that this group of people were individuals who had been baptised, but were continuing their former idol worship. This was evidence of syncretic faith, as idol worship was anathema to the Christian worldview. Here, it is evident, baptism was not enough to produce believers, since Gregory clearly understood that these people needed correction, not just of practice but of understanding as well.

The other main theme within the correspondence and *Vita* was the constant return to the preaching and teaching of correct doctrine and practice. Boniface was to model correct practice in order to be an example for others to follow.[111] The tension between the ideal and reality is seen throughout the correspondence as Boniface seems to be constantly battling against drunkenness and immoral conduct in the clergy.[112] Concern with correct doctrine moves the missional aim from the realm of external practice, to that of internal belief and understanding. The papal concern that syncretic belief and practices would enter the church community centred on individuals, who had strayed from the core gospel message and the correct practices which, according to Rome, should result from correct belief and understanding.

Boniface himself underwent close examination by Gregory II in 719[113] at the outset of his mission career, and then again in 722 before receiving episcopal authority.[114] It is curious, after such a close examination in 719, that three years later Gregory felt the need once again to investigate Boniface on his teaching, on the creed, and on the tradition and beliefs of the Roman See. One wonders whether Gregory had heard conflicting reports of Boniface's work and thus felt it best to

---

[109] Ibid, no. 17. See the discussion in section 3.1 of chapter 1.

[110] Ibid. See as in above footnote.

[111] For example: Ibid, no. 25, 44, 82.

[112] This term is used here as a divider between the official church workers, of whatever rank, and the layman, that is those with no official position within the ecclesial structure.

[113] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 12; Willibald, *VB*, §5. "After the pope had read the letters of recommendation and examined the writing on the parchment, he thereafter met with Boniface on a daily basis and discussed his plans assiduously,..."

[114] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 16; Willibald, *VB*, §6. "After they had exchanged a few words of greeting, the bishop of the Apostolic See interrogated him on his teaching, on the creed and on the tradition and beliefs of his church."

examine him once again. Most likely, though, Gregory desired to invest Boniface with an episcopal office on the basis of the report he had received, but needed to hear first-hand what had happened and confirm the content of what Boniface was preaching and teaching. Then, in 732, when the report of the work in Thuringia was given to Pope Gregory III, the messengers "assured the pope of Boniface's devoted and humble submission to the Apostolic See both in the past and for the future...".[115] Thus there is a sense of the popes being ever vigilant that syncretic belief, with its resulting practices, should not enter the church communities.

After receiving the episcopal office, Boniface travelled north, gave Charles Gregory's letter, and then returned to Hesse. Upon returning to the Hessian area to continue his work, he found people in various states of faith: some needed confirmation by handlaying; some needed further teaching in order to wholly accept the teachings of the church; some continued in secret, or in the open, to offer sacrifices to trees and springs; some were clearly not attempting to follow Christian practices but choosing the traditional religion of the area; and some were committed Christians.[116] Thus the work previously done still needed to be consolidated. It is into this background that the account of the destruction of the oak at Gaesmere fits.[117] Boniface, now a travelling bishop, would be moving on into other territories, but before he did he created a change in order to consolidate the faith of the believers. The instrument of change, in this case, was the incident of the cutting down of the oak tree at Gaesmere in 724. The most common interpretation is that this was a display of the power of the Christian God over the traditional gods of that area.[118] There is, however, another interpretation available, and that is in terms of syncretism and contextualization. This interpretation arises from the record of how this event took place. Boniface is not portrayed as someone striding into an area looking for a pagan symbol or temple to destroy. On the contrary, the *Vita* portrays Boniface being

---

[115] Willibald, *VB*, §6. *Sed et devotam eius in futurum humilitatis apostolico sedi subiectionem narraverunt*

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid. The following phrases are all from this same chapter in the *Vita*.

[118] See for example: Latourette, *The Thousand Years of Uncertainty*, 92-93; Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 75; Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan': 711-12, 721; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, 152; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 60. For an overview of Boniface's mission strategy see: R. Pierce Beaver, 'The History of Mission Strategy', *Southwestern Journal of Theology* XII, no. 2 (1970): 7. For setting this event in the wider context of similar literary accounts see Palmer, 'Defining paganism'.

nervous about taking such a bold stance within the community. The *Vita* uses the words "taking his courage in hand"[119] to convey this understanding. Thus Boniface was aware there could be negative consequences to this action if he failed to fell the tree. The reason given as to why Boniface undertook the task was that he had conferred with the local believers and was acting upon their counsel and advice. This gathering of the consensus of the local believers was an important step in the process as it indicates firstly, there was a large enough community of believers to back up the decision; secondly, this group of believers were concerned enough about the significance of this oak that they were willing to take action; and thirdly, they were not inclined to take action themselves, but left that to the foreign travelling missionary. The latter may well have been the fall back position, in that, if there was a strong negative reaction to the felling of the oak, the responsibility for the action could be laid on Boniface, not the local body of believers, who would then have been under pressure to return to traditional religious practices.

In this record there is no indication that these local Christians were the elite of the area, only concerned believers, and there is no indication of numbers though if the paragraphs above are to be taken as setting the scene, then there could have been a substantial number. The felling of the oak indicates that the local group of believers saw the presence of this object of worship as a threat to themselves as believers, and also a threat to the consolidation of their faith. This could have been at two levels, the first, that the mere presence of the oak continued to encourage traditional religious practices and mindset; and, second, it was of enough significance that it needed to be removed, not re-invigorated or reinvented as a Christian place of worship. That is, the oak was of the class of sites and symbols that required destruction instead of accommodation. Thus this can be seen as a move to stem syncretic practice or understanding, since once the oak was destroyed, people in the area would be open to the gospel message and there would have been one less cause for syncretic practices continuing to take place. For the non-Christian people who gathered to watch this act by Boniface, the destruction of the oak would clarify in their minds that not only was the Christian God powerful, but he also required a turning away from traditional gods and practices. This nuance is related in the phrase

[119] Willibald, *VB*, §6. *...mentis constantia confortatus...*

"...the heathen who had been cursing ceased to revile and began, on the contrary, to believe and bless the Lord".[120] Thus, this is a case in which there was no accommodation of the local practices, but instead a replacement of a non-Christian symbol with a Christian church, significantly created from the wood from the same tree. The recorded miracle of the tree falling into four pieces when the first axe-cut was made is, mostly likely, an embellishment, though the miraculous cannot not be absolutely discounted, in that the people obviously believed that miracles could happen, and in this case did happen. Whatever actually happened in the cutting down of the tree, the effect on the people is clearly recorded in the *Vita*: those who witnessed this miracle ceased to curse and revile Boniface and the Christian believers, and began not only to believe but also to bless God.[121] And this was the ultimate aim of Willibald in choosing to relate this incident, that is to report the movement of people from unbelief to belief. Therefore, evangelism resulting in conversion was seen as a part of the missional task of Boniface by popes, and by Willibald.

Since the *Vita* and the correspondence were written to promote Rome's authority over the mission work of Boniface and his companions, there is little in these sources that allows an interpretation of contextualization. This does not mean that this was not taking place, as some of the practices that Boniface labels pagan or heretical could well have been justifiable but since they were not connected to Rome, they were unacceptable. The only passage that hints at how Boniface might have contextualized the gospel message is early in the *Vita*:

> To such a degree was he inflamed with a love of the Scriptures that he applied all his energies to learning and practicing their counsels, and those matters that were written for the instruction of the people he paraphrased and explained to them with striking eloquence, shrewdly spicing it with parables. His discretion was such that his rebukes, though sharp, were never lacking in gentleness, while his teaching, though mild, was never lacking in force. Zeal and vigor made him forceful, but gentleness and love made him mild. Accordingly he exhorted and reproved with equal impartiality the rich and powerful, the freedmen and the slaves, neither flattering and fawning upon the rich nor oppressing and browbeating the freedmen and slaves but, in the words of the apostle, he had "become all things to all men that [he] might by all means save some".[122]

---

[120] Ibid. *Quo viso, prius devotantes pagani etiam versa vice benedictionem Domino, pristina abiecta maledictione, credentes reddiderunt*

[121] Ibid. As above footnote.

[122] Ibid, §3. *In tantum enim scripturarum exarsit desiderio, ut omni se intentione earum imitatione et auditione sepius coniungeret; et quae ob doctrinam populorum conscripta sunt, ipse quippe populis mira eloqui dissertitudine et sollertissima parabularum adsertione efficaciter praedicando retexiut.*

There is no other detailed account in the *Vita* of how Boniface taught and preached, though there is the advice offered by Bishop Daniel in his letter c. 723,[123] and this account laid down so early on in the *Vita* is done with the whole of his life in mind as Willibald gives this information before Boniface was sent to Kent, which started his rise within the monastic circles of the Nursling area. Thus, it was well before he went on his first journey to Frisia to start his missionary career. It would seem that Willibald wanted the reader to be aware that Boniface, a very learned man, was able to contextualize the gospel message to his audience, though he gives no further information in the *Vita* on this subject. According to this account, Boniface was able to take theological knowledge and 'paraphrase', that is, contextualize, the content for his audience. This would have been of great help in his missional task as he travelled and preached among different people groups. The account also clearly gives the impression that he did not change the content of his teaching to please the audience but was concerned, from the very beginning of his teaching career, to communicate clearly with his audience. Thus, though the content of his message would not have changed, the paraphrasing might depending on the audience. This is the only time that Willibald gives information concerning the teaching techniques of Boniface. All his other accounts focus on the resultant conversion or correction of the listeners. Therefore, there is little information within Willibald's *Vita* and the Bonifatian correspondence to understand what, if how much, contextualization of the gospel message took place in Boniface's mission work.

Missiology, therefore, brings different insights to the historical sources of the Bonifatian *Vita* and correspondence in light of the missiological issues of syncretism and contextualization. Syncretism, that is, the loss of the uniqueness of the core gospel message, is seen in the papal concern with baptismal practices and the strong need to consolidate the faith of the believers in all ranks of society. That the sources focus on the incorrect practice does not diminish the concern for correct doctrinal

---

Ciu tale discretionis temperamentum inerat, ut et vigore correptionis mansuetudo et vigor praedicationis mansuetudine non deerat, sed quem zelus accenderat vigoris, mansuetudo mitigabat amoris. Divitibus ergo ac potentibus liberisque ac servis aequalem sanctae exortationis exhibuit disciplinam, ut nec divites adolando demulceret nec servos vel liberos districtione praegravaret; sed iuxta apostolum omnibus omnia factus est, ut omnes lucrificaret. (Final Scripture from 1Corinthians 9:22).

[123] Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 23. This advice was to attack the worldview especially about creation and the power of the traditional gods.

understanding from which correct practice should flow. For Boniface, the correct doctrinal understanding and practice was that of Rome, thus all other forms of Christianity were rejected. This did not mean that they were invalid, only that Rome did not countenance them. Even so, the popes were not so tied to correct practice as to lose sight of the underlying issue of syncretism that was always a danger to the Christian community.

5. Conclusion

The life and work of Boniface is important to the history of Christian mission as he was a central figure of mission work in the eighth century. Since there is a large body of historical sources available, he is a well-studied figure. It is easy to forget that he travelled and worked with companions, often unnamed, but all equally important to the outcome of the task of the mission. This task had two foci, that of consolidation and that of evangelism. The consolidation, from Rome's perspective, may well have been the more important as orthodoxy was of prime import to a strong ecclesial structure. That there was a gap between the ideal presented by the church of Rome, and the reality on the ground is clearly seen in the *Vita* and correspondence as Boniface was constantly confronted with drunken priests, bishops and priests living immoral lives, the encroachment of surrounding traditional religious practices into the church community, concern about the baptismal rite, and the repeated refrain of the need to correct the understanding of those who had fallen into error. This last has missiological implications, as correct understanding of the Christian gospel message not only retains the unique gospel core of the message but also allows contextualization to take place. The practices that Boniface was correcting often stemmed from ignorance rather than misunderstanding, but there was a category of people who were worshiping idols under the guise of Christianity, and this, clearly, could not be allowed to continue. Thus, for Boniface, pure Christian belief and understanding should translate into correct orthodox practice. So one part of his task was to correct wrong doctrine and practice, that is, to consolidate the Christian faith within individuals and groups.

The other part of his task was to transmit the Christian gospel message to the unbeliever. There were various methods used such as the destruction of traditional places of worship to be replaced with churches, miracles, and preaching and teaching. But no matter what methods were used, there was clearly an evangelistic side to Boniface's mission work. The popes also clearly understood this as an important part of the task. It is unclear how many of these unbelievers were truly unbelievers, that is first time converts, and how many may have been already receivers of the gospel message from a bottom-up movement but still unbaptised, and thus not considered full Christians. In either case, it is clear that evangelism was always part of the mindset of the popes and the missionaries during the eighth century. Thus the components of mission, those of evangelism, conversion, and consolidation, can be seen in the historical sources, though the emphasis in the Bonifatian accounts is primarily on consolidation, and only secondarily on evangelism and conversion.

Map 3
Anskar
Birka
Swedes
Ribe
Danes
Hamburg
Corvey
Bremen
Rome
Roman sphere of influence
Irish sphere of influence
Anskar's area of responsibility
Place of mission in Vita Anskar

Chapter 5. Case Study 2: Anskar

1. Background

The basic sources for a study on Anskar are his *Vita*[1] written by Rimbert circa 880 and the *Gesta Hammaburgensis Eccleisae Pontificum*[2] by Adam of Bremen circa 1070. Each of these authors had their own agendas as they selected and collated their materials: Rimbert to promote the cult of Anskar, and Adam to promote the see of Hamburg-Bremen.[3] Palmer proposes that Rimbert was also promoting the mission to the north by encouraging future Benedictine monks to take up Anskar's work.[4] Nevertheless, these sources allow a study of Anskar's life and work from a missiological perspective.

Anskar was born and raised on the continent, entering the monastery at Corbie at a young age.[5] Rimbert relates several visions that Anskar had during these early years, to set the tone of the *Vita* in terms of laying out the evidence for Anskar's sainthood. In one of these visions Anskar's receives the words, "Go and return to me crowned with martyrdom."[6] Anskar was not killed for his faith and thus, some would claim, he was not worthy of martyrdom and sainthood. Rimbert's argument for Anskar's sainthood starts in chapter 3 and ends in chapter 42 with these words:

> For he was indeed a martyr, because, according to the apostle, the world was crucified to him and he to the world. He was a martyr because, amidst the temptations of the devil, the enticements of the flesh, the persecutions of the heathen and the oppositions of Christians, he continued to the end of his life unperturbed, immovable, and unconquerable as a

---

[1] Rimbert, *VA*.

[2] Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum, MGH, SRG 2* (Hanover, 1917).

[3] Sawyer, 'Scandinavian Conversion Histories': 46. Sawyer also adds Saxo Grammaticus wrote to glorify the Danes and Ari wrote to give the main credit for Icelanders conversion to his own familial group. Thus each author had his own clear agenda. For background on the bishoprics of Saxony see: Christopher Carroll, 'The bishoprics of Saxony in the first century after Christianization', *Early Medieval Europe* 8, no. 2 (1999).

[4] James T Palmer, 'Rimbert's Vita Anskarii and Scandinavian Mission in the Ninth Century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 55, no. 2 (2004): 240, 256. More of this theory will be discussed in other sections of this chapter.

[5] Rimbert, *VA*, §2, 3. Most likely c. 812; Latourette, *The Thousand Years of Uncertainty*, 113. Latourette gives the information that Corbie, founded between 657-661 under Balthildis, would have been in the spiritual succession of Columban and of Irish monasticism.

[6] Rimbert, *VA*, §3. '*Vade, et martyrio coronatus ad me reverteris.*'

> confessor of Christ. He was a martyr, for, while the word martyr signifies witness, he was a witness of God's word and of the Christian name.[7]

So one of the main purposes of the *Vita Anskarii* was to show Anskar's right to the title of martyr. Stancliffe, in her article on martyrdom,[8] showed that, as well as being put to death, being made to suffer difficulties and hardships for preaching the gospel message could lead to martyrdom. This is Rimbert's basic argument, that is, that the difficulties and persecutions endured for the sake of spreading the gospel message should allow the title of martyr to be applied to the life of Anskar.

In another vision, before departing for Sweden, Anskar received the words, "Go and declare the word of God unto the nations."[9] As seen in chapter 1, these are close to the words in Matthew 28:18-20, and, therefore, Rimbert saw them as part of the mission mandate contained in this scripture. Thus another aim of the *Vita Anskarii* was to lay out the evidence of Anskar's personal understanding of the mandate to go to the peoples of the north with the gospel message.[10]

Anskar moved to the daughter monastery, the 'new' Corbie or Corvey, when it was founded c. 815, to become "the first master of the school and teacher of the people."[11] Even though this is the only passage Rimbert gives relating to Anskar's tasks within the monastic community, it adds to the evidence that he was well educated, preached to the people in the church, and, therefore, was well suited to the task of carrying the Christian gospel message to the Danes and Swedes.

The world in which Anskar lived and worked was quite different to that of Boniface's in the eighth century. Boniface's work consolidated a strong Frankish controlled, Rome-centred ecclesial structures in the areas he travelled and worked—Thuringia, Frisia, Hesse, and Bavaria—although the bottom-up growth, and other streams of Christian teaching entering these areas, was never fully dealt with to the satisfaction of Rome. Therefore, by the time Charlemagne (768-814) rose to power, a

---

[7] Ibid, §42. *Martyr enim fuit, quia iuxta apostolum et ipsi mundus et ille mundo crucifixus erat. Martyr fuit, quia inter diaboli temptamenta, inter carnis illecebras, inter persequentes paganos, inter obsistentes christianos semper imperterritus, semper immobilis, semper invictus in Christi confessione usque ad exitum vitae permansit. Martyr fuit, quia, dum martyr testis dicatur, ispe divini semper verbi et christifici nominis extitit testis.*

[8] C. E. Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom', in *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock, R. McKitterick, and David Dumville (Cambridge, 1982).

[9] Rimbert, *VA*, §9. *'Vade et annuntia gentibus verbum Dei'*

[10] This is discussed in fuller detail in the next section.

[11] Rimbert, *VA*, §6....*ipse primus et magister scolae et doctor fieret populi.*

pattern of top-down Christian mission work had already been established in Frankish territories.

Charlemagne became the first of the Carolingian emperors to intentionally use the church as a stabilizing influence and structure, not just within Frankish territory, but also into new territory,[12] and his successors continued this pattern of ecclesial and political interaction. Therefore, for the Franks, the spread of a strong top-down ecclesial structure was a positive strategy. In contrast, many of the peoples in the frontier area, who wanted independence, rejected Christianity along with Frankish control.[13] Thus there would be times when the top-down approach to mission work was hampered by the strong ties between the political and the ecclesial.

Alongside the political factor, the papacy saw Christian leaders as having the responsibility, as well as a mandate, to extend the Christian religion within their controlled territories.[14] Although this was not a new mindset from the papacy, it gained added strength after the coronation of Charlemagne c. 800.[15] With both the

---

[12] For example: Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, 81, 127-29; Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom*, 435, 438, 461; McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, xix, 9; Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages*, 22, 37, 48, 68; Smith, *Europe After Rome*, 231; Adam of Bremen also promotes this thinking: Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, Book I.IX.10. All English translation, unless otherwise noted by Tschan, Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, trans. Francis J. Tschan (Irvington, NY, 2002). *Omnibus igitur, qui resistere solebant, progligatis et in suam potestatem redactis ea conditio a rege proposita et ab illis suscepta est, ut abiecto demonum cultu relictisque patriis cerimoniis christianae fidei sacramenta susciperent et Francis adunati unus cum eis populus ifficerentur*... Which Tschan translates as: "When all who were hardened to resistance had thus been overcome and brought under his power, this condition was proposed by the king and accepted by them, that, renouncing the worship of devils and abandoning their ancestral rites, they should receive the sacraments of the Christian faith and, joined to the Franks, make one people with them."

[13] For example: Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, Book II §7. Einhard and Notker the Stammer, *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London, 1969). Einhard sums up the Saxons as "Sometimes they were so cowed and reduced that they even promised to abandon their devil worship and submit willingly to the Christian faith; but, however, ready they might seem from time to time to do all this, they were always prepared to break the promises they had made." (All following translations from Thorpe unless otherwise noted); *ARF*, 776; *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories*, trans. Bernhard Walter Scholz (Ann Arbor, 1970). Relates the Saxons promised to become Christians and many were baptised. In 778 they rebelled under Widukind and the Saxon wars were to continue for thirty-three years; Carolingian wars with the Avars from the 780s and ending in 796 with the Avars submitting to baptism. (All following translations from Scholz unless otherwise noted); Sullivan, 'Khan Boris and the Conversion of Bulgaria'; Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, 54.

[14] For example: Gregory's letters: Gregory I, *MGH, Registrum Epistolarum, Vol 2* (Berlin, 1901), 11.29, 63, 66; Boniface and Tangl, *Briefe*, no. 19, 20, 81; Simon Coupland, 'The Rod of God's Wrath or the People of God's Wrath? The Carolingian Theology of the Viking Invasions.', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 42, no. 4 (1991): 554; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, 52, 166, 198-99; Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', 50; Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, 81.

[15] Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages*, 23; On Charlemagne's coronation see for example: *ARF*, 801; Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom*, 454-62; Philippe Buc, 'Political Rituals and

Franks and Rome promoted Christian mission in the frontier areas, the Carolingian territorial expansion came to equal the expansion of a top-down ecclesial structure of a Roman form of Christianity.

Charlemagne made inroads to the east among the Avars, Saxons and Slavs but did not effectively go north, even though he had laid plans to do so,[16] leaving this to his son, Louis the Pious (814-40) and, his successor, Louis the German (843- 876). By 804 Charlemagne had finally brought an end to the thirty-three years of war with the Saxons. This did not mean that all the Saxons had become Christians, but that Charlemagne had control of the territory. The *Annales Regni Francorum*[17] record that he deported all the Saxons living beyond the Elbe and gave this area to the Obodrites.[18] This meant that he ruled over territory that bordered on the Danes, which then brought a greater immediacy to Carolingian and Danish politics.[19]

The eastern Franks, therefore, already had a history of involvement in the affairs of the Danes before Anskar moved into that area with the commission to consolidate the faith of Harald and his companions, as well as to evangelise. Einhard's *Vita Karoli* and Notker's *Gesta Karoli*,[20] the *Annales Francorum*,[21] the *Annales Fuldenses*,[22] and the *Annales Bertiniani*[23] all reveal the continual political involvement throughout the ninth century of the Carolingians in the northern people groups, more specifically the Danes and the Swedes. This became even more of an issue when Godofrid, with his plan to expand Danish control into Frisia, began to encroach on what was seen as Carolingian territory.[24] This was an area already

---

Political Imagination in the Medieval West from the Fourth Century to the Eleventh', in *The Medieval World*, ed. Peter Linehan and J. T. Nelson (London, 2003), 95; Henry Mayr-Harting, 'Charlemagne, the Saxons, and the Imperial Coronation of 800', *The English Historical Review* 111, no. 444 (1996); Walter Ullmann, 'Reflections on the Medieval Empire', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th Series* (London, 1964).

[16] Lund, 'Scandinavia', 209.

[17] Hereafter designated as *Annales Francorum* in the text and *ARF* in footnotes.

[18] *ARF*, 804.

[19] Lund, 'Scandinavia', 206-7; Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages*, 34; Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', 42-5.

[20] Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, Book II §8, 14; Notker, *Gesta Karoli Magni Imperatoris, MGH, SRG 12*, Book II §19. English translation in Einhard and Notker the Stammer, *Two Lives of Charlemagne*.

[21] For example: *ARF*, 813, 814, 817, 822, 823, 825-28.

[22] For example: *AF*, 845, 852, 867, 873, 882, 883, 885. English translation, *AF*.

[23] *AB*, 835-37, 843, 845, 847, 850, 860, 863-66, 872, 876, 881. English translation, *The Annals of St-Bertin*, trans. Janet T. Nelson (Manchester, 1991).

[24] Lund, 'Scandinavia', 207; Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', 42-5; *ARF*, 809; Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, Book II.14.

claimed by the Franks, especially as this was where Willibrord and Boniface had worked under Carolingian backing. So, from the Frankish perspective, the move north may not have had a strong spiritual dimension, so much as a strong political dimension. This did not mean that Charlemagne and the two Louis were not eager to see their accepted form of Christianity penetrating these areas, but that the impetus for sending workers to the north may have had more significance politically than spiritually, since, for the Franks, the establishment of ecclesial centres and bishoprics in the north would aid them in extending political control and influence into these areas.[25]

The northmen were perceived by the Carolingian writers to be hostile and very strong as they recorded attacks by the northmen into Frankish territory all through the ninth century.[26] This would have been part of Anskar's and his fellow monks' image of the northmen, and thus there was the added sense of danger to travelling north with the gospel message.

The *Annales Francorum* records the continual battles between Charlemagne and Godofrid[27] until his death in 810.[28] Then, "[a]fter the death of Godofrid, king of the Danes, Hemming, the son of his brother, succeeded to his throne and made peace with the emperor."[29] But Hemming died the following year and after internal strife, two brothers, Harald and Reginfrid became kings, and approached the Franks for a treaty.[30] However, the internal strife concerning the succession to the Danish throne

---

[25] Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages*, 28-9; Sawyer, 'Scandinavian Conversion Histories': 49 where Sawyer states: "Hamburg-Bremen was associated with this German imperialism, which was resented in Denmark." On pages 55-6 Sawyer discusses the difference sources and their take on the history. Sweden wanted independence from the Franks so..."[a] historical background was created to justify the aspirations to freedom, according to which Christianity and church organization were brought to Sweden not from Germany or Denmark but from England, and not by any missionary, but by an archbishop of York, subject only to the pope, and he came thanks to the initiative of a Swedish king."; Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, 139; Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, 129.

[26] The sources are too numerous to attempt a complete citation, thus only a few examples are given: *AB*, 835-37, 847, 860, 864-66, 878; *AF*, 845, 847, 850, 883-85; *ARF*, 808, 809; Nithard, *Nithardi Historiarum Libri III, MGH, SRG 44* (Hanover/Leipzig, 1907), Book IV.3. All English translations from Thorpe, Nithard, 'Nithard's Histories', in *Carolingian Chronicles* (Ann Arbor, 1970).

[27] Variant spellings are given in English translations, therefore, other than direct inserted citations, the spellings Godofrid and Harald will be used.

[28] *ARF*, 804-10.

[29] Ibid, 810. *Godofrido Danorum rege mortuo Hemmingus filius fratris eius in regnum successit ac pacem cum imperatore fecit.*

[30] Ibid, 811.

continued as Godofrid's sons attacked these kings and drove them into exile.[31] Reginfrid was killed in 814 and Harald brought his case to the emperor in order to gain support for his claim. Thus the Frankish emperor became entwined in the internal political situation of the Danes.

Harald continued to fight for his claim to the Danish throne with various results over the years. In 823, Counts Theothari and Hruodmund were sent to investigate the situation among the Danes. "They returned with Archbishop Ebbo of Reims, who had gone to preach in the land of the Danes on the counsel of the emperor and with the approval of the Roman pontiff and had baptized many converts to the faith during the summer."[32] This is the first mention in the *Annales Francorum* of official Christian mission among the Danes, though it was not the first time a missionary travelled into Danish territory. Alcuin, writing circa 796, relates in his *Vita Willibrordi*:

> but though the Frisian king received the man of God in a kind and humble spirit, his heart was hardened against the Word of Life. So when the man of God saw that his efforts were to no avail he turned his missionary course toward the fierce tribes of the Danes. At that time, so we are told, the Danish ruler was Ogendus, a man more savage than any wild beast and harder than stone, who nevertheless, through divine intervention, received the herald of truth with every mark of honor. But when the latter found that the people were steeped in evil practices, abandoned to idolatry and indifferent to any hope of a better life, he chose thirty boys from among them and hastily returned with them to the chosen people of the Franks.[33]

Alcuin, thus, supported the negative image of the Danes (and others to the north) that the Carolingians writers had, although this was not reserved only for those peoples to

---

[31] Ibid, 813.

[32] Ibid, 823. *Cum quibus et Ebo Remorum archiepiscopus, qui consilio imperatoris et auctoritate Romani pontificis praedicandi gratia ad terminos Danorum accesserat et aestate praeterita multos ex eis ad fidem venientes baptizaverat, regressus est*; For a fuller account of Ebbo see: P. R. McKoen, 'Archbishop Ebbo of Rheims (816-835): A Study in the Carolingian Empire and Church', *Church History* 43, no. 3 (1974); Rimbert, *VA*, §12. Rimbert places Ebbo as Anskar's assistant though Ebbo had been in Danish territory in 823, before Anskar; Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, Book I.xv (17). Adam states, "Behold, we read that what Willibrord as well as Ebbo and others had wished long ago to do but could not, our Ansgar has now marvellously both desired and accomplished.".

[33] Alcuin, 'VWillibrordi', §9. Alcuin wrote this *Vita* c. 796. English translation, Alcuin, 'Life of Willibrord'. *Sed praefatus Fresonum rex virum Dei humilitatis gratia benigne suscipiens, nullis tamen vitae fomentis saxeum eius cor emollire potuit. Et dum apud eum vir Dei fructificare non posse agnovit, ad ferocissimos Danorum populos iter euangelizandi convertit. Ibi tame, ut fertur, regnabat Ongendus, homo omni fera crudelior et omni lapide durior, qui tamen, iubente Deo, veritatis praeconem honorifice tractabat. Qui dum obduratam moribus et idolatriae deditam et nullam melioris vitae spem habentem offendit, acceptis tunc triginta eiusdem patriae pueris, ad electos a Deo populos regni Francorum revertere festinavit.*

the north.[34] In Alcuin's account, Willibrord accomplished little other than to take thirty boys with him. These young boys, however, may well have been some of the priests that were sent north from monastic houses in Carolingian territory.[35]

Louis the Pious attempted to bring a solution to the Danish succession issue, but it was not easily solved. In 825, he ordered peace to be made between the two sides, but in 827 Harald was in exile.[36] The year before this, in 826, Harald arrived at Mainz to be baptised with his wife and a great number of Danes.[37] Rimbert, in the *Vita Anskarii*, records this as happening as a result of persuasion by Louis.

> ...a king named Harald [Klak], who ruled over some of the Danes,....came to...Louis and asked to be thought worthy to receive his help so that he might be able to regain his kingdom. While the emperor kept him at his court he urged him, by personal persuasion and through the agency of others, to accept the Christian faith, because there would then be a more intimate friendship between them and a Christian people would more readily come to his aid and to the aid of his friends if both peoples were worshippers of the same God.[38]

What is not clear in the *Vita*, but can be traced in the *Annales*, was that Harald's first contact with the Franks would have been at least a decade earlier. Thus, there was clearly a process involved before Harald was baptised. What spurred him onto accepting baptism after so many years of prompting and teaching is difficult to say. Did Harald truly believe in the Christian gospel message, or was this a political move to gain Louis' support at a time when Louis was favouring a settlement between the two sides in the succession dispute?[39] Most sources do not reveal the inner motives of any one individual, only the resultant action, and this is true in the case of Harald.

---

[34] For example: *ARF*, 756. King Aistulf of the Lombards was described as 'villainous'; 763, where the Bavarian Tassilo's actions were described as 'wicked' and 'lying'; 769, Hunald in Aquitaine was 'hostile'.

[35] Rimbert, *VA*, §33.

[36] *ARF*, 823, 827.

[37] Ibid, 826.

[38] Rimbert, *VA*, §7. *...Herioldus quidam rex, qui partem tenebat Danorum...adiit imperatorem Hludowicum, postulans, ut eius auxilio uti mereretur, quo regnum suum denuo evindicare valeret. Qui cum secum detentum tam per se quam per alios ad suscipiendam christianitatem cohortatus, quod scilicet inter eos ita maior familiaritas esse posset, populusque christianus ipsi ac suis promptiori voluntate in adiutorium sic veniert, si uterque unum coleret Deum...;* Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', 43. Wood argues for the influence of Ebbo in the process that brought Harald to the point of accepting baptism; *ARF*, 826. These simply state: "At the same time Heriold came with his wife and a great number of Danes and was baptized with his companions at St. Alban's in Mainz. The emperor presented him with many gifts before he returned home through Frisia, ..."; Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, Book I.xv(17). Adam records, "At that very time the king of the Danes, Harold, despoiled of his kingdom by the sons of Gotafrid, came to Louis a suppliant. And on being instructed thereupon in the doctrine of the Christian faith, he was baptized at Mainz with his wife and brother and a great multitude of Danes."; Lund, 'Scandinavia', 206-07.

[39] *ARF*, 825.

Once Harald had been baptised, Louis moved to support Harald and to do this "he began to make diligent inquiry to find a holy and devoted man who could go and stay with him, and who might strengthen him and his people, and by teaching the doctrine of salvation, might induce them to receive the faith of the Lord."[40] The *Vita Anskarii* clearly portrays an intentional top-down move of the Christian gospel message being politically driven by Louis. In looking for someone to travel and be with Harald, Louis was looking for someone who would consolidate Harald's faith and "induce them [the Danes] to receive the faith of the Lord."[41] Thus the thrust of this mission work would be a combination of consolidation and evangelism.

But what attraction was there that would compel monks, bishops and priests to travel to the north, especially when they saw this area as the ends of the earth[42]? Was it just the attraction of the unknown or unevangelized that drew these men to focus energy on being involved with leaders and groups in the north? The 'ends of the earth' phrase is significant in light of scripture passages such as Psalm 2:8, "Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession"; Psalm 67:7, "God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him"; and the verses quoted in chapter 25 of the *Vita*: Isaiah 49:1ff.[43] Thus the monks, particularly Anskar, would have seen going to the ends of the earth as a fulfilment of the scriptural mandate to spread the Christian gospel message to the very edges of civilisation. Ebbo had travelled into Danish territory with the support of Louis and the pope, and he had baptised many people. This meant that there were

---

[40] Rimbert, *VA*, §7. *...coepit diligentius quaerere, si quem inveniret sanctae devotionis virum, qui cum eo ire posset eique continuo adhererert fieretque illi et suis ad corroborandam suscipiendamque fdem Domini magister doctrinae salutaris.*

[41] Ibid. As above footnote.

[42] Ibid, §25. *Eris illis in salutem, usque ad extremum terrae', quia finis mundi in aquilonis partibus in Sueonum coniacet regionibus*; §34 *sed fructificabit in Dei gratia et prosperabitur, usquequo perveniat nomen Domini ad fines orbis terrae*; §38 *Hoc ergo facto in ipso itinere Dominus veraciter exhibuit, quod fidelibus pollicitus est, dicens: 'Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem saeculi*; Ratramni, 'Ratramni Corbeiensis Epistolae', in *MGH, Epistolae Karolini Aevi IV*, ed. E Dümmler (Berlin, 1925); Ratramnus, 'Ratramnus and the Dog-headed Humans', in *Carolingian Civilization*, ed. Paul Edward Dutton (Peterborough, Ontario, 2004). Ratramnus of Corbie wrote to Rimbert asking about whether cynocephali (dog-headed humans) who were reputed to be found on the edges of the civilized world. The issue was whether they were to be seen as human or animal since this would make a difference in terms of evangelism. For a further discussion of this letter see Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', 64-66; Palmer, 'Defining paganism': 423-24.

[43] Palmer, 'Rimbert's Vita Anskarii': 243-44, 255. Palmer discusses the contemporary predestination debate and its influence on Rimbert.

already believers within Danish controlled territory well before Anskar entered. Ebbo does not seem to have been tied to a specific political leader, but Anskar would be, as Louis clearly desired him to travel with Harald to consolidate his faith. The fact that Harald was in exile would mean that the actual mission work within the greater Danish population would be hampered by political considerations. But what compelled, or allowed, Anskar to respond positively to Louis' request?

2. Anskar and Missiology

Taking up the question of what motivated Anskar to reply favourably to the request of Louis to accompany Harald into Danish territory, first of all, Rimbert stressed that Anskar understood the scriptural mandate to 'go to the nations'[44] with the Christian gospel message, something which the monastic houses of the ninth century mostly failed to grasp. This is not to say that all monastic houses were uninterested in mission work,[45] or that monastic houses were not vibrant communities of faithful believers.[46] It is to say that by the early ninth century the mindset of *stabilitas* was stronger than the understanding of the scriptural mandate to spread the Christian gospel message into new areas and to new people.

Stabilitas required monks to remain where they were placed in order to create stability in the monastic houses.[47] The only way a monk could leave, either to transfer to another house, or to travel to Rome, or to engage in mission in a foreign land, was with the permission of the abbot or bishop. Thus Boniface had had to plead for permission to leave his monastery, but once it was granted, he received ongoing support from his monastic house over the years.[48] In contrast, Anskar did not initiate his leaving the monastic house at Corvey; he was responding to a request from his abbot and Louis,[49] and he received his support mainly from the Franks, not from his

[44] Rimbert, *VA*, §9. For further insight into Rimbert's motives see: Palmer, 'Rimbert's Vita Anskarii'.

[45] Corbie, Corvey, Turholt, Mainz, Cologne, Hamburg, Bremen are all mentioned in the *Vita*.

[46] Mayke De Jong, 'Carolingian monasticism: the power of prayer', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol II*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995); Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, 304-89.

[47] *Rule of Benedict*, trans. Anthony C. Meisel and M.L. del Mastro (New York, 1975), §1, 61.

[48] Willibald, *VB*, §4.

[49] Rimbert, *VA*, §7.

monastic house.[50] However, both these monks, Boniface and Anskar, had the same missionary impulse to travel to foreign lands for the salvation of souls.[51] But for Anskar, there was less enthusiasm within the monastic community for mission work in foreign lands.[52] Whether this attitude was widespread among monastic houses is hard to say as there were monks and priests willing to work among the Danes, Swedes and other people groups throughout the ninth century and beyond,[53] but Rimbert portrays the monks of Corvey as having a distinct lack of enthusiasm for taking the gospel message to foreign lands. Therefore, whereas Boniface and his fellow Anglo-Saxons were eager to engage in the spread of the gospel message, many of the Benedictine monastic communities of the early ninth century saw their role fulfilled in *stabilitas*.[54]

Rimbert felt it important to make it clear that Anskar complied with the opportunity to travel north from the mission motive to spread the Christian gospel message in foreign parts for the salvation of souls.[55] The question of motive seems uppermost in Rimbert's mind as he not only recorded Anskar's visions that gave him a mission mandate, but he also included a paragraph addressing this issue:

> By these and many other revelations and visions the man of God was divinely strengthened and of the increase of his sanctity and goodness you have still better proof provided by eye witnesses. We, who desire to tell of what has happened in our midst, must first inquire for the benefit of those who may chance to be ignorant, how he came to leave his secured position and by what impulse and force of circumstances, after dedicating himself to God in your presence and promising to render obedience, he came to these parts and was raised to the office of bishop in our midst. We have thought that it was necessary to write this for fear lest anyone should attribute to fickleness the task which the man of God undertook for the saving of souls, moved by divine compassion and by a desire to go to foreign parts.[56]

---

[50] Ibid, §10. This did not mean that there was no support, in this chapter Wala was involved in finding Witmar, from Corvey, to travel with Anskar to Sweden.

[51] For Boniface see Chapter 4; for Anskar see for example: Ibid, §6, 7. For some insights into parallels between Anskar and Boniface see Palmer, *Frankish World*, 244-46.

[52] Addison, *The Medieval Missionary*, 100. Addison states: "By the first quarter of the ninth century, when the work of Anskar begins, missionary zeal in Frankish monasteries was at so low an ebb that he and his companions were regarded as freakish exceptions."

[53] For example: Rimbert, *VA*, §16, 18, 25. There were many monks involved in the mission to the north, some named and some unnamed, but there must have been quite a number committed to the work; Adalbert of Prague in the tenth century, Bruno of Querfurt, 'Passio sancti Adalberti episcopi et martyris', in *MGH, SS 4*, ed. G.H. Pertz (Hanover, 1841).

[54] Birgit Sawyer, Peter Sawyer, and Ian Wood, eds., *The Christianization of Scandinavia: Report of a Symposium held at Kungälv, Sweden, August 4-9 August 1985* (Alingsås, Sweden, 1987), 6.

[55] Rimbert, *VA*, §3, 6.

[56] Ibid, §6. *His itaque et aliis quam plurimis revelationibus atque visionibus vir Dei caelitus inspiratus, quanta inter vos postmodum gratia sanctitatis ac bonitatis excreverit, vestrorum qui tunc affuere melius testimonio comprobabitur. Nobis autem ea quae apud nos gesta sunt narrare*

Rimbert, therefore, was well aware that the climate within Corvey and other monastic houses was not highly enthusiastic for travel into foreign lands with the gospel message. Therefore, the first hurdle to Anskar's mission work was the idea of *stabilitas*.

The mission impetus for Anskar was portrayed as internal and individual. It was not an ecclesial mandate, but a political one that gave Anskar the opportunity to act upon his desire to spread the gospel message in foreign lands. According to Rimbert, Louis managed after many years of contact, to convince Harald to undergo baptism in 826.[57] He then had the problem of how to consolidate Harald's faith so that he remained a Christian, and, thus, allied with the Franks from an ecclesial, as well as a political aspect. Louis' solution was to consult abbot Wala of Corvey to see if there was a monk willing to return with Harald into Danish territory. Thus, it was through the request of Louis and the suggestion of abbot Wala that the opportunity to travel north presented itself to Anskar. Wala's recommendation to Louis was "he knew a monk in his monastery who burned with zeal for true religion and was eager to endure suffering for the name of God."[58] It is interesting that the task of spreading the Christian gospel message was described as suffering, which reinforces Rimbert's theme that Anskar endured much hardship for the sake of the spread of the gospel message.

Anskar was approached by Wala and then taken to Louis, where Louis "asked him whether on God's behalf and for the sake of preaching the gospel among the Danish peoples, he would become a companion of Harald, whereupon he replied that he was entirely willing."[59] Anskar's reply seemed to come too readily for Wala as the *Vita* then describes a process Anskar underwent in order to confirm his willingness to

---

cupientibus, primo indagandum videtur propter eos qui huius rei forte minus conscii sunt, qua occasione a loco stabilitatis suae huc secesserit, et cum apud vos Deo oblatus sit ibique oboedientiam promiserit, quo instinctu cuiusque rei dispositione ad has partes emigraverit atque ad episcopatus officium apud nos sublimatus sit. Hoc autem ideo scribere necessarium duximus, ne forte aliquis levitati assignet, quod vir Dei divinae conpunctionis instinctu et peregrinationis amore pro salute animarum suscepit.

[57] See note 38 in this chapter.

[58] Rimbert, *VA*, §7....*unum se scire monachum in monasterio suo, qui multo ardore circa divinam religionem ferveret ac pro Dei nomine multa pati desideraret.*

[59] Ibid. *Deductus itaque ad praesentiam augusti, cum ab ipso interrogaretur, utrum pro Dei nomine causa in gentibus Danorum euangelium praedicandi comes fieri vellet Herioldi, omnino se velle, constanter respondit.*

go with Harald.[60] In this, Wala is portrayed as being cautious, some might say overly cautious, to make sure that Anskar was going of his own free will. "The venerable abbot did not act thus through any lack of regard for Anskar, but because at that time it seemed to him to be abhorrent and wrong that anyone should be compelled against his will to live among pagans."[61] In spite of the portrayal of Wala by Rimbert, Wala must have been open to the idea of Anskar travelling, since it was he that Louis consulted, and it was he that put forth Anskar as a candidate. But in the end, it was left to the individual monks, like Anskar and Autbert, to take up the opportunity and challenge presented by Louis.

The reaction of fellow monks when the news was announced was quite different to that of Boniface's experience: Boniface received blessings, gifts, and promises of support for the future;[62] Anskar received criticism and reproaches, and astonishment at "his willingness to abandon his country and his acquaintances and the love of the brothers with whom he had been brought up, and to visit foreign peoples and live with strangers and barbarians".[63] At this time, the north was seen as the ends of the earth,[64] the unknown and thus something to be feared. Therefore, not only was Anskar challenging the mindset of *stabilitas*, but he was also challenging the fear connected with the unknown. Only one of the monks, Autbert, desired to join Anskar in his task. Wala was "greatly astonished as he had never imagined that he [Autbert], who belonged to a noble family and was his intimate friend and was regarded as the chief administrator of the monastery after himself, would be willing to undertake such a task."[65] The implication seems to be that Wala equated elite social and monastic status with conformity to the idea of *stabilitas*. However, after confirming Autbert's desire to travel with Anskar as voluntary, Wala agreed to send

---

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid. *Hoc autem venerabilis abbas non de inaffectione faciebat, sed quia abominabile eo tempore et iniustum videbatur, ut quis invitus inter paganos conversari cogeretur.*

[62] Willibald, *VB*, §4.

[63] Rimbert, *VA*, §7....*quod scilicet, relicta patria et propinquis suis, fratrum quoque, cum quibus educatus fuerat, dulcissima affectione, alienas expetere vellet nationes et cum ignotis ac barbaris conversari.*

[64] See above section for this discussion.

[65] Rimbert, *VA*, §7. *Cuius personam cum abbas inquireret, et ille fratrem Autbertum nominaret, multo miraculo obstupuit, nequaquam putans, eum, qui et nobilis prosapiae in saeculo et apud eum tunc familiaris ac post ipsum domus eius procurator habebatur, talia velle.*

the two with Harald.[66] One wonders if Wala's reaction was not to just the mission task at hand, but to having two of his key monks leaving at the same time: Anskar a good teacher of the school and the people,[67] and Autbert the chief administrator.[68]

Rimbert made it clear that in order for Anskar and Autbert to respond positively to Louis' request, they had to have been convinced of the value of such a task, that is, they had to have understood the scriptural mandate to spread the Christian gospel message as more important than *stabilitas*. Therefore, although the impetus for the mission was from the political leader, it did not affect the core gospel message that they were taking with them. Louis supplied them in practical matters and commissioned them with the task of consolidation and evangelism:

> The two monks were subsequently brought before the king, who was gratified by their willingness and desire to undertake this task and he gave them whatever was necessary for the performance of their ministerial functions, including writing cases, tents, and other things that would be helpful and which seemed likely to be needed on their great journey. He bade them go with Harald and commanded them to devote the utmost care to his profession of faith and by their godly exhortations to confirm in the faith both Harald and the companions who had been baptized together with him, for fear least at the instigation of the devil they should return to their former errors, and at the same time by their preaching to urge others to accept the Christian religion.[69]

A factor in Anskar's first mission was that although Harald was now seen to be a Christian, since he had undergone baptism, he was not in control of the Danes, as he was an exile being supported by Louis in the battle over Danish succession rights.[70] Therefore, the twofold task of consolidation and evangelism was confined to the territory that Harald controlled, and he was in Frisian, not Danish territory. "On leaving the boat they passed through Dorestad and, crossing the neighboring territory of the Frisians, came to the Danish border. As King Harald could not for the time being obtain peaceful possession of his kingdom, the emperor gave him a place beyond the Elbe River so that if it were necessary he might halt there."[71] Therefore,

---

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid, §6.

[68] Ibid, §7.

[69] Ibid. *Post haec itaque ambo deducuntur ad regem. Quorum voluntati et desiderio [ipse] condelectatus, dedit eis ministeria ecclesiastica et scrinia atque tentoria ceteraque subsidia, quae tanto itineri videbantur necessaria, et cum praefato Herioldo ire praecepit; denuncians, ut eius fidei maximam impenderent sollicitudinem eumque et suos qui simul baptizati fuerant pia exhortatione, ne ad pristinos reducerentur diabolo instigante errores, continue roborarent simulque etiam alios ad suscipiendam christianam religionem verbo praedicationis strenue commonerent.*

[70] As outlined in the above section.

[71] Rimbert, *VA*, §7. *Inde egressi, per Dorstatum et vicinia Fresonum transeuntes, ad confinia pervenerunt Danorum. Et quia interdum pacifice in regno suo Herioldus rex consistere non poterat,*

though Anskar and Autbert were to consolidate the faith of Harald and his followers, the people with whom they would have contact outside of the exiled Danish group would have been Frisians who had already heard the Christian gospel message from Willibrord and Boniface. This, however, did not stop the two monks from spreading the Christian gospel message at every opportunity.

> Accordingly the servants of God, who were with him and who were stationed at one time among the Christians and at other times among the pagans, began to apply themselves to the word of God; and those whom they could influence they directed into the way of truth, so that many were converted to the faith by their example and teaching, and the number of those who should be saved in the Lord increased daily.[72]

Rimbert is once again promoting the consolidation and evangelistic components of mission. Anskar's life would now revolve around working among the Danes and the Swedes from his base in Hamburg, which was established by Louis after Anskar's return from Sweden circa 830. Anskar was not always on the front lines of the mission work, but he was responsible for sending workers into these areas to evangelise and consolidate a strong Roman ecclesial structure.[73] His first two years or so of work among the Danes saw many Christians consolidated in their faith and many new believers added to the Christian community.[74] However, Autbert took seriously ill, so Anskar and his companions returned to Corvey, where Autbert died.

During Anskar's time at Corvey, an embassy from the Swedes arrived at Louis' court where

> they informed him that there were many belonging to their people who desired to embrace the Christian religion and that their king so far favored this suggestion that he would permit God's priests to reside there, provided that they might be deemed worth of such a favor and that the emperor would send them suitable preachers.[75]

---

dedit ei memoratus augustus ultra Albiam beneficium, ut, si quando ei necessarium esset, ibi subsistere posset; Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, Book I.xv (17); *ARF*, 826; Lund, 'Scandinavia', 208.

[72] Rimbert, *VA*, §8. *Praefati itaque servi Dei cum eo positi et aliquando inter christianos, aliquando inter paganos constituti, coeperunt verbo Dei insistere et quoslibet poterant ad viam veritatis monere. Multi etiam exemplo et doctrina eorum ad fidem convertebantur, et crescebant cotidie, qui salvi fierent in Domino.*

[73] For example: Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, Book I.xx(22); xxii(25); xxv(27); xxvi(28); xxix(31); xxx(32); xxxiii(35); Rimbert, *VA*, §9, 13, 14, 23, 33. Adam's prime motive was to establish the ecclesial claims of Hamburg-Bremen, and, therefore the establishment of churches was crucial.

[74] Rimbert, *VA*, §8; Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, Book I.xv (17).

[75] Rimbert, *VA*, §9....*esse multos in gente sua, qui christianae religionis cultum suscipere desiderarent, regis quoque sui animum ad hoc satis benivolum, ut ibi sacerdotes Dei esse permitteret; tantum eius munificentia mererentur, ut ois praedicatores destinaret idoneos.*

There are several interesting aspects to this record. First the Swedes arrived at Louis' court clearly not Christians, but with a commission to ask for preachers for those within the Swedish community who were Christians. This suggests that the Christians were both numerous enough and influential enough to have the Swedish king ask the Frankish Christian king for preachers to consolidate the faith of believers in Sweden. Rimbert records that Louis pressed the envoys to discover whether the Swedes might be prepared to accept the Christian faith and its practices. Thus, though the Swedes were not declaring themselves Christians as a group, there were individuals within their community who were believers, and who desired a stable ecclesial structure, otherwise they would not have wanted to approach Louis, as they would have been well aware that Frankish backed preachers would be promoting the Roman ecclesial structure and practices. Where, and from whom, these believers heard the Christian gospel message is difficult to say. For a partial answer there is evidence of Anglo-Saxon/ Celtic influence in the area,[76] and there are the records of Christian captives at Birka,[77] among other clues as to how the Christian gospel message was first transmitted to the Swedes.[78]

The tension in mission between evangelism and consolidation is seen in this reassignment of Anskar to the Swedes. The work among the Danes was reported as being quite successful, but instead of returning to consolidate and continue the work he had started, Anskar was requested to go to the Swedes.[79] This did not mean that the work among the Danes stopped, only that Anskar was not involved in it at this point; Anskar and Witmar travelled to the Swedes, and Gislemar was sent to Harald.[80]

Anskar worked among the Swedes for about eighteen months and reported great success, travelling back to Louis with a letter from the Swedish king.[81] The report motivated Louis to establish Hamburg and consecrate Anskar as archbishop.

> When the time came that the faith of Christ began, by God's grace, to bear fruit in the lands of the Danes and Swedes and his father's wish became known to him, he was unwilling that this wish should remain unaccomplished and, acting with the approval of the bishops and a

[76] Sawyer, 'Scandinavian Conversion Histories': 56.
[77] Rimbert, *VA*, §11.
[78] Latourette, *The Thousand Years of Uncertainty*, 107ff.
[79] Rimbert, *VA*, §9.
[80] Ibid, §10.
[81] Ibid, §12.

> well attended synod, he established an archiepiscopal see in the town of Hamburg, which is situated in the farthest part of Saxony beyond the Elbe. He desired that the whole church of the Nordalbingia should be subject to this archbishopric and that it should possess the power of appointing bishops and priests who for the name of Christ might go out into these districts.[82]

Thus Louis was consolidating at the ecclesial level the work that Anskar had accomplished among the Danes and the Swedes in the mission components of consolidation and evangelism. The presence of an ecclesial structure, at this time, did not signify a strong top-down politically supported mission work among the Danes and Swedes, as the leaders were not personally interested in accepting the Christian faith. However, they did allow the gospel message to be spread, which facilitated the mission work of Anskar and others. What the establishment of Hamburg-Bremen did do was solidify Frankish ecclesial interests in the area. Rimbert's and Adam's emphasis on the establishment not only of Hamburg but the unification of Hamburg and Bremen reveals one of the motives they had in writing, which was to promote the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen.

The year 845 was a traumatic year for Anskar: Bishop Gautbert and his companions were forced to leave Sweden; one worker, Nithard, was killed;[83] and Hamburg was sacked by northmen.[84] Rimbert was careful to distinguish between the Swedes who attacked the Christian workers and the king who was portrayed as being still favourably disposed to having Christians in the area.[85] After a seven-year gap Anskar sent Ardgar to the Swedes as he was concerned about Herigar, a counsellor of the Swedish king, who had been baptised.[86] Ardgar arrived to be greeted by Herigar and some other Christians.[87] So for seven years, even without a priest or strong ecclesial structure, a group of Christian believers remained active in Birka.

---

[82] Ibid. *Non enim satis attendit patris sui super hoc constitutionem, aut certe omnimodis ignoravit. Ista vero facta occasione, qua iam fides Christi in partibus Danorum atque Sueonum per gratiam Dei fructificare coeperat, cognito patris sui voto, ne quid eius studii inperfectum remaneret, una cum consensu episcoporum ac plurimo synodi conventu in praefata ultima Saxoniae regione trans Albiam in civitate Hammaburg sedem constituit archiespiscopalem, cui subiaceret universa Nordalbingorum ecclesia, et ad quam pertineret omnium regionum aquilonalium potestas ad constituendos episcopos sive presbiteros, in illas partes pro Christi nomine destinandos.*

[83] Ibid, §17.

[84] Ibid, §16.

[85] It is generally acknowledged among historians that the Swedish king did sanction the raid, but Rimbert was reporting in such a way as to allow the Swedish kings to seem favourable to the Christian gospel message. See, Palmer, 'Rimbert's Vita Anskarii': 252; Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', 46.

[86] Rimbert, *VA*, §11.

[87] Ibid, §19.

For Rimbert and others promoting the top-down Roman ecclesial structure, the seven-year gap could be seen as a loss, a retreat of the progress of the mission work. However, if mission work includes bottom-up growth, then the mission work was a success in that there was obviously a strong enough core of believers to be able to survive for seven years even without a priest to perform the sacraments.[88]

Rimbert's account of Frideburg portrays a woman who had been baptised and who was not willing to return to traditional religious practices even under pressure. "She declared that it was useless to seek for help from dumb and deaf images and that she thought it detestable to do again the things that she had renounced in her baptism and to fail to perform the promise that she had made to Christ."[89] Though there is no time frame for her baptism, she retained her faith and a basic understanding of the core gospel message over a period of years. She is recorded to have put aside some wine in order to receive the *viaticum* at death according to correct Roman practice. She kept this wine for three years, during which time Ardgar arrived to restart correct sacramental practices.[90] It cannot be assumed that she was baptised under Gautbert, but neither can it be argued that she was baptised in the seven-year gap between Gautbert and Ardgar. But whether she was a Christian for seven or more years or not, she would have been transmitter of the gospel message from the bottom-up, in that she is portrayed as an individual who had maintained a correct understanding of the significance of baptism, as well as other sacraments, in the midst of pressure.

How one evaluates Anskar's mission work[91] is determined by one's definition of mission. If mission is furthering the top-down Roman ecclesial

---

[88] Cusack, *Rise of Christianity*, 176. Cusack dismisses the example of Herigar, and other individual stories, as exceptions, rather than the norm, as she argues for top-down mass baptism as conversion. However, a bottom-up approach gives greater significance to records of individual baptisms and conversions for the reason that they are rare, and usually given to portray Christian faith against the backdrop of traditional religious practices.

[89] Rimbert, *VA*, §20. *[V]anum esse dicens, a simulacris mutis et surdis auxilim quaerere, et abominabile sibi videri, ut his quibus in baptismo renuntiaverat denuo intenderet et sponsionem quam Christo promiserat falleret.*

[90] Ibid, §19, 20.

[91] For contrasting evaluations see: Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, 20, n. 43. Tschan comments that Adam greatly exaggerates Anskar's success in order to press his claim for the primacy of Hamburg-Bremen in the area; *ARF*, 823. The chronicles mention Ebbo's work among the Danes, but they never mention Anskar; Addison, *The Medieval Missionary*, 29. "Though Anskar is commonly regarded as the Apostle to Scandinavia, the result of his devoted labors was small—two churches on the borders of Denmark and one priest in Birka; Lund,

structure, then this was not accomplished for many years after Anskar's death.[92] However, if the definition of mission includes the bottom-up spread of the core gospel message, then Anskar's mission was a success. The vitality of the Christian faith in Denmark and Sweden in the ninth century would not be from the top-down ecclesial structure, but from the groups of believers spreading the gospel message from the bottom-up. Therefore, Anskar's involvement in both consolidation and evangelism was a success even though no strong ecclesial structure survived during the following years.

3. Individual and Group

The *Vita Anskarii* and the *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* give several instances of the tension between the group and the individual in mission. One of the first of these recorded by Rimbert was the whole process of Anskar responding to Louis' request. Anskar was portrayed as being ready to go to the ends of the earth for the sake of the gospel, even to live among the barbarians. For his fellow monastics, this verged on the edge of insanity, as they could not understand why Anskar would want to leave the monastic community.[93] There was only one fellow monk, Autbert, willing to travel with Anskar, and their abbot, Wala, quizzed both of these individuals before he agreed to present them to Louis for the commission to travel with Harald into Danish territory.[94] The leader of the group, Wala, also made it an individual choice as Rimbert records, "they had none to render them any menial service, as no one in the abbot's household would go with them of his own accord

---

'Scandinavia', 210. "There can be little doubt that at this time there were a number of people in Scandinavia interested in Christianity nor that the mission was, in fact, quite successful."; Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion*, 404. "After Anskar's death in 865 the Danish mission faltered....This is not to say that Christianity disappeared from Denmark. Adam was probably right to judge, or guess, that something of the Christianity implanted by Anskar survive...".

[92] When to put a date to the conversion of a society is difficult, see chapter 3; Addison, *The Medieval Missionary*, 29. Addison puts the real conversion of Denmark c. 965 and Sweden c. 985, using the word Christianized to define conversion; See also: Birkeli, 'The Earliest Missionary Activities'; Pier Hassing, 'Religious Change in Eleventh Century Norway', *Missiology* 3, no. 4 (1975); Jochens, 'Late and Peaceful: Iceland's Conversion Through Arbitration in 1000'.

[93] Rimbert, *VA*, §7.

[94] Ibid.

and he would compel no one against his will."[95] Thus, Rimbert portrayed Anskar and Autbert as standing out from the group in their individual desire and decision to leave the community, and he emphasised the individual internal faith of these two men in contrast to the group mindset of *stabilitas*.

Palmer argues that Rimbert's main goal in writing the *Vita Anskarii* was "to encourage the Benedictine monks to suspend their vows and work in the mission field, while informing them of what to expect there."[96] Thus the stories of individuals within the *Vita* have a certain purpose: they would be the examples of what God could accomplish when individuals took up the task of transmitting the gospel message to new people. In this context, Rimbert's inclusion of Ebbo's encouragement to Anskar makes sense.

> ...the piety and spiritual fervor of Ebbo the archbishop of Rheims, who had first received the members of the mission, afforded him no little comfort. For Ebbo, being inflamed with the desire to render effective the religious call to the non-Christian races, urged him to carry the blessings of the faith into those parts and impressed upon him that he should not abandon what he had begun. The good bishop [Anskar], stirred by his exhortations and his enthusiasm on behalf of this cause, accomplished unhesitatingly the duties of the task that had been entrusted to him, nor could he be diverted from it by any trouble or inconvenience.[97]

Rimbert in no way portrayed the result of Anskar's work as a success in terms of a top-down ecclesial structure, although there are numerous times he mentions the building of churches,[98] and other than Harald's baptism, there is no account of a king or ruler being baptised. [99] Therefore, it is not possible to consider Anskar's work in light of a mass movement of people into the Christian community, either through baptism or conversion, as a top-down politically supported movement. There are, though, various accounts of 'numerous' or 'multitudes' accepting faith,[100] though the

---

[95] Ibid. *...nullum habuerunt socium, qui eis aliquid servitii impenderet, quoniam nemo ex familia abbatis cum eis sua sponte ire, nec ille quemquam ad hoc invitum volebat cogere.*

[96] Palmer, 'Rimbert's Vita Anskarii': 256.

[97] Rimbert, *VA*, §34....*tamen quoque Ebonis memorati Remensis archiepiscopi, qui hanc legationem primo susceperat, non modice eum in hac causa et devotio mentis et fervor consolabatur animi. Siquidem ipse intimo pro vocatione gentium flagrans spiritu, iugiter eum ad fidei gratiam in partes istas promulgandam incitabat et, ut coepta non desereret, strenue commonebat. Cuius verbis exhortationis et maximo ardore mentis, quo ad hoc fervebat, iste beatus vir provocatus, indubitanter officii sibi commissi curam agebat, nec aliqua umquam incommoditatis adversitate a coepto opere averti poterat.*

[98] For example: Ibid, 11, 14, 24, 28, 32.

[99] Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, Book I.xxv (27). Adam, however, claims that Horic was 'made a Christian', but this cannot be confirmed in other sources.

[100] Ibid, Book I.xv (17), xvii (19), xxv (27), xliii (41). For example: Rimbert, *VA*, §8, 11, 14, 15.

accounts are not specific to how quickly these numbers entered the Christian community, nor are Adam or Rimbert precise in recording baptisms.

In contrast to a mass movement of people into the Christian community by baptism, Rimbert recorded numerous accounts of, and also hints at, individuals being baptised.[101] The two main accounts of individuals, one specifically receiving baptism,[102] are of Herigar and Frideburg in Sweden. These two individuals are portrayed as taking an unmoveable stand for the Christian faith in the face of pressure and opposition from those in their communities. Why were these two individuals given as examples to be followed? One suggestion may be the fact that both were from the elite of the society—Herigar was a counsellor to the king, and Frideburg was a wealthy woman. Therefore, this may be part of Rimbert's agenda to encourage not only leaders to support mission work,[103] but also for them to encourage leaders of foreign peoples to become Christians,[104] and this strategy would not be effective if the accounts of faith at work in a person's life were of those outside the social elite. Or it could have been that it was unusual to have prominent citizens continue to cling to the Christian faith in the face of years of opposition. Thus, Rimbert's selection of Herigar and Frideburg should not suggest that the Christian gospel message only penetrated the social elite. In fact the majority of the Christian believers were, most likely, of the lower social ranks, as seen in the records of slaves, servants and prisoners being transmitters of the gospel message.[105] The scarcity of accounts of peasants, slaves, servants, or prisoners being baptised, as individuals or as groups, cannot be interpreted as meaning that this did not take place, nor that these ranks of society did not receive the gospel message.[106] Rather, for Rimbert, the lack of detail of who had become Christians seemed to be less of a concern than the ability to report that many, sometimes thousands, had come to faith.[107] Therefore, Rimbert must have had a different agenda in choosing these two figures for his *Vita Anskarii*.

---

[101] For example: Rimbert, *VA*, §8, 11, 12, 14, 20, 24, 35.
[102] Ibid, §11.
[103] Palmer, 'Rimbert's Vita Anskarii': 256.
[104] Ibid: 237-42. Palmer discusses the intended audience of the *Vita*.
[105] See Chapter 1 and 3 for further discussion on this point.
[106] Rimbert, *VA*, §11, 38. These passages clearly state Christians were captives.
[107] For example: Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, Book I.xv (17), xvii (19), xxv (27), xliii (41); Rimbert, *VA*, §8, 11, 14, 15.

What is of interest in these accounts from missiological perspective is the portrayal of influential people, as individuals, retaining their Christian faith in spite of opposition and pressure to return to pre-Christian practices. This is clearly seen in both accounts and allows for the interpretation that there was a body of believers in Birka, maybe small in number, who had a deep enough understanding of the uniqueness of the Christian gospel message to be able to withstand pressure to return to traditional religious practices from others within the societal group, when confronted with serious problems. Herigar, in particular, confronts the larger societal group with some very public debates and displays of the Christian God's power.

> This most faithful man endured many reproaches at the hands of unbelievers during the time when there was no priest present there, but by the help of divine grace and as a result of his prayer the true faith was proclaimed and accompanied by signs from heaven.[108]

And when he was ill he prayed:

> My Lord Jesus Christ grant to me, your servant, now my former health in order that these unhappy men may know that you are the only God and that there is none beside you, and in order that my enemies may behold the great things that you do and may turn in confusion from their errors and be converted to the knowledge of your name. Accomplish, I beseech you, that which I ask for the sake of your holy name, which is blessed for evermore, that they who believe in you may not be confounded, O Lord.[109]

And Rimbert sums up his life:

> His own faith having been strengthened by the abounding goodness of the Lord, he was the more ready to come forward both publicly and otherwise, and at one time by reproach, at another time by persuasion, he declared to them the power of the Lord and the benefits resulting from faith in him. And thus he continued the good fight even to the end of his life.[110]

Here, not just words, but actions are part of the transmission of the gospel message. Thus, for Rimbert, Herigar was an important example of a non-Christian becoming a believer in the gospel message and then passing the message along. Therefore, the components of mission—pre-evangelism, evangelism, the passing on of the message—can be seen. Rimbert records no baptisms or conversions from Herigar's

---

[108] Rimbert, *VA*, §19. *Qui videlicet fidelissimus vir Herigarius tempore, quo sacerdotalis ibi deerat praesentia, multa ab infidelibus sustinuit obprobria, sed largiente divina gratia signis caelestibus eius petitione verae fidei declarata sunt praeconia.*

[109] Ibid. *Domine mi Iesu Christe, ut sciant isti miseri, quia tu es Deus solus et non [est] alius praeter te, da mihi servo tuo in hac hora pristinam corporis mei sanitatem, ut videntes inimici magnalia tua de suis erroribus confundantur et ad cognitionem tui nominis convertantur. Fac, queso, quod peto propter nomen tuum sanctum, quod est benedictum in saecula, ne sit confusio confidentibus in te, Domine.*

[110] Ibid. *Denique ipse post haec tanto alacrior quanto frequentibus Domini beneficiis in fide robustior factus, publice ubicumque aderat, partim exasperando, partim suadendo, virtutem Domini et fidei gratiam cunctis nuntiabat. Sicque bonum certamen usque ad finem suae perduxit vitae.*

actions, rather one is left with the impression that there was little positive response to Herigar's message. However, Adam records "he [Herigar] saved many thousands of pagans through his miraculous power and religious exhortation."[111] Missiologically, these statements are what would be expected—results both positive and negative—from the transmission of the Christian gospel message. This makes Rimbert's lack of information that much more curious. One suggestion could be that Rimbert was focused on the difficulty of the transmitting the gospel message rather than on the resultant conversions. Adam, on the other hand, was putting forth the claim of ecclesial authority for Hamburg-Bremen and therefore a record of numbers of believers would be important.

Wood argues that Rimbert understood that the religious mindset of the Scandinavian was utilitarian,[112] in other words, the people were looking for practical answers to their ritual practices, whether they were the traditional ones or the new Christian ones. Thus there is a conflict in the *Vita* between the desire for external, practical results and Rimbert's care in portraying the inner faith of Anskar, which had motivated him to be a carrier of the gospel message to the ends of the earth.[113] Therefore, in Rimbert's accounts there are tensions between groups and individuals in terms of which religious practices to follow, as well as the tension between Rimbert's understanding of the Scandinavian mindset and the internal, individual faith of Anskar. This can also be seen in the account of Herigar's public and private faith and it can be seen in Rimbert's evaluation of Anskar's life: "The two wings of the active and the contemplative life he himself completely possessed...".[114]

Another group who became influential in the mission task were the Danish and Slav boys who Anskar redeemed from captivity. From this group, he selected some individuals to be trained at the monastery of Turholt.[115] Here is not only a pattern of mission strategy, but also, again, the tension between the group and the individual. Redeeming captives and sending some to be trained in a monastery was

---

[111] Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, Book I.xxi (23)....*quia etiam tantam gratiam fidei meruit, ut potentia miraculorum et exhortatione doctrinae multa paganorum milia salvaret.*

[112] Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', 54-55.

[113] Ibid, 54, 67.

[114] Rimbert, *VA*, §42....*ad quas activae et contemplativae vitae geminas alas ideo ipse sufficiebat...*

[115] Ibid, §15.

not a new strategy by any means.[116] However, in the context of the group and the individual, it is from a group of young men that a few individuals were selected for training. There is no information as to what criteria was used to separate out those to be trained in the monastery, but there was a clear plan that these boys would then become future monks and priests who would be transmitters of the Christian gospel message to their indigenous group. This can be seen in the following account:

> While these things were being done the venerable Bishop Gautbert sent to the Swedes a priest called Ansfrid, who was of Danish descent and had been trained by Ebbo for the service of the Lord.....he ordained for this work a priest named Rimbert, whose ancestors were of Danish extraction.[117]

The main pattern for mission followed in the *Vita Anskarii* was for Anskar to have the support of political leaders for the preaching of the gospel message. The individual leaders, therefore, would determine the acceptability of the presence of the Christian faith in their territories. These individual leaders of the Danes and Swedes were never claimed by Rimbert to have accepted the gospel message for themselves, but they were favourably disposed to have it spread in their territories.[118] The influence of individual leaders in top-down mission work is seen in Louis being the impetus behind Anskar's missions to the Danes and Swedes,[119] in Anskar's concern to consult the Swedish king on arrival at Birka,[120] as well as in his relations with Horic I and II.[121] Rimbert presented the pattern of asking permission from the leaders before engaging in mission work in an area.[122] This had two results, one was the new work done by the foreign missionaries to the area, and the other was the already existent Christian believers were allowed to gather for worship.[123] These results can be seen in the following passage:

---

[116] For example, Gregory I, *MGH, Registrum Epistolarum, Vol I* (Berlin, 1891), vi.10. Gregory I in his letter to Candidus in 595 gives instructions for English slave boys to be educated in monasteries; Alcuin, 'VWillibrordi', §9. Willibrord chose thirty boys to instruct and baptise; *Conversio*, §4. The *Conversio* records hostages being taught in monasteries.

[117] Rimbert, *VA*, §33. *Denique dum haec agerentur, praedictus venerabilis Gauzbertus episcopus ad gentem Sueonum quendam misit presbiterum nomine Ansfridum, qui ex gente Danorum oriundus a domno Ebone ad sevitium Domini educatus fuerat...ordinavit presbiterum, ex gente quoque Danorum progentium, nomine Rimbertum.*

[118] As discussed in the above sections.

[119] Rimbert, *VA*, §7, 9.

[120] Ibid, §11.

[121] Ibid, §24, 26, 32.

[122] For discussion on this point see Palmer, 'Rimbert's Vita Anskarii': 252.

[123] Rimbert, *VA*, §11, 14, 19, 24.

> When our lord bishop obtained this permission he at once did that which he had long desired. And when a priest had been established there, the grace of God began to bear much fruit in that place, for there were many who had already become Christians and had been baptized in Dorestad or Hamburg, among whom were the principal people of the place, who rejoiced at the opportunity afforded them to observe their religion. Many others also, both men and women, followed their example, and having abandoned the superstitious worship of idols, believed in the Lord and were baptized....And while many who were baptized there have survived, an innumerable host of those who were clothed in white have ascended to the heavenly kingdom.[124]

Rimbert also used the individual as an example to show God's judgment on those in the group who had attacked Gautbert and killed Nithard.[125] Rimbert makes it clear that punishment descended on all who took part in these events, but he only focused on one account of one individual to give credence to his claim that it was God's judgement, not man's, that occurred. This man is never named, but the details of his problems are recorded, so the individual, as an example, was important. If Rimbert knew as much detail as he wrote, then he must have known the person's name, but for Rimbert the emphasis was not on the individual, but on the display of God's judgement on the whole group. Here again is the tension between the group and the individual: the whole group received punishment but only one individual was singled out for examination.

Rimbert's style of writing shows individuals influencing groups of people with the Christian gospel message: Anskar and Autbert, Witmar and Gislemar, Herigar and Frideburg, Louis the Pious and Louis the German, among others are all mentioned by name. This did not mean that Rimbert saw the individual as more important than the group, but it points to the tension between the individual response to the gospel mandate and the *stabilitas* of group monastic life.[126]

---

[124] Ibid, §24.*Hac ergo domnus episcopus noster accepta licentia, statim quod diu desideraverat perfecit. Et constituto ibi presbitero, gratia Dei in eodem loco fructuosius crescere coepit. Multi namque ibi antea erant christiani, qui vel in Dorstado vel in Hammaburg baptizati fuerant, quorum quidam primores ipsius vici habebantur, et guadebant facultatem sibi datam christianitatem suam observandi. Quorum exemplo multi quoque alii et viri et feminae, relicta superstitiosa idolorum cultura ad fidem Domini conversi baptizabantur....Et cum multi inibi baptizati supervixerint, innumerablilis tamen albatorum multitudo exinde ad regna conscendit caelorum.*

[125] Ibid, §18.

[126] Palmer, 'Rimbert's Vita Anskarii': 256; Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', 67.

4. Syncretism or Contextualization

Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* contains little information about how Anskar might have contextualized the Christian gospel message for the Danes or the Swedes, or even the Frisians and Nordalbingians close to his base in Hamburg. Though there are no records showing that Anskar, or other workers needed translators, it is also impossible to say that none were needed. The accounts of boys from the Danes and Slavs being trained up in Turholt[127] and the asides that give the information that some of the priest sent out from Hamburg and other monastic houses were of Danish descent,[128] point to the understanding that native speakers were important transmitters of the Christian gospel message. Therefore, the pattern of training indigenous workers seen in other accounts,[129] continues in the *Vita Anskarii.*

There are, however, a few passages that give some understanding of the mindset of the non-Christian population in these areas. In Rimbert's account of Herigar he includes a few of Herigar's speeches challenging the unbelief of the people. There is the incident of the miracle of the rain where Herigar, reminiscent of Elijah at Mount Carmel,[130] challenged the peoples to pray to their gods to perform a miracle of keeping them dry during a rainstorm. Herigar, with one small boy, at his side remained dry, but the people were soaked. At the end Herigar challenges them to renounce their errors and learn the way of truth.[131] Here Herigar was giving the plea to reject the traditional gods and to accept the truth, that is, the Christian God. This formula of a negative rejection and a positive acceptance was part of many of the baptismal rites,[132] but here it is used as a formula for conversion, that is a change of allegiance.

Herigar was then struck down with an illness that continued for some time. There was growing pressure from the people for Herigar to throw off the Christian

---

[127] Rimbert, *VA*, §15.

[128] Ibid, §33.

[129] For example, Gregory I, *MGH, Registrum Epistolarum, Vol I*, vi.10. Gregory I in his letter to Candidus in 595 gives instructions for English slave boys to be educated in monasteries; Alcuin, 'VWillibrordi', §9. Willibrord chose thirty boys to instruct and baptise; *Conversio*, §4The *Conversio* records hostages being taught in monasteries.

[130] I Kings 18:16-46.

[131] Rimbert, *VA*, §19.

[132] See Chapter 2 on Baptism.

God and return to the traditional gods. This resulted in Herigar publicly praying for healing, which he received. Here, then, was another show of the power of the Christian God over the traditional gods of the people. In this prayer there were 'unhappy men' who were unbelieving, and there were believers who needed clarity in their faith.[133] Again in Rimbert's account there is a clear distinction between the old and the new, the unbeliever and the believer. This points to a clear understanding of the core Christian gospel message, and therefore a statement against syncretism, since there was a clear break not only in practice, but in worldview as well.

In another instance, Anound, a Swedish contender for a kingship, was exiled to Denmark. He gathered some Danes and sailed to Birka to find the city not well protected. Anound asked for ransom money and received it, but the Danes with him wanted to attack. To appease them, Anound planned to attack the city. The townspeople became aware of the situation and gathered to confer and offer sacrifices to their gods. Herigar stepped in and argued that their idols could not save them, but the Christian God could. The townspeople agreed to follow Herigar's advice and "in accordance with custom, they all went out on their own accord to a plain where they promised the Lord Christ to fast and to give alms in order to secure their deliverance."[134] Though Rimbert gives no indication how many of these people were converted to the Christian faith, he does record that they approached the Christian God in the same plain where they approached their traditional gods. This would most likely not have been the start of syncretic practice and thought, since the people understood that the Christian God required fasting and giving of alms, not sacrifices. Therefore, although the location for the performance of the rituals was the same, the content was very different.

Herigar's last recorded speech took place after the Danes decided to attack a Slavic town, thus saving Birka from a sacking. He pleaded with the people to accept the Christian faith as the Christian God had proved how powerful he was. Over above this, he declared that the Christian God is the one true God, who rules and reigns over all things in heaven and on earth.[135] Thus the argument was not just to

---

[133] Rimbert, *VA*, §19.

[134] Ibid. *...cuncti unanimes et voluntarii exeuntes, sicut sibi consuetudinis erat, in campum, pro liberatione sui ieiunium et elemosinas domino Christo devoverunt.*

[135] Ibid.

accept the Christian God for his power, but also to begin to understand a different worldview based on scriptures. Adam records that many thousands became Christians as a result of Herigar's words and actions, but Rimbert does not record any results from these speeches.[136]

In all of these accounts there is a curious lack of emphasis on baptism, even though this was still seen as the demarcation of a believer and a non-believer. Thus one wonders how many of the thousands recorded by Adam were first time believers, that is, those who needed baptism, and how many were Christians who were corrected either in doctrine or practice.[137] Again Rimbert give no clues to this question, but, as Palmer argues, his concern was with realistically promoting the mission work,[138]and therefore clear data concerning baptisms was not essential. The one section in the *Vita Anskarii* that does give some detail about baptism focuses on those who had become catechumens, had gone through the baptismal preparation up to a certain point, but had left actual baptism until the hour of their death.[139] This shows that there were a variety of baptismal practices in Birka and Dorestad. Rimbert did not condemn these people, but along with the example of healing through baptism, he concluded, "In such a manner did divine compassion spread in that place and a multitude of people were converted to the Lord."[140]

There is one speech that Palmer rightly points out as curious as it was given by a non-Christian, but recorded by Rimbert in the *Vita*.[141] Anskar was heading towards Birka with a message and token from King Horic for the Swedish king Olaf.[142] The content of the message was that Olaf should accept Anskar and allow him "to establish the Christian religion in his own kingdom."[143] However, before Anskar arrived with these evidences of support from the Danish leader, someone had heard that he was on the way and produced the speech recorded in the *Vita*. The

---

[136] The result was recorded by Adam of Bremen, not Rimbert as above discussion.

[137] Sawyer, 'Scandinavian Conversion Histories': 47-48. Sawyer shows that for Adam 'pagan' meant 'anti-Hamburg-Bremen', and 'conversio' meant subordination to the archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen.

[138] Palmer, 'Rimbert's Vita Anskarii': 246, 256.

[139] Rimbert, *VA*, 24.

[140] Ibid, §24. *Sicque crevit in eodem loco Dei miseratio, et ad fidem Domini populi conversa est multitudo.*

[141] Palmer, 'Rimbert's Vita Anskarii': 246-248; Rimbert, *VA*, §26.

[142] Rimbert, *VA*, §26. His second journey circa 850.

[143] Ibid. *...omnia quae ille in regno suo causa christianae religionis disponere vellet,...*

speech contains what Palmer calls pagan ideals, that is, concerns about land, ancestors, wealth and offerings.[144] Palmer addresses the question of why Rimbert would include a pagan speech by a pagan believer in a hagiographical text. He concludes that Rimbert's intention was "to inform future missionaries about the kind of challenges and attitudes that they would have to overcome there."[145] If this interpretation is used, then ultimately, Rimbert was not condemning the content of this speech, but included it as an informative paragraph for apologetic preaching. This would mean that future missionaries were to use persuasion to transmit the Christian gospel message, not force, and therefore would need to have an awareness of the content of the beliefs of the traditional religions of the Swedes and the Danes.[146] From a missiological perspective, this is preparation for contextualizing, since there is a need to understand the culture of the receiver of the gospel message before it can be appropriately transmitted. For Rimbert, the carriers of the Christian gospel message would be monks from Corvey or other monastic houses, with a top-down approach to the task of mission. These carriers, however, were to be contextualizers of the gospel message, which would make the bottom-up spread of the gospel message much easier.

With these insights from syncretism and contextualization, Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* is very missiological in its approach to the task of spreading the Christian gospel message among the Danes, Swedes, Slavs and other people groups under the responsibility of the see of Hamburg-Bremen.

5. Conclusion

Rimbert's portrayal of the mission work in the *Vita Anskarii,* with its ebb and flow of progress and setbacks, and the difficulties faced, is similar to mission work of any age. However, it must be remembered that Rimbert had a clear agenda in writing this *Vita.* His main concerns were first, to argue for Anskar to be accepted as a martyr of the faith through his suffering for the sake of the gospel message.

---

[144] Palmer, 'Rimbert's Vita Anskarii': 247.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Rimbert, *VA*, 247. For one such study see: Hayward, 'Contextualizing the Gospel among the Saxons: An example from the ninth century of the cultural adaptation of the gospel as found in *The Heliand*'.

Second, to show the need for monastic houses to respond to the scriptural mandate to take the gospel message 'to the ends of the earth'. Third, to establish the authority of the see of Hamburg-Bremen. Missiologically is can be argued that the underlying purpose was to challenge the ideal of *stabilitas*, especially when it compromised the movement of the gospel message into new territories.

The *Vita Anskarii* contains several examples of the tension between the group and the individual. Anskar himself is contrasted with the group in his monastic house. When he responded to Louis and Wala's request to accompany Harald into Danish territory his fellow monks were aghast and amazed that Anskar would want to leave the *stabilitas* of the community. However, Rimbert shows that Anskar was responding to a scriptural mandate to take the gospel message to the ends of the earth. This, then, overrode his commitment to the monastic community. Even though Wala is the one who recommends Anskar for the task of travelling with Harald and his companions to consolidate their faith, Wala is also the one who closely questions Anskar and Autbert when they respond to this request. Therefore Wala is seen to balance the concerns of the group—the monastic community, as well as the individual—Anskar and Autbert.

There are other named individuals such as Herigar and Frideburg, Witmar and Gautbert, but these are set against the backdrop of the group: Herigar and Frideburg in the city of Birka, Witmar and Gautbert from monastic houses. These accounts are used not only to highlight the difficulties involved in mission work, but they are also used to highlight the underlying tension between the mandate to 'go to the nations' with the Christian gospel message and the ninth-century Benedictine mindset of *stabilitas*.

Although the mission work was sponsored by Frankish leaders and permitted by various Scandinavian leaders, there is no account of a Scandinavian leaders receiving baptism at this time. Rather, the sources reveal a bottom-up spread of the gospel message which was consolidated under the bishoprics of Hamburg and Bremen. Under the sponsorship of the Frankish emperors, Anskar and his companions were focusing north into Danish and Swedish territory. This, however, was not their only mission field as they also interacted with Frisians, Nordalbingians and other people groups in the area under the responsibility of the sees of Hamburg

and Bremen. In these areas not only were the missionaries engaged in evangelism, but they were also consolidating the work that had already been done, especially among the Saxons and the Frisians.

Two examples of both the importance of the individual in the mission process and also the importance of the bottom-up spread of the Christian gospel message are given in Herigar and Frideburg. They are portrayed as individuals who continued to believe and transmit the gospel message even under severe pressure to return to former religious beliefs and practices. Their stories take place in Birka over a seven-year gap when Anskar was unable to be present or to send a worker. This very clearly shows that Rimbert understood the role of the individual in the missional process as well as the need to retain the uniqueness of the gospel message. Therefore, it can be argued that in his *Vita Anskarii*, Rimbert clearly sees the importance of the individual Christian believer as a transmitter of the gospel message.

As all of these examples show Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* is a rich source for missiology and, even after this case study, there are further insights to be explored from this perspective.

Map 4
Cyril and Methodius
Rome's sphere of influence
Constantinople's sphere of influence
Salzburg's area of mission work
Irish sphere of influence
Area of Cyrilo-Methodian mission
Rus'
Khazars
Constantinople
Salzburg
Bavarians
Moravians
Rome

Chapter 6. Case Study 3: Cyril and Methodius

1. Background

Having looked at Boniface's work, in the eighth century, consolidating a strong ecclesial structure (which allowed both the Franks and the popes to combine their aims in the Carolingian expansion) then at Anskar, in the early to mid ninth century (working among the Danes and Swedes with some bishoprics being established, but most of the results seen in the pockets of believers continuing a bottom-up spread of the gospel message in the midst of upheavals) the focus will now shift to an area where Carolingian, Roman, and Byzantine interests clashed, that is the area of Moravia, Bulgaria, and Bavaria. The overlap of various mission work can be seen on map 1, which shows the broader overlapping of various Christian mission movements; map 2, shows the overlapping mission work in the area under Boniface's authority; and map 3, shows the overlap of various mission work in the Salzburg, Bavarian and eastern Pannonian territories[1].

The two prominent figures examined in this case study are Cyril, and Methodius. They were not the first to move into the frontier areas where there were various Christian traditions engaged in missional work: in fact the area already had a strong Christian presence.[2] They were also not the only Christians working in the area as their *Lives* present a list of other workers from Italy, the Franks, and the Greeks.[3] They have been chosen as their *Lives* are existent,[4] their work highlights the issue of language in mission, and they bridge the East-West divide of mission work

---

[1] These maps are found on pp. 21, 116, 143, and 174 respectively.

[2] See for example: *VM*, §5; Zdenek R. Dittrich, *Christianity in Great-Moravia*, ed. F.W.N. Hungenholtz and W. Jappe Alberts (Groningen, 1962), 32-34; Francis Dvornik, 'Western and Eastern Traditions of Central Europe', *The Review of Politics* 9 (1947): 464-66; Dvornik, 'Byzantium, Rome, the Franks', 114-15; Francis Dvornik, 'The Significance of the Missions of Cyril and Methodius', *Slavic Review* 23, no. 2 (1964): 195-96; Francis Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs: SS. Constantine-Cyril and Methodius* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1970), 1-48; Josef Poulík, *Great Moravia and the Mission of Cyril and Methodius* (Prague, 1985), 19; A.P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom: An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs* (London, 1970), 16, 20-29.

[3] See above, especially Dvornik's *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs* for a discussion on the identity of these workers. Also see map 1 and map 4.

[4] See introduction to the case studies for background to the sources. Even though the Latin/French translations are cited as the main sources, Kantor's English edition will be used as the basis of this study as it is an attested translation and medieval Greek is beyond the skills of the author.

since, although they were sent from Constantinople, they had interaction with Rome and the Franks.[5]

Cyril, to use Constantine's monastic name, and Methodius were two brothers from the Slavic[6] Thessalonican area of the Byzantine empire. They were well educated and came to the attention of Emperor Michael III (842-67) and Photius (858-67, 877-86), patriarch of Constantinople[7] through their skills as administrators and teachers.[8] With this background they were well equipped to be part of the larger missional work under the auspices of Constantinople.

In 860 the Khazars[9] requested a Christian teacher to present the case for the Christian faith in light of Jewish and Islamic pressure.[10] There is confusion about from whom this request came, since most of the Khazars leaders had accepted the Jewish faith more than a century earlier.[11] Nevertheless, Michael III, in consultation with Photius, sent Cyril[12] to the Khazars to engage in an apologetic for Christianity.[13] The *Life of Constantine* records the debate in some detail, and then records that about

---

[5] *VC*, §17; *VM*, §6, 9, 10; *Conversio*, §14, Excerptum de Karentanis; Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs*, 55.

[6] For background on Slavs see for example: Jean-Pierre Arrignon, *Les Églises slaves des origines au XVe siècle*, ed. Paul Christophe (Paris, 1991); P.M. Barford, *The Early Slavs* (Ithaca, NY, 2001); Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs* (Cambridge, 2001); Francis Dvornik, *The Slavs: Their Early History and Civilization* (Boston, 1956); Jonathan Shepard, 'Slavs and Bulgars', in *New Cambridge Medieval History, Volume II c.700-c.900*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995); Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs.*

[7] For some brief background on Photius see: Cyril Mango, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, MA, 1958), 7-22; John V. A. Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century* (Ann Arbor, 1983), 121-24.

[8] *VC*, §2-4; *VM*, §2,3. English translations in Kantor, *Medieval Slavic Lives of Saints and Princes.*

[9] For background on the Khazars see for example: Ericsson, 'The Earliest Conversion of the Rus' to Christianity'; Peter B. Golden, Haggai Ben-Shammai, and András Roná-Tas, *The World of the Khazars* (Leiden, 2007); Barford, *The Early Slavs*, 98-100, 237-39; Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs*, 51-53; Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity I: to A.D. 1500* (New York, 1953, 1975), 250-53; '*Life of Constantine*', 86, note 30; Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs*, 237-40.

[10] *VC*, §8; *VM*, §5.

[11] Ericsson, 'The Earliest Conversion of the Rus' to Christianity': 114-17. Ericsson concludes that the request came from the Polyane, a small number of Christians remaining in the area from the days of Theophilus; *VC*, §9, 10 The Jews were debating with Constantine in the presence of the Kagan, therefore they were already well established before Cyril arrived.

[12] *VC*, §8 has Cyril travelling alone, but §12 has the two brothers present on their return to Constantinople with the two hundred redeemed captives. Also *VM*, §4 has the Emperor sending for Cyril as an aid to Methodius.

[13] *VC*, §8 records."From the beginning we have known one God who is above all, and worshipped Him facing east. However, we keep other shameful customs. The Jews exhort us to accept their faith and ways, while on the other hand the Saracens, offering us peace and many gifts, press us, saying: 'our faith is better than that of other peoples."; the *VM*, §4 records, "For Jews were there who were blaspheming the Christian faith."

two hundred[14] people were voluntarily baptised.[15] Ericsson suggests that the two hundred captives Cyril was allowed to take with him[16] are the same two hundred that were baptised. This would, then, support his argument that the request for a Christian teacher came from a small group of Polyane believers.[17] However, it is difficult to trace a clear line between the baptised and the captives. Also, even if these were one and the same, that would not necessarily mean that all the Christians had left the Khazarian area with the Constantinopolitan delegation.

If baptism was a sign of belief for new believers,[18] then the record of the two hundred baptised would argue for an expansion of the number of Christians among the Khazar population, as there was already in existence a group of believers before Cyril and his embassy arrived. However, as seen in other sources, a portion of these baptisms could well be believers who had not yet been baptised. If this was the case then it is harder to argue for two hundred new believers into the Christian community. Even if the two hundred redeemed captives were the same two hundred as had been baptised, there would still be believers remaining who would continue the bottom-up spread of the Christian gospel message. Therefore, although Cyril was unable to convince the Khazars to accept Byzantine Christianity, which some scholars have evaluated as a failure of the mission,[19] in missiological terms the mission would have been a success, in that transmitters of the Christian gospel message remained in the area under Khazar control.

Whatever evaluation is given to the brothers' work among the Khazars, there remains the underlying question of why Michael responded to the request for a

---

[14] Anna Kuznetsova, 'Signs of Conversion in *Vitae sanctorum*', in *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, ed. Guyda Armstrong and Ian Wood (Turnhout, 2000), 127. Kuznetsova states that numbers are the most unreliable part of *Vitae*. Therefore, the figure two hundred should not be taken literally, but the surrounding story would still stand, that is, a number of people were voluntarily baptised.

[15] *VC*, §11.

[16] Ibid.

[17] For more information refer to works cited in Kantor's translation, note 8 on page 178.

[18] See chapter 2 for various interpretations of baptism.

[19] Dimitri Obolensky, 'The Empire and Its Northern Neighbors, 565-1018', in *Byzantium and the Slavs* (London, 1971), 493. Ostrogorsky makes this same judgement concerning Moravia as well; Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth, Eastern Europe, 500-1453* (London, 1971), 176; George Ostrogorsky, 'The Byzantine Background of the Moravian Mission', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 19 (1965): 16; Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs*, 35. In terms of rating the Khazar mission a success see, Gyula Moravcsik, 'Byzantine Christianity and the Magyars in the Period of Their Migration', *American Slavic and East European Review* 5, no. 3/4 (1946): 40.

Christian teacher, if the Khazars were already known to be Jews. Although the *Lives* record the interaction with the Khazars in some detail, it would seem the main thrust of the trip would not have been evangelistic, but rather diplomatic as the area the Khazars were claiming was territory that Byzantium also claimed.[20] With this in mind, Vlasto argues that the thrust of the trip was to negotiate for Khazarian toleration towards Christianity, not mission work per se.[21]

In contrast to Boniface's impetus for mission from an Anglo-Saxon sense of *peregrinatio* and Anskar's response to the scriptural mandate to go to all nations, even to the ends of the earth, for the Byzantines the impetus for carrying the Christian gospel message to new people groups came from a combination of the concepts of *Pax Romana* and the *Pax Christiana*. This can be described as the conviction that the Byzantine people were the new Rome, or the new chosen people,[22] commissioned to take the gospel message to the world along with the imperial culture that was part of the new Rome.[23] When exactly this became the predominant worldview of Byzantium is still debated with some, like Baker, arguing for a fourth century dating, and some, like Obolensky, for a sixth century dating.[24] What is clear is that this worldview had been firmly entrenched in the Byzantine psyche by the time of Cyril and Methodius. This meant that for Cyril and Methodius, from a Byzantine background, the spread of the eastern form of Christianity would also consist of the spread of the Greek culture.

---

[20] Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs*, 53; Ericsson, 'The Earliest Conversion of the Rus' to Christianity': 117; Dimitri Obolensky, 'Cyrille et Méthode et la Christianisation des Slaves', in *Byzantium and the Slavs* (London, 1971), 588; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 177; Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs*, 35.

[21] Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs*, 35. Vlasto states: "On the religious side there was no question of trying to convert the Khazars ruling class from Judaism to Christianity but merely to safeguard the practice of Christianity and the persons of Christians in the Khazar Empire, where the normally prevailing tolerance had apparently been temporarily broken."

[22] Obolensky, 'Cyrille et Méthode', 588; Richard E. Sullivan, 'Early Medieval Missionary Activity: A Comparative Study of Eastern and Western Methods ', in *Christian Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 1994), 21, 31. The Carolingians also took on this worldview as discussed in the Anskar case.

[23] Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 55, 170; Michael McCormick, 'Byzantium and the West, 700-900', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History II c.700-c.900*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), 360-61; Obolensky, 'Cyrille et Méthode', 588; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 103-04, 355-56; Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs*, 29, 32.

[24] L.G.D. Baker, 'The shadow of the Christian Symbol', in *Studies in Church History: The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith* (Cambridge, 1970), 18; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth.*

As seen above in the case of the Khazars, other religious streams had already penetrated the areas that Cyril and Methodius worked in. Among the Khazars leaders there were factions for Judaism, Islam, and Christianity all vying for influence. In contrast to this choice of religions, it was the clash between competing ecclesial systems that was found in the frontier area between the Franks and the Byzantines. This is seen in the request from the Moravians under, Rastislav's (846-870), "Though our people have rejected paganism and observe Christian law, we do not have a teacher who can explain to us in our language the true Christian faith, so that other countries which look to us might emulate us. Therefore, O lord, send us such a bishop and teacher, for from you good law issues to all countries."[25] The account in the *Life of Methodius* is slightly different and adds information: "We have prospered through God's grace, and many Christian teachers have come to us from among the Italians, Greeks and Germans, teaching us various ways. But we Slavs are a simple people, and have no one to instruct us in the truth, and explain wisely. Therefore, O kind lord, send the type of man who will direct us to the whole truth."[26] Rastislav made it clear that he was looking for teachers who would be able to teach the scriptures and explain them in order for the Moravians to have 'true Christian faith'. The translation of scriptures into spoken or written vernacular was not a new innovation by Cyril and Methodius. The first record of a translation from Hebrew to Greek, the Septuagint, was completed by the end of the second century B.C. Among others, there was Jerome's Latin translation, the Vulgate, made in the fourth century. There were also many other translations of scripture throughout the early medieval period. So what was it that made the Slavonic translations an issue large enough to have Cyril and Methodius travelling to Rome to explain the situation in Moravia[27]?

The fiercest reactions against the introduction of the Slavonic liturgy were the 'Tri-linguist', that is those who held to the claim that there were only three 'holy' languages—Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.[28] The *Life of Constantine* gives a record of several apologetics on various Christian beliefs, with the confrontation of the

---

[25] *VC*, §14.
[26] *VM*, §5; Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs*, 16.
[27] *VC*, §16, 17. See also the discussion of language and mission in the next section.
[28] Ibid, §15, 16.

trilinguist being some of these.[29] One of the defences of the Slavonic liturgy comes at the end of Cyril's life, when the brothers were summoned to Rome. So strongly did Cyril abhor the trilingualists that even when he fell ill and was on his deathbed he prayed, "Deliver them [the faithful flock] from the godless and heathen malice of those speaking blasphemy against Thee, and destroy the trilingual heresy belief."[30]

But it would not be just the trilingualists who were opposed to the liturgy in Slavonic. Rome at first seemed very pleased to affirm the Slavonic liturgy with several celebrations in Slavonic[31], but then some time later sent the command that "during Mass read the *Apostolos* and Gospel, first in Latin and then in Slavic..."[32] confirming the primacy of Latin. Byzantium, a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual empire,[33] had the official, or public language of Greek but also recognised the role of the vernacular language within the various people groups within which its missionaries and churchmen were sent. The empire had as well a history of non-Greek liturgical languages, such as those Cyril used in his defence of the Slavic liturgy against the Tri-linguists.[34] Therefore the hostile reaction of groups in Rome and Constantinople to the production of the Slavonic translations in Moravia and then in Bavaria and Bulgaria had further implications than mere liturgical use.[35] The linguistic issue was part of the larger issue of political power and control. The hostility which stemmed from the Franks, Rome, and Constantinople was from the various powers who all desired to have influence in the same territory, and at this time political control was coupled with ecclesial structures. This meant that whatever power the leaders of these people groups allied with would determine whether their

---

[29] Ibid, §5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 16.

[30] Ibid, §18.

[31] Ibid, §17; See also Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 6; McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, 37-38, 65, 187, 195-96; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, 16 (see note 14), 46 Where is it clear that in the late eighth and early ninth centuries, the use of the vernacular was not only encouraged, but demanded in Carolingian documents which stated that the Creed and the Lord's Prayer were to be memorized before baptism in the local language, as well as in Latin.

[32] *VM*, §8.

[33] McCormick, 'Byzantium and the West', 350.

[34] *VC*, §16. For insights into this passage see: '*Life of Constantine*', 94, note 102; Obolensky, 'Cyrille et Méthode', 494-95.

[35] *VM*, §6, 8; Latourette, *The Thousand Years of Uncertainty*, 162; Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 85-86; Obolensky, 'Cyrille et Méthode', 600; Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 67-69, 72; Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs*, 46; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 175.

ecclesial structure would be eastern or western, Greek or Latin in language.[36] Therefore, Rastislav promoted the use of the Slavonic language as he saw it as a key to acquiring the type of ecclesial structure that would give him the most independent control from the various surrounding powers.[37]

After Cyril's death, Methodius received the mandate from Rome to have responsibility for all Slavic lands,[38] and returned to the area with the support of Rastislav, Svatopluk, and Kocel[39]. The appointment of Methodius to, in effect, the bishopric over Salzburg, Pannonia and other Slavic lands was not popular with the Frankish appointed Bavarian bishops and other workers already established in the area.[40]

Hadrian II's (867-872) decision highlights the overlapping interests of the various powers in this area: Constantinople had moved into the area since there was no ecclesial structure in place and that in response to Rastislav's request;[41] the pope had the brothers travel to Rome ostensibly to praise the Slavonic linguistic work,[42] but then claimed jurisdictional authority over Pannonia and the surrounding area, and thus, gave Methodius a Roman episcopal appointment;[43] when Methodius returned to

---

[36] Paul Alexander, 'The Papacy, the Bavarian Clergy and the Slavonic Apostles', in *Religions and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1978), 288, 268-69; Dvornik, 'Western and Eastern Traditions of Central Europe': 19-21; Dvornik, *The Slavs*, 72, 75; Dvornik, 'The Significance of the Missions of Cyril and Methodius': 200, 209; Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs*, 106; Erhard Meissner, *Mediators between East and West, Reflections on the Cyril and Methodian Idea*, trans. Francis Fergus (Cleveland, Ohio, 1990), 10-11; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 185; Poulík, *Great Moravia* ; Matthew Spinka, 'Slavic Translations of the Scriptures', *The Journal of Religion* 13, no. 4 (1933): 427.

[37] Dvornik, 'Byzantium, Rome, the Franks', 119; Meissner, *Mediators between East and West*, 10; Dimitri Obolensky, 'St. Cyril and Methodius, Apostles of the Slavs', in *Byzantine and the Slavs* (London, 1971), 9; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 185; Obolensky, 'The Empire and its Northern Neighbors', 496-97; Poulík, *Great Moravia*, 20-21, 34; Spinka, 'Slavic Translations of the Scriptures': 415-16; Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs*, 66.

[38] *VM*, §8.

[39] *VC*, §15. Kocel was the Prince of Pannonia so interested in the Slavonic script that he gave Cyril fifty students to be taught it.

[40] *VM*, §9.

[41] Alexander, 'The Papacy', 288; Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs*, 79, 106; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 141-42; Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages*, 54-60.

[42] *VC*, §17; *VM*, §8; Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 114.

[43] *VM*, §17. Pope Hadrian's letter to Rastislav, Svatopluk, and Kocel reads in part: "You have asked for a teacher not only from this Holy See, but also from the pious Emperor Michael. And he sent you the blessed Philosopher Constantine together with his brother before we managed to. But when they learned that your lands belonged to the Apostolic See, they did nought against the canon, but came to us bearing the relics of Saint Clement. Deriving threefold joy therefrom, we considered the matter and decided to send to your lands our son Methodius, an Orthodox man accomplished in

the area to take up the appointment, the existing Bavarian bishops seized him and kept him prisoner for two and a half years while they negotiated with Rome;[44] and in the midst of these tensions, Moravia and Bulgaria were negotiating for as much independence, both political and ecclesial, as possible. Therefore, this one episcopal appointment had profound implications for the different interest groups in the area.

In response to the situation, Salzburg, in Bavarian territory, put forth its claims in the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum;*[45] Methodius' disciples, after his death, were exiled from Moravia, but continued the work from a base in Bulgaria;[46] and the various leaders of the Moravians and Bulgarians made their choice (or had it made for them) of ecclesial and political alliances—Moravia to Franco-Rome,[47] and Bulgaria to Constantinople.[48]

With this brief sketch of some of the issues surrounding the life and work of Cyril and Methodius, the issues to be explored are those of missiology, group and individual, syncretism or contextualization; there follows a brief overview of the content and implications of the *Conversio Bagoariorum* in terms of the mission work of Cyril and Methodius.

---

mind, whom we consecrated with his disciples in order to teach, as you requested, and to explain fully in your language the Scriptures and holy Mass, that is, the liturgy, as well as Baptism according to the entire Church Office,...."; Dittrich, *Christianity in Great-Moravia*, 178-81; Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs*, 146, 148; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 140-41.

[44] *VM*, §9; Dittrich, *Christianity in Great-Moravia*, 186-92; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 144.

[45] *Conversio*. See below for further discussion of this document.

[46] Dittrich, *Christianity in Great-Moravia*, 181-82, 209-20; Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 114; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 147; Spinka, 'Slavic Translations of the Scriptures': 429.

[47] Dittrich, *Christianity in Great-Moravia*, 183-85; Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 114.

[48] For details on Bulgaria see: *AB*, 866; *AF*, 866, 867; Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*; Mayr-Harting, *Two Conversions*; Nicholas, 'Nicolaus ad Bulgarorum consulta respondet (866)'; Nicholas, 'The Responses of Pope Nicholas I to the Questions of the Bulgars (Letter 99)', in *MGH, Ep VI*, ed. Ernest Perels (Berlin, 1925); Stephen Nikolov, 'The Pagan Bulgars and Byzantine Christianity in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 13, no. 3 (2000); Thomas S. Noonan, 'Why Orthodoxy Did Not Spread among the Bulgars of the Crimea during the Early Medieval Era: An Early Byzantine Conversion Model', in *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, ed. Guyda Armstrong and Ian Wood (Turnhout, 2000); Shepard, 'Slavs and Bulgars'; Sullivan, 'Khan Boris and the Conversion of Bulgaria'; Stratoudaki Despina White and Joseph R. Berrigan Jr., *The Patriarch and the Prince, The Letter of Patriarch Photios of Constantinople to Khan Boris of Bulgaria* (Brookline, MA, 1982).

2. Cyril and Methodius and Missiology

The situation for Cyril and Methodius was quite different to that of either Boniface or Anskar, since these two had strong ties to the Frankish ecclesial structure, whereas Cyril and Methodius were from Byzantium. Sullivan sums up the major difference between eastern and western mission activity as the western missionaries had to solicit assistance from governments and leaders of the different people groups, whereas in the East the imperial government initiated, and thus fully supported, missionary ventures.[49] Thus, although Cyril and Methodius responded to requests from leaders of groups on the borders of the Byzantine empire, they were fully supported and commissioned by the Byzantine government and patriarch. This can be seen in the *Life of Methodius* when those opposing his Roman episcopal appointment threatened Methodius' life. When he heard of this, Emperor Basil (867-886) invited Methodius to Constantinople to be encouraged by both himself and the patriarch before returning to his see.[50] Therefore, even though Constantinople recognised Roman jurisdiction in the ecclesial appointment, it continued to support its missionary, Methodius.[51]

Cyril and Methodius were highly educated, and part of the Byzantine elite, which gave them skills in teaching, languages, administration and general knowledge.[52] Therefore, one of the methods Cyril used to transmit the core gospel message was to engage in debates such as those recorded on the iconoclastic issue, the Trinity, and then various topics with the Jews, and with the Tri-lingualists.[53] Even from his youth he is portrayed as being an able debater. This is seen in the account of his debate with John over the iconoclastic issue. Then, at the age of 24, his debate on the Trinity with the Hagarites, a group of Muslims.[54] These, along with

---

[49] Sullivan, 'Early Medieval Missionary Activity'. For other insights see: Andrew Louth, *Greek East and Latin West: The Church AD 681-1071* (Crestwood, NY, 2007), Ch. 8: Pope, Patriarch and Christian Mission.

[50] *VM*, §13.

[51] '*Life of Methodius*', 137, note 70.

[52] *VC*, §3, 4; *VM*, §2, 3.

[53] *VC*, §5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16.

[54] Ibid, §5, 6.

his debates with the Khazars, highlight the importance Byzantium gave to the teaching and understanding of the gospel message before baptism.[55]

Another method that was used was to train up young men not merely in terms of general education, but also so that they could continue the work of translation and apologetics. Rastislav entrusted students to the brothers and after about three years, when the brothers left, there were disciples in place to continue the work.[56] When Kocel greeted Cyril's arrival he had fifty students ready to learn the Slavonic script,[57] and he later sent twenty men to be under Methodius.[58] This pattern continued after Cyril's death as Methodius continued the work of translation, with his *Life* giving the account that with two able scribes he completed a translation of all the scriptures, except Maccabees, in eight months.[59] If this is taken at face value, that is, a complete translation from start to finish, then eight months seems very short. However, this account is placed towards the end of his life, and, therefore, it can be argued, he would have spent years orally teaching the scriptures in the Slavonic language, so it was more of a matter of putting words on paper than of struggling with all that is involved in the task of translation.[60] Even so, the recorded time of eight months is still very brief, although this would fit with the idea of the miraculous in hagiographical works.[61]

There is evidence of the bottom-up spread of the Christian gospel message in several accounts in the *Lives*. The case of the Khazars has already been discussed, therefore the account of the Hagarites will be explored.[62] That there was a Christian presence already among the Hagarites can be seen in the opening lines of the chapter, "[T]he Hagarites, who were called Saracens, blasphemed the single Deity of the

---

[55] Sullivan, 'Early Medieval Missionary Activity', 24-25.

[56] *VC*, §15; *VM*, §5; '*Life of Methodius*', 134, note 40 for a list of names.

[57] *VC*, §15.

[58] *VM*, §8.

[59] Ibid, §15. The supposed reason for leaving out Maccabees was that it would encourage warfare. One wonders what he thought about other passages in the Hebrew Scriptures which also centre on warfare.

[60] For translation and missiology see: Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 67-76. For insights into actual translation work useful insights are offered by such organizations as Wycliffe (www.wycliffe.org); World Bible Translation Center (www.wbtc.com); and SIL International (www.sil.org). There are also many personal stories available about the work of Bible translators such as Jerome, William Carey, John Wycliffe, and Adoniram Judson. From all of these, it is well known that Bible translation usually takes years.

[61] See the introduction for a discussion on hagiography and bibliography for further study.

[62] '*Life of Constantine*', 84, note 20 for information on this term.

Holy Trinity, saying: 'How is it, O Christians, that you, while holding that God is one, further divide Him into three, saying He is Father, Son, and Spirit? If you can explain clearly, send us men who can speak of this and convince us."[63] This prompted Basil's question to Cyril, "Do you hear, Philosopher, what the nasty Hagarites are saying against our faith?"[64] The author of the *Life*, therefore, has set the scene for a debate on the Trinity, but he has at the same time acknowledged the bottom-up spread of the gospel message in the area under Hagarite control. When Cyril arrived he saw the manner in which the Hagarites were persecuting the Christians: "When they came there they saw strange and vile things which the God-fighting Hagarites did to deride and mock Christians. In these places all those living in piety in Christ were caused much grief. Thus on the outside doors of all Christians they painted images of demons playing games and grimacing."[65]

In the record of the long debate with the Hagarites Cyril never mentions this group of Christian believers, but they must have been concerned about the outcome, since it would influence Hagarite behaviour towards them. Cyril presented the case for the Trinity and God as the Creator, addressed the issue of variety in Christian practices, and argued that God was the source of all wealth and all life,[66] but he never mentions Christian rituals such as baptism or the sacraments. This would mean that this debate would be part of the pre-evangelism and evangelism stages of mission work, in that, although Cyril answered all their questions, he did not press them to accept the Christian God, that is, to move into the conversion stage. So, if there were no clear converts to the Christian gospel message, did this mean that this mission was a failure? If the mission work needs to be evaluated by positive results in terms of baptism, then it was a failure. If however, the definition of mission includes the possibility of a negative reaction, not just a positive one, to the Christian gospel message, then it was a success. The negative reaction is seen in account of the Hagarites attempting to poison him.[67] Also, if mission is seen as people moving through the stages laid out in the first chapter, then the work of these brothers and their companions would be just one of the stages in the mission process. Therefore,

---

[63] *VC*, §6.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.

although there is no account that people believed and were baptised, the mission was still a success. Also, the group of Christian believers already settled in these areas would have continued the bottom-up spread of the gospel message.

There are a few passages that mention baptism, albeit not in great detail. One account takes place on Cyril's way to the Khazar's when he stopped to learn the Hebrew language and scriptures. At that place there was a Samaritan who came to Cyril to debate with him from the Samaritan scriptures. Cyril, who did not know the Samaritan language, borrowed the scriptures, locked himself in a room and prayed. He then started to read fluently, whereupon the Samaritan acknowledged Christ and "[h]is son was baptized immediately and he himself was baptized after him.".[68] Here the separation of the Samaritan and his son being baptized in sequence suggests that there was a process to the acceptance of baptism even though it is not clearly detailed in the *Life*.

Cyril then travelled on and met a Khazar commander who had surrounded a Christian city. Cyril intervened by approaching the commander to converse with him. This resulted in the troops standing down and the commander promising to be baptised.[69] There is a suggestion that labelling the city as Christian was the important point of the story, that is, Cyril acted to save his fellow believers, and in so doing most probably gained another member for the larger Christian community. In the debate with the Jews in Khazaria, Cyril argued that baptism replaced circumcision as the sign of a covenant between the believer and God.[70] This replacement of circumcision by baptism would be crucial for the Jews as the issue of circumcision dates back to the early church and the Jerusalem Council.[71] Another mention of baptism comes when Cyril addressed the believers in Phoullae to remind them of the gospel they had already accepted.[72] So although baptism is not often mentioned there were a variety of ways it was used: there was the baptism of new believers, baptism replacing circumcision as a sign of a covenant, and baptism used as a reminder of the

---

[68] Ibid, §8.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid, §10.
[71] For the Jerusalem Council see Acts 15. For just some of the passages on circumcision see Romans 2:25-3:1; 1Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 2:12, 5:6-11, 6:15; Philippians 3:3; and Colossians 2:11.
[72] *VC*, §12.

gospel content. Thus baptism was seen as significant even though it was not central in the *Life of Constantine.*

Baptism, again with a variety of usage, is also mentioned in the *Life of Methodius.* In Hadrian's letter to Kocel, Rastislav and Svatopluk, Hadrian declared that Methodius was an orthodox man consecrated to teach and to explain in Slavonic the Scriptures, the liturgy, and baptism according to the church offices.[73] This shows that baptism was seen as an important element of the orthodoxy of Rome and it was part of the correct practices that needed to be conveyed to believers. This could well have meant Hadrian was more concerned with the external rite of baptism than its internal significance, since both Rome and Constantinople agreed on the significance of the rite, but implemented the ritual differently.[74] The next occurrence comes after the Moravians expelled the German priests and then appealed to Rome for Methodius to be archbishop on the basis that "our fathers once received Baptism from Saint Peter."[75] Here baptism was being employed as a declaration of ecclesial allegiance to Rome in order to gain the archbishop they desired.

The last occurrence of the actual word baptism in the *Life of Methodius* is when the author gave examples of Methodius having the gift of prophecy. "A very powerful pagan prince settled on the Vistula and began mocking the Christians and doing evil. Communicating with him, Methodius said: 'My son, it would be better for you to be baptized of your own will in your own land, so that you will not have to be baptized against your will as a prisoner in a foreign land...'".[76] There are several elements of interest in this one short passage, the first being the mention of the Vistula and a pagan prince. This suggests that Methodius was in the Cracow area, that is, outside the Moravian territory.[77] The account also reveals that there were Christians within the area although no further information is given. And then the statements, or prophecy, centred on voluntary and forced baptism, that is, there was no room to doubt that the pagan prince would be baptised, but he did have a choice to either submit voluntarily or be forced to submit. Kantor suggests that this may

---

[73] *VM*, §8.
[74] See chapter 2 for a discussion on the variety of baptismal practices.
[75] *VM*, §10.
[76] Ibid, §11.
[77] Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs*, 169; '*Life of Methodius*', 136, note 62.

allude to the forced baptism of conquered peoples by the Franks. [78] Although the *Life of Methodius* is much shorter than the *Life of Constantine*, the underlying attitude, again, was that baptism was significant, which is seen in the variety of purposes recorded.

The actual word conversion is rarely used even though there were new believers baptised, and thus, some change had taken place. It is clear that the greater emphasis in the *Lives* is on teaching and training in orthodox doctrine,[79] and therefore baptism and conversion are secondary. This does not give these less significance in the minds of the hagiographers, but merely indicates that their purposes for composing the *Lives* centred less on these points than on orthodoxy. For this reason Cyril's debates are given in detail and the accounts of disciples left to carry on the work of promoting the Slavonic script and translations (as well as being engaged in evangelism) become significant.

There has been much scholarship done on the work of Cyril and Methodius in terms of the development of the Slavonic script and its significance.[80] Therefore, just a few words will be given to highlight the use of the vernacular in terms of mission.[81] Sanneh insightfully examines the place of language and the vernacular in religious assimilation, showing that vernacular usage increases the effective transmission of the gospel message.[82] The main issue in terms of the controversy over the use of the Slavonic liturgy was not the oral vernacular, nor the translation of various offices of the church, commentaries, and grammars or other works, nor even the translation of the sacramental services.[83] The main issue was the introduction of a new liturgical language, which would, in the ninth century context, elevate the Slavonic speaking

---

[78] '*Life of Methodius*', 136, footnote 62.

[79] Sullivan, 'Early Medieval Missionary Activity', 27, 31.

[80] See for example: Dvornik, 'Western and Eastern Traditions of Central Europe'; Dvornik, 'Byzantium, Rome, the Franks'; Dvornik, 'The Significance of the Missions of Cyril and Methodius'; Meissner, *Mediators between East and West*; Obolensky, 'Cyrille et Méthode'; Obolensky, 'St. Cyril and Methodius'; Poulík, *Great Moravia*; Igor Ševčenko, 'Three Paradoxes of the Cyrill-Methodian Mission', *Slavic Review* 23, no. 2 (1964); George C. Soulis, 'Legacy of Cyril and Methodius to the Southern Slavs', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 19 (1965); Spinka, 'Slavic Translations of the Scriptures'; A.P. Vlasto, 'The Mission of SS. Cyril and Methodius and Its Aftermath in Central Europe', in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith*, ed. G.J. Cuming (Cambridge, 1970).

[81] This is another aspect of mission that has been explored with the field of missiology and could be valuablely applied to historical sources of the early middle ages.

[82] Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 67-72.

[83] Lists of translated works in: *VC*, §16; *VM*, §15; Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs*, 105-18; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 423-25.

world to a position comparable to Rome and Constantinople.[84] This was the crux of the debate with the Tri-linguists, who asserted that only the three languages used in the inscription over Jesus' cross[85] were valid sacred languages. All other liturgical languages should be stopped in favour of Hebrew, Latin, or Greek, though in essence only two languages—Latin and Greek—were at the heart of the debate. One wonders whether the Slavonic liturgy would have been so controversial one hundred years earlier. However in the ninth century context, Rome desired to consolidate her jurisdictional claims over as large a territory as possible and the main means of doing this was the imposition of a Roman ecclesial structure, which meant the Latin liturgy.[86] This was one of the reasons why Moravia expelled Methodius' disciples, and replaced the Slavonic liturgy with the Latin one.[87] Byzantium was less opposed to vernacular liturgical languages, which is why the Slavonic liturgy survived in Bulgaria and then spread into Bohemia and the Rus'.[88] But the Tri-linguists were also in Constantinople, as this group saw Greek as the superior language and the vehicle for the superior Byzantine culture. This resulted in opposition to other vernacular liturgies, not just Slavonic.[89] The use of the Slavonic vernacular would open culturally appropriate ways of communication since culture and language are

[84] Obolensky, 'St. Cyril and Methodius', 9-10; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 428-33; Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 72; Soulis, 'Legacy of Cyril and Methodius to the Southern Slavs': 22, 23, 26; Spinka, 'Slavic Translations of the Scriptures': 420-21, 423; Anthony-Emil Tachiaos, 'The Cult of Saint Methodius in the Byzantino-Slavonic World' (paper presented at the International Congress on the Eleventh Century of the Death of St. Methodius Rome, Italy, 1988 1985), 137-38.

[85] John 19:20.

[86] Alexander, 'The Papacy', 270, 284; Barford, *The Early Slavs*, 71, 219; Dvornik, 'Western and Eastern Traditions of Central Europe': 466; Dvornik, *The Slavs*, 75; Dvornik, 'Byzantium, Rome, the Franks', 113; Smith, *Europe After Rome*, 39; Spinka, 'Slavic Translations of the Scriptures': 415, 427, 430.

[87] Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs*, 195; Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 114, 869-70; Josef Poulík, 'The Origins of Christianity in Slavonic Countries North of the Middle Danube Basin', *World Archaeology* 10, no. 2 (1978): 161; Poulík, *Great Moravia*, 31-32; Spinka, 'Slavic Translations of the Scriptures': 429.

[88] For example: Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 56; Dvornik, 'The Significance of the Missions of Cyril and Methodius': 209-10; Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 114; Obolensky, 'Cyrille et Méthode', 594-95, 598; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 88; Obolensky, 'The Empire and its Northern Neighbors', 502; Ostrogorsky, 'The Byzantine Background': 18; Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs*, 46.

[89] Obolensky, 'Cyrille et Méthode', 596, 599-601; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 355-56.

closely tied together.[90] This alone would assist the mission task of Cyril and Methodius.

In summary, since most of the area that Cyril and Methodius worked in already had a Christian presence, whether official or unofficial, the brothers were mainly involved in the consolidation and the passing on of the gospel message stages of mission. These involved the translation of scriptures, the liturgy and other ecclesial books, the training up of disciples to continue the passing on of knowledge and the core gospel message, and the correction of wrong beliefs and practices. This, however, did not mean that the brothers were not engaged in the pre-evangelism and evangelism stages of mission. On the contrary, the *Lives* portray the brothers as willing to take up any opportunity to engage those outside the believing Christian community by means of debate, teaching or even the miraculous.

3. Individual and Group

Cyril and Methodius were two very gifted brothers who worked closely together and thus their names are linked almost as though they were one person. Both were highly educated, with Cyril clearly the one with linguistic and debate skills, as seen in various accounts,[91] and in his ease and quickness in acquiring languages.[92] These skills were essential in his debates as he was able to address a variety of issues in a culturally appropriate way, as seen in the different approaches used for the Hagarites, the Khazars and the Jews.[93] In all of this he was portrayed as an individual debating with a group. He is also portrayed as being concerned with the individual. This is seen in the one-on-one debate with John over the iconoclastic controversy, as well as in the account of his time in Rome towards the end of his life: "And the Romans did not cease to come to him and question him. And if someone wished to

---

[90] See for example: Green, Language and History ; Kraft, Christianity in Culture; Luzbetak, The Church and Cultures, An Applied Anthropology for the Religious Worker; Luzbetak, The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology; Nida and Rayburn, Meaning Across Cultures; Andy Orchard, 'Latin and the Vernacular Languages: The Creation of a Bilingual Textual Culture', in After Rome, ed. T.M. Charles-Edwards (Oxford, 2003); Sanneh, Translating the Message, 214-15; Schmitz, 'The language of conversion'.

[91] *VC*, §4, 5, 6, 9-11, 16.

[92] Ibid, §4, 8, 14.

[93] This is discussed in greater detail in the syncretism and contextualization section below.

ask about these things, they received double and triple explanations to their questions from him, and would joyfully return to their homes again."[94]

Methodius was the brother with administrative skills, as seen in his appointment to a Slavic principality by the Byzantine government.[95] The hagiographer clearly had the larger Slavic mission in mind when writing this account, since he added that Methodius was well prepared for mission work having had this time to learn Slavic customs and culture.[96] Most likely the brothers had no problems with the Slavonic oral language as they grew up in a Slavonic speaking area, which Michael confirms, "you are both Thessalonians and all Thessalonians speak pure Slavic."[97] At this time, the differences in Slavonic dialects were slim and therefore, by learning one dialect the information could readily be translated to another dialect.[98] Although hagiography rarely informs about language and translators, there is a sense in these *Lives* that, with the brothers being fluent in several languages and Slavonic dialects, which were more similar than dissimilar, there was little need for translators.

Groups are mentioned in terms of students to be trained,[99] captives who were redeemed,[100] people who were baptised,[101] Christians who were under persecution,[102] associates in the mission work,[103] and groups inquiring about the Christian faith.[104] There are also groups in the list of mourners attending Methodius' burial, "[a]n innumerable crowd of people gathered—men and women, great and small, rich and poor, freemen and slaves, widows and orphans, foreigners and countrymen, the ailing and the healthy..."[105] Each of these groups represented a part of the greater society, so in essence all the people mourned.

---

[94] *VC*, §17.
[95] *VM*, §2.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid, §5.
[98] Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 155-56; Dittrich, *Christianity in Great-Moravia*, 5-6; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 187, 420; '*Life of Constantine*', 86-88, note 33.
[99] For example: *VC*, §15; *VM*, §5.
[100] For example: *VC*, §8, 11, 15.
[101] For example: Ibid.
[102] For example: Ibid, §4, 6.
[103] For example: Ibid, §8, 14; *VM*, §5.
[104] For example: *VC*, §6, 8, 10, 14.
[105] *VM*, §17.

The most significant groups that were established by Cyril and Methodius were the groups of disciples, since without these men their work would not have continued in the midst of unrest. Therefore these groups of disciples were essential in order to have the Slavonic translations reach the next generation of believers. In tension with these groups of disciples were the individual leaders, like Kocel, Rastislav, and Boris, who took an interest in the Slavonic script, albeit mostly from a political motivation. On the one hand, Cyril and Methodius needed the disciples to produce the materials to be passed on. On the other hand, the rulers, especially Boris, were essential in giving the support for the materials to be produced in order to be passed on. Again, neither the group nor the individual was more important, both were needed, and thus both had a role to play.

The work of mission itself is portrayed as receiving its impetus from individuals—Michael, Photius, Rastislav, Svatopluk, Kocel, and Hadrian, among others. Without these key figures the mission work of Cyril and Methodius might have been very different. It was these political figures who decided where and to whom the brothers should go. At the same time, there were groups that influenced the direction of the mission work such as the Hagarites, the Khazars, the Jews, the Moravians, as they interacted with the brothers and the Christian gospel message.

Therefore, in the *Lives* both the group and the individual were receivers of and transmitters of the gospel message. Cyril and Methodius, as individuals, are the central figures, but there were those who surrounded them with support. Groups, as discussed above, are portrayed as needing to be recalled to a pure gospel message, as needing explanations of the gospel message, as accepting the gospel message, as opposing the gospel message, and as rejecting the gospel message. Here is the full spectrum of the interaction of the gospel message with groups within cultures and with other religious persuasions. In the *Lives*, there were individuals, as well as groups, who influenced where and when the brothers travelled, and there were groups, as well as individuals, who were baptised. In all of this, although Cyril and Methodius worked mainly as consolidators preparing others for the task of passing on the core Christian gospel message along with other vernacular materials. There was also the element of the presentation of the core gospel message whenever the opportunity arose. In many of the areas mentioned in the *Lives*, there were already

groups of Christian believers though none are named as individuals. Thus the top-down approach of Cyril and Methodius was matched by the continued bottom-up spread of the Christian gospel message.

4. Syncretism or Contextualization

The issues of syncretism and contextualization can be seen in the *Lives* especially in the accounts of debates as well as the production and use of the Slavonic script. The use of scripture is prominent in Cyril's defence of the Christian gospel message in the different groups and cultures he encountered.[106] This meant that he was, firstly, knowledgeable in the Christian scriptures, and, secondly, also aware of which passages were appropriate to use in each situation. When debating the Hagarites he also used the Koran to bolster his argument[107] which meant that he had studied it as well. This pattern of debate is similar to that used by Paul as seen in the accounts of his missionary travels in Acts.[108] Thus, the hagiographer was setting Cyril as an example for others to follow in terms of contextualizing the Christian gospel message.[109] This also argues for the bottom-up spread of the gospel message as various non-Christian groups had enough awareness and knowledge of the Christian scriptures not only to ask questions but also for Cyril to be able to argue from them.

There is not space to take each account in the *Lives* and examine it in light of syncretism and contextualization, so only a few passages will be highlighted as examples of these issues. Having already mentioned the Hagarites in general, a few passages from chapter six of the *Life of Constantine* will be examined. When Cyril arrived among the Hagarites he was shown how they had painted demons on the doors of the Christians. They asked Cyril if he understood the meaning of this and Cyril used this to launch an apologetic: "I see demonic images and assume that Christians dwell within. However, the demons are unable to live with them and flee from them. But wherever this sign is not present on the outside, the demons dwell

---

[106] *VC*. Kantor helpfully lists Bible passages on the margins of his translation.

[107] Ibid, §6.

[108] For example see Acts 13, 14:11-18, 17:1-4, 16-34, 19:35-41.

[109] *VC*, §1. The hagiographer says, "Stated briefly, his *Vita* reveals what sort of man he was, so that hearing it, he who wishes—taking courage and rejecting idleness—can follow him."

with those inside."[110] Here Cyril was clearly making a distinction between the internal and the external, that is, although the Christians had demons painted externally on their doors, the demons could not rule the internal life, whereas the Hagarites externally had no signs painted, but in reality they were ruled by demons. Therefore, Cyril was starting from their question in order to challenge their understanding of the significance of the internal life and the external sign; therefore, it is argued, he was contextualizing part of the Christian message.

The Hagarites gathered the educated elite to debate with Cyril proposing that Islam gave them joy and unity whereas the Christians "in keeping Christ's law, you act and do whatever pleases each of you, one this, another that."[111] Behind the question was the confusion at the variety in Christian practices, which they saw as a negative, in contrast with the strict code of unified practice in Islam. Cyril answered by arguing, "Christ is not the way. Rather, He raises up what is difficult from beneath through faith and divine action. As the Creator of everything, He created man between the angels and beasts. For man is distinguished from beasts by his speech and intelligence, and from angels by his anger and lust. And he shall participate either in high or lower realms in accordance with the realm he approaches." In essence Cyril was arguing for free will under the sovereignty of God, while also attacking their understanding of a faith built on external practices. Here again Cyril starts from their point of reference and brings a challenge to their understanding by presenting part of the gospel message in such a way that it could be understood by the Hagarites in the context of their worldview.

The Hagarites then questioned the militancy of the Christian priesthood and Cyril counters with scripture:

> [I]f Christ is your God, why do you not do as He commands? For in the Gospels it is written: "Pray for your enemies, do good to them that hate you and persecute you, and unto them that smite you turn your cheek!" You are not like that but, on the contrary, you sharpen weapons against those who treat you in such a manner.
>
> In answer to this the Philosopher said: "If the law contains two precepts, who appears to fulfil the law? He who keeps one precept, or both?"
>
> They answered: "Obviously he who keeps both."

---

[110] Ibid, §6.
[111] Ibid.

> The Philosopher then said: "God said: 'Pray for them which despitefully use you.' And He also said: 'Greater love hath no man that this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' We do this for the sake of friends, lest their souls be captured together with their bodies.[112]

There are several points of interest in this conversation. First, the Hagarites, themselves quite militant as they moved into new territory, chose a Christian scriptural passage to quiz Cyril, which meant they knew the scriptures well enough to be able to form questions from them. Cyril's answer began with a question to the Muslims in accordance with their own understanding of scripture, then on the basis of their answer he formulated his response. This is, again, contextualization in action. Cyril starts from their understanding of how to view scripture and then gives an appropriate response. The question of Christians and war is an ongoing debate with no easy answer, but here it is not so much the answer that is important but the contextualization process used to convey the Christian mindset.

One clear example of the need to clarify syncretic thinking and practices is found in the account of Cyril entering the land of Phoullae and hearing about the people sacrificing at a great oak intertwined with a cherry tree, which was a location for traditional religious sacrifices.[113] He went to the spot to confront the people, not because they were sacrificing, but because they were claiming to be Christians while still adhering to belief in the power of the god of the tree. Cyril questioned why they would continue this practice, and the people answered, "We have not just begun to do this, but have taken it from our fathers. All our requests are fulfilled by it, most of all rainfall, and much else. How can we do that which none has dared to do? For if someone were to dare this, he will then see death, and furthermore, we will not see rainfall until the end."[114] This clarified the situation for Cyril as it is evident that the people were not instituting a new practice, but continuing a pre-Christian practice based on a belief that very practical answers, especially to rainfall, would come as a result of sacrificing at the tree. There was also the element of fear as no one had dared to stop the sacrifices or to go as far as cutting down the tree, as that would surely have had dire consequences.

Cyril's method of confrontation was not to be angry with the people, but to quote scripture and remind them of their baptismal vows and the correct

---

[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid, §12.
[114] Ibid.

understanding of the gospel message.[115] As a result the people were convinced to cut down the tree, the cause of their syncretic belief. Again, Cyril did not immediately attack the tree, but rather there was an elaborate ritual done in order to appease the people's worldview.

> And, thus, having persuaded them with sweet words, he commanded them to cut down and burn the tree. Their elder bowed, came forth and kissed the Holy Gospel, as did all the others. Upon receiving white candles from the Philosopher, they walked toward the tree, chanting. And seizing an axe, Constantine struck the tree thirty-three times. Then he commanded all to chop and uproot it and burn it. That very same night God sent rain and watered the earth. And with great rejoicing they praised God, and God rejoiced greatly over this.[116]

There is much to distil in terms of ritual and practice, but the emphasis here is on syncretism and contextualization, therefore the process is examined. Again, Cyril had started from where the people were in terms of understanding, which allowed them to clarify the uniqueness of the gospel message before they took any action. Once persuaded that the motivation to continue sacrificing according to traditional religious practices whilst claiming to believe in the uniqueness of the Christian gospel message was inconsistent, both Cyril and the people were ready to address the issue of whether the tree should remain standing or be cut down. In one sense, once the people had realized that traditional practices and new Christian practices could not abide together, it might not have been absolutely necessary to cut down the tree. However, if the tree was left standing, it was more than likely that at the next crisis the people would again sacrifice at the tree. Therefore, it can be argued, in order to keep the uniqueness of the gospel message clear in the people's minds, the tree was cut down. Even here Cyril went through an elaborate ceremony with the people to make sure that they were comfortable with the decision to cut down the tree and comfortable in their worldview in terms of appeasing the traditional gods. Only then could the tree be cut down. Thus, although in this example, the reason for the confrontation was the encroaching syncretism of traditional religious beliefs with the

---

[115] Ibid. "The Philosopher answered them: 'God speaks of you in the Scriptures. How can you deny Him? For Isaiah cried out in the name of the Lord, saying: "Behold, I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, and to Pul and Lud and Mosoch,...and to the isles afar off, that have not heard my name, and they shall declare my fame among the Gentiles." says the Lord Almighty....Brethren, know the God who created you. Behold the Gospel of God's New Covenant in which you too were baptized."

[116] Ibid.

new Christian ones, the handling of the situation was done in a culturally appropriate way for the group, that is, the approach was a contextualization of the message that the Christian God was now their only god.

The hagiographers of the *Lives* portray not just two well-educated, elite men but two missionaries sensitive to opportunities to share the Christian gospel message in culturally appropriate ways, even when battling the problem of syncretism, that is a dissolution of the unique core gospel message by traditional religious beliefs, worldviews, or practices.

5. Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum

The *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*[117] *is* one document of value to the historian when looking at mission work in the eastern Pannonia area during the eighth and ninth centuries. The *Conversio,* since it is intended to clarify Salzburg claims of authority over an area, tends to portray mission as a top-down ecclesial sponsored work. If this was the only document one had to study mission at this time then Methodius would be seen in a negative light. However the *Lives of Constantine* and *Methodius* help give a broader, more balanced picture of the complexity of mission work in eastern Pannonia at this time.

There are two references to Methodius in the *Conversio*, one in the twelfth chapter and one in the fourteenth chapter. In the twelfth chapter he is mentioned as a Greek who invented the Slavonic alphabet and then translated the Latin liturgy and other Roman teachings. This, it was argued, was having the effect of undermining the use of Latin in the liturgy and sacraments in the area, and therefore undermining the authority of Salzburg.[118] Methodius' presence in the area had caused so much

---

[117] For background to this document and insights into the complex situation in Bavaria and eastern Pannonia see Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 171-81. See also the sources found in the discussion in chapter one, especially Airlie, 'True Teachers and Pious Kings'.

[118] *Conversio*, §12. *Similiterque eo defuncto Rihpaldum constituit archipresbyterum. Qui multum tempus ibi demoratus est, exerecens suum potestative officium sicut illi licuit archiepiscopus suus, usque dum quidam Graecus Methodius nomine noviter inventis Sclavinis litteris linguam Latinam doctrinamque Romanam atque litteras auctorales Latinas philosophice superducens vilescere fecit cuncto populo ex parte missas et euangelia ecclesiasticumque officium illorum qui hoc Latine celebraverunt. Quod ille ferre non valens sedem repetivit Iuvavensem.* This is reinforced in the attached *Excerptum de Karentanis*, 1: *Post hunc interiecto aliquo tempore supervenit quidam Sclavus ab Hystrie et [D]almatie partibus nomine Methodius, qui adinvenit Sclavicas literas et Sclavice*

disruption, it was claimed, that the Salzburg appointed archbishop, Rihpald, could no longer stay in the area and had had to return to Salzburg.[119] The other mention of Methodius is at the end of the document, where Salzburg claims to have had jurisdiction over the east Pannonian people for the past 75 years. Again Methodius is named as the cause of a breakdown in the smooth running of the Salzburgensian administration in the area.[120] Here again, from a Salzburg perspective, Methodius is cast in the role of the intruder and destabiliser. However the actual circumstances were not straightforward. The first request for teachers from Rastislav showed that one of the issues for the Slavic people groups was that there were Italians, Greeks and Germans in the area all teaching slightly different things.[121] Therefore, not only was Salzburg making a claim for authority to appoint bishops, but also there was the complication of other workers from Rome, Byzantium, the Franks as well as other ecclesial centres in the same territory. This meant that Salzburg greatly desired to prove its claim of jurisdiction in order to have control over the area.

The *Life of Methodius* records that it was Kocel, the son of the Slavic Prince Pribina and ruler over Pannonia[122], who instigated the request to have Methodius appointed by Rome to the territory under his control. Hadrian responded by saying, "Not only to you alone but to all the Slavic lands do I sent him..".[123] He then penned a letter to Rastislav, Svatopluk and Kocel reminding them that they had requested a teacher from Emperor Michael and he had sent Methodius. This same Methodius was now being sent under the auspices of Rome to work in the same area as before. The reason for this switch from a Byzantine patronage to a Roman one was that Rome

---

celebravit divinum officium et vilescere fecit Latinum; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 175. Wood translates the main argument as "the Greek Methodius, like a philosopher, overriding the Latin tongue, Roman doctrine and Latin letters with newly invented Slav letters, made vile for the whole people, in part, the mass, Gospels, and the offices of their ecclesiastics, who celebrated these in Latin."

[119] As above footnote.

[120] *Conversio. A tempore igitur quo dato et praecepto domni Karoli imperatoris orientalis Pannoniae populus a Iuvavensibus regi coepit praesulibus usque in praesens tempus sunt anni 75, quod nullus episcopus alicubi veniens potestatem habuit ecclesiasticam in illo confinio nisi Salzburgenses rectores, neque presbyter aliunde veniens plus tribus mensibus ibi suum ausus est colere officium, priusquam suam dimissoriam episcopo praesentavit epistolam. Hoc enim ibi observatum fuit usque dum nova orta est doctrina Methodi philosophi.*

[121] *VM*, §5. These overlapping circles of interest can be seen on map 1, 2, and 4.

[122] '*Life of Methodius*', 92, footnote 100.

[123] *VM*, §8.

had claimed authority over Pannonia and Constantinople had acknowledged it.[124] This highlights the complexity of mission work in the eastern Pannonian region at this time. Not only were the leaders of various Slav groups intent on having translation work done in their territories, they were actually requesting the appointment of the same person, first under the auspices of Constantinople and now under Rome. As seen in the Slavonic liturgy-trilingual controversy one of the motives behind this request for vernacular materials was for the leaders to be able to establish a degree of independence from both Roman and Byzantine ecclesial centres.

The *Life of Methodius* goes onto record that Kocel requested Hadrian to consecrate Methodius as bishop of Pannonia.[125] This request was carried out but it met with stiff resistance from others already working in the area under Frankish or some other ecclesial authority. As a result of this disagreement over who had the authority to act as bishop in the area, Methodius was banished to Swabia.[126] It was only at the instigation of Pope John VIII, who was not pleased with some bishops who had acted on their own, that Methodius was freed and able to return to Moravia.[127]

From a missiological perspective there is much more to study and discover in the *Conversio*. There is the account of the reign of Virgil as bishop and abbot at Salzburg, which then connects with the study of Boniface. The above discussion shows the complexity of the situation with Methodius and the interplay between Rome, Constantinople and Salzburg for jurisdictional control. There is the impression of mission being a top-down movement closely allied to ecclesial structures, but then there are the accounts which reveal that as the Salzburgensian bishops and priests travelled around the area they discovered already established churches and congregations. Thus, there is more to mine from this document in terms of mission studies.

---

[124] Ibid. "You asked for a teacher not only from this Holy See, but also from the pious Emperor Michael. And he sent you the blessed Philosopher Constantine together with his brother before we managed to. But when they learned that your lands belonged to the Apostolic See, they did nought against canon, but came to us...we considered the matter and decided to send to your lands our son Methodius, an Orthodox man accomplished in mind,.."

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid, §9; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 175.

[127] Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 175.

6. Conclusion

Cyril and Methodius came from a different worldview and mindset than Boniface and Anskar, but the fundamental Christian gospel message was the same. The differences were in ecclesial structure and its place in the politics of the Franks and the Byzantines, in some liturgical practices and in language, but these did not create a barrier to Methodius taking up an episcopal appointment under Roman jurisdiction. Therefore, the theological basis for their mission work was similar enough at this time to see Byzantine and Rome in communication with one another. The significance of their work is usually evaluated from the linguistic perspective, that is the creation of a Slavonic script that moved that language from an oral one to one with a written language, which could then be used to translate and pass on scripture and other ecclesial works. From this base the Slavonic script changed from Glagolithic, or old Slavonic, to Cyrillic[128] freeing it from the church liturgy, and thus allowing it to spread into new people groups such as the Bohemians, Rus', and Romanians.

This examination, however, has not been a linguistic one, but a missiological one, as language is a component, but not the major part of mission work. The hagiographers of the *Lives* portrayed two brothers from the elite class sent by the Byzantine government, in consultation with the patriarch, which would lead to the conclusion that theirs was a heavily top-down oriented mission program. However, they were moving into areas that already had a clear Christian presence, whether through workers from the Franks, Irish or other Balkans areas, as well as the always-present bottom-up growth through slaves and merchants among others. This tension is seen in some accounts in the *Lives*, especially in the list of societal groups that attended Methodius' funeral. Thus there were political and ecclesial dimensions beyond just the tensions between Rome and Constantinople, and this is highlighted in the Roman episcopal appointment of Methodius to all the Slavic lands.

---

[128] This has not been discussed in detail, as it did not impact the actual mission work of Cyril and Methodius. For more information on this change see for example: Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 155-56; Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs*, 103; Obolensky, 'St. Cyril and Methodius', 2-3; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 420; Tachiaos, 'The Cult of Saint Methodius', 137.

From reading the *Lives*, the impression is of a much gentler method of evangelism and consolidation than that used by Boniface and Anskar, which Sullivan helpfully highlights in the difference between the eastern and western approach to the mission task.[129] The main methods used to spread the gospel message were persuasion and training up disciples. It was in this way that they consolidated their linguistic work, while also grasping every opportunity to share the gospel message.

There are several ways to evaluate their work: Dvornik emphasises the tasks of instruction, translation and education;[130] Obolensky sees their twofold task as religious and cultural, while at the same time political and diplomatic;[131] Meissner states that their task was not as missionaries but as teachers of the faithful.[132] Only Vlasto gives a broader summation of their work as teaching and training as well as conversion and baptism layered on the lens of reporting to Byzantium concerning the ecclesial situation in the lands they travelled through.[133] From a missiological perspective, Vlasto's evaluation contains the greatest number of components of the task of mission, that of evangelism, conversion, and the passing on of the message. Cyril and Methodius are also examples of how the message could be contextualized. Even though there is more to mine from the *Lives*, particularly from the various accounts of the debates held by Cyril, the work of mission is well portrayed in these sources.

---

[129] Sullivan, 'Early Medieval Missionary Activity'.

[130] Dvornik, 'The Significance of the Missions of Cyril and Methodius': 200; Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs*, 106.

[131] Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 188-89.

[132] Meissner, *Mediators between East and West*, 10.

[133] Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs*, 47.

PART 3

SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSION

Chapter 7. Summary, Discussion, and Conclusion

1. Introduction

Having examined the threads of mission, baptism and conversion in the context of history, through the lens of missiology, several observations and conclusions can be drawn. Examining these threads in the early church and the early middle ages laid the framework for the historical case studies in which the themes of the individual and the group, and syncretism and contextualisation have been highlighted. Throughout this study evidence has been presented for a greater acknowledgement of the influence of the bottom-up spread of the gospel message over against the top-down establishment of ecclesial structures. Since history is a continuous story, the greater the understanding of Christian mission in the early middle ages, the greater the understanding of the developments in missions in the second, and now the third, millennium. However, before coming to a final conclusion, a summary of the case studies will be provided and then some implications of this study will be drawn.

2. Saints' *Vitae* and Missiology

The three case studies of the *Vitae Bonifatii* and *Anskarii* and the *Lives of Constantine* and *Methodius* have led to some new insights into the mission work of Boniface, Anskar, and Cyril and Methodius. With the definition of mission as: "Christian mission is conveying the core message of Jesus' incarnation, death and resurrection in a way that allows for different cultural forms without affecting the core message and the values it holds, with the goal of having people, whether individuals or groups, respond to this message", and the task of mission being to see people progress through the stages of pre-evangelism, evangelism, conversion, consolidation, and the passing on the message, several observations can be made.

The first is that there is clear evidence of the bottom-up spread of the Christian gospel message. At times this was what remained, as seen in *Vita Anskarii*, and at times a strong, top-down, politically supported, ecclesial structure was established, as in the case of Boniface. But all four *Vitae* acknowledge that the areas that these men entered already had Christians living and working in them. Therefore, few of the areas Boniface, Anskar, and Cyril and Methodius entered had had no knowledge at all of the Christian gospel message. This shows the vitality of the bottom-up growth of the Christian gospel message.

Secondly, all four men should be classified as missionaries or missioners, as all were involved in the five stages of mission task, although each had different priorities, thus different components were given prominence. Boniface concentrated on consolidating and unifying the ecclesial structure by working closely with Merovingian rulers within Frankish controlled territory (while being directly under papal authority) but this did not mean he did not evangelise when he had the opportunity. Anskar worked in areas where there were groups of Christian believers already existing, though no strong ecclesial structure emerged from his work. Therefore, for Anskar the spread of the Christian gospel message was closely tied to the permission granted by the local leaders of the different areas, even though these leaders did not become Christians themselves. And Cyril and Methodius were heavily involved in consolidating and passing the message on since the development of a written Slavonic script allowed the scriptures and other materials to be translated into a vernacular language. Further, they travelled outside the understood imperial boundaries to preach and teach the Christian gospel message to people such as the Khazars, Hagarites and Hungarians. This meant that although they concentrated on translation, they were open to opportunities to evangelise as well.

Thirdly, the predominance of Boniface's concern with the baptismal ritual is in stark contrast to the *Vita Anskarii*, and the *Lives of Constantine*, and *Methodius*, where baptism is mentioned but it is not central to the accounts. This does not demonstrate that the Carolingian reforms were effective in creating uniformity of ritual practice (or for that matter ineffective); rather it shows that baptisms were not central in the minds of the hagiographers. Thus in the eighty or so years between Boniface's death (754) and the beginning of the work of the other three (c.830 to

840), the emphasis had moved from correct baptismal and sacramental practices to encouraging the bottom-up spread of the Christian gospel message, as seen in Anskar, and the training of others to continue the work, as developed by Cyril and Methodius.

Fourthly, mission work is never far from politics, whether secular or ecclesial, and this was especially true for these four men. Boniface was involved in the internal ecclesial politics, as he was commissioned to correct bishops, priests and other clergy, while being supported by Frankish rulers and local leaders. Anskar was involved in Frankish-Danish-Swedish politics during a time when the northeastern frontier area of the Carolingians was still unstable. Thus Rimbert's account portrays the difficulties of transmitting the Christian gospel message into areas were the local leaders were non-Christians. Anskar was also involved in ecclesial politics when the see of Hamburg was united with Bremen, and Adam's historical account of the archbishops of the see, had the promotion of this see as its purpose. Cyril and Methodius worked in areas that had a well-established Christian presence, but the local leaders were involved in negotiating among various powers to gain political and ecclesial independence to as great a degree as possible. They were also involved in the tensions between Rome, Constantinople, and the Franks for jurisdictional claims in some of the territories. Thus, in some ways, there was a greater complexity to the background of Cyril and Methodius than in the cases of Boniface and Anskar, as there was the added element of proximity to Rome and Constantinople.

Fifthly, each of the men were involved in syncretism and contextualization as they were all concerned to retain the uniqueness of the Christian gospel message in various circumstances. For Boniface, as seen in the *Vita* and correspondence, this was worked out in correct practice and understanding; for Anskar, as portrayed in Rimbert's *Vita*, this was worked out in examples of individuals standing for the Christian faith under pressure from non-believers; and for Cyril, as portrayed in the *Life of Constantine*, this was worked out in the debates with various non-believers. In the accounts of Cyril's discourses, there is a clear depiction of how the gospel message might be contextualized, that is transmitted in a culturally appropriate form and manner. There is more to be explored in the discourses in the *Life of Constantine*, but it is clear that Cyril had an ability to reason and persuade people

from all social ranks to seriously consider the uniqueness of the Christian gospel message.

Sixthly, in each of the *Vitae* the group and the individual are portrayed in balance and in tension. This had several layers, in that there were the physical and numerical differences between a group and an individual, but there was also the tension seen in *Vita Anskarii* of the internal (individual) versus the external (the group expectation). Each of the men is portrayed as having a clear understanding of scripture and two, Boniface and Anskar, with a clear individual impetus for becoming transmitters of the Christian gospel message. This is not to say that Cyril and Methodius did not have this as well, only that their hagiographers did not make it central to the *Lives*. This also highlights the different approaches Rome and Constantinople brought to the task of mission.[1] Therefore, although the accounts seem very dissimilar, in essence the aim of all four missionaries was the same, which was to faithfully transmit the Christian gospel message to those who had not heard, to those who had heard but not understood, and to those who needed reminding of its content. The approaches may have differed, but the essential gospel message was the same.

Therefore, although each of the hagiographers, named or unnamed, had their own agendas for writing the *Vitae*, all recorded the task of mission in and through the lives and work of their central figures. In all the *Vitae* there can be seen the various components of mission work as the hagiographers reveal the central concerns of the salvation of souls (conversion), the place of the sacraments (including baptism) in the worship of the Christian community, and the implicit acknowledgement that there was a balance between groups and individuals. Thus the mission task encompassed more than the establishment of a top-down ecclesial structure, or a mass movement of people into the Christian community by baptism, or even an individual's decision to believe. And while the authors did not sidestep the difficulties involved in the task of transmitting the Christian gospel message in various circumstances, these four men are portrayed as individuals engaged in, and part of, the larger flow of mission history.

---

[1] Sullivan, 'Early Medieval Missionary Activity'.

3. Implications

3.1. Why is this work important?

For the historian, using missiology as a lens to examine historical sources adds insights into how mission is to be understood. The history of Christian mission of any age can be a controversial subject, as there are many who view mission work purely from its spiritual aspect and become overanxious when history is applied to the invisible substance of faith. However, some historians err on the other side and try to divorce mission work from any spiritual understanding. Neither of these positions is tenable if one truly desires to investigate the meaning of mission. Both the visible results of successful mission (for example in ecclesial structures, codes of practices, concerns with social justice, rites and rituals), and the invisible results, (that is, the internal transforming faith), need to be acknowledged and applied to historical sources. One of the arguments of the thesis is to challenge the historian to see the mission process as more than evangelism, or the setting up of bishoprics, or the building of churches, or even the establishment of Christian law codes. Mission can be seen to have five stages. These being pre-evangelism, evangelism, conversion, consolidation, and the passing on of the core gospel message. The consolidation of a change of faith into law codes and other visible aspects of social organisation are just that, consolidation. Therefore these stages do not separate out what is usually termed 'Christianisation' from the broader understanding of mission as it is seen as part of the consolidation stage. This means that many of the uses of the word 'Christianisation' can be interpreted as consolidation and put within the framework of these stages. This could be helpful to the historian in developing a better-balanced and more realistic interpretation of the growth of the Christian faith in various areas.

Using the fairly new field of missiology as a lens to examine Christian mission in the eighth and ninth centuries has produced some perspectives that may be new to historiography. The fact that mission is not isolated from culture and worldview understanding helps to interpret some of the accounts of reactions to the gospel message. Several sets of seemingly opposite interpretations of mission work are highlighted as a means to gain new insights into Christian mission in the early

middle ages. These are the group and the individual, top-down and bottom-up mission work, and syncretism and contextualization. Striving to hold these in balance encourages an approach to the historical source that allows for a broader understanding of mission. For example, the tension between whether to interpret mission history as that of a group or an individual activity has implications for how missional work is examined and evaluated. It is argued that both the group and the individual are important in missional work and the response to the Christian gospel message. In many ways, choosing one over the other is unhelpful when examining historical sources.

The tension between whether to label a belief, worldview, or practice as syncretistic or contextualized also has implications for how history is interpreted. Although this is a contentious issue, with some missiologists and historians desiring to see everything as contextualization, it is helpful to think through what was the immovable, non-negotiable core of the Christian gospel message. Although often there are various dogmas or doctrines added on to this core, it has been argued that there is an identifiable core gospel message, that is, Jesus' life and work, his death and his resurrection. This then allows the historian, and missiologist, to identify what has been added to the core gospel message, which may lead to new insights into how the interpretation of mission has changed over time.

One other major tension is that between interpreting mission as something that takes place from the top-down or the bottom-up. If a top-down view is taken, then mission can be seen as something that mainly takes place before an official ecclesial structure is in place. This, however, then can lead to seeing the remainder of the mission process as separate from evangelism. Using the five stages of mission as set out in this paper allows the historian to understand mission as the ongoing task of the believing Christian community at both the group and the individual level. There is no separation between evangelism and Christianization; rather these are all part of one continuous process.

The two key aspects of mission that are examined are baptism, its uses and understanding, and conversion. It is possible to see baptism as an external evidence of faith and conversion as the internal evidence. However, even though these are examined separately, they are in fact closely entwined. This has made it possible to

see the variety of understandings of conversion and baptism, as well as the variety of baptismal rites. How the historical sources portray baptism and conversion can reveal certain concerns of the wider church at certain points in time. As for conversion, there is an ongoing need to continuously define what is meant by conversion. Once a definition is arrived at, new insights can be gleaned from the historical sources.

These are just a few of the insights gained through this study of Christian mission in the early middle ages through using the lens of missiology.

3.2. What can be done with these insights?

The insights of the role baptism and conversion have on the group and individual, how to view syncretism and contextualization, and the role of missiology in history can be extended into the tenth century and to the issues of language, geography, buildings, and ecclesial structures.

For example, the tension between the vernacular and the official languages of the Church, whether East or West, can be seen in the acceptance and spread of the gospel message within a group. Although the leader of a group may accept baptism as a sign of submission to a Christian political power, it is then the task of the missionary, usually a monk or a priest, to educate the individuals within the group as to the faith that they have accepted. Although the official Church languages were Latin, Greek and Hebrew the person on the ground would not have readily understood any of these; therefore, the vernacular played an important role in the consolidation of the faith.

The translation of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures into other languages has a long history going back to c. 285BC when the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, into what has become known as the Septuagint. This allowed the spread of the Jewish Scriptures to a wider audience, as Greek was more accessible within the Greek and Roman Empires than Hebrew. Jerome is credited with the watermark translation of the Scriptures into Latin, what has become known as the Vulgate (fourth). There have been translations of the New Testament into Syriac (c. 200), Gothic (fourth century), Armenian (fifth century), Ethiopic (sixth or seventh century). There were also translations of parts of the Scriptures into Anglo-Saxon and other languages throughout history. The early English translations date from the

fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Therefore the Slavonic translations fall into the larger framework of these translations.

Slavonic is highlighted in this thesis, as it was the focus of the work of the brothers Cyril and Methodius. The use of the Slavonic liturgy became a point of contention in the ninth century, as it was the first time the full liturgy was being promoted in a language other than Greek or Latin. This points to the missiological implications of language and translation of Scripture and liturgy—how they interact with one another within a culture or language group and how other linguistic groups view these changes. The tension between group and individual can be seen in educated leaders accepting a foreign language as part of the established Christianity but the individuals "on the ground" not understanding what they were believing or who they were worshipping unless the vernacular was being used. The issue of syncretism and contextualization can be seen not only in the Slavonic liturgical history but also in the acceptance of different kinds of music from various cultures as an expression of their culturally appropriate worship, which also has a linguistic base.

As for the role of geography and mission history these same themes and issues can be highlighted. The movement of a people group over a geographical area can reflect cultural preferences. For example, a group could be a land-based culture and thus they are looking to move into a territory and establish themselves, or they could be a nomadic culture, which would move with the seasons. This would influence the way mission work was done. Also the geographical boundaries of the episcopal sees in the early medieval period influenced mission work as well. While looking into the possibilities of further study in the area of geography and mission, especially in terms of episcopal sees, it became clear that there is no map that shows the boundaries of the sees over time. Most maps show the episcopal cities, but there are no maps that show the territory attached to these sees and how it changed over time. The actual area an episcopal see was responsible for would not only give information in terms of size, but also in terms of resources and movement. This is a study still to be done. Geography also gives insight into people movements in that well-established routes become the pilgrim routes but the question remains of whether this equates with the spread of the Christian message along these routes.

Although it is generally understood that people travelled in groups, most of the sources focus on the individual. Here would be a place to examine the tension between the group and the individual not only in the writing, but also in the interpretation of history. Tracing the movement of the gospel message in terms of geography over a certain historical period may well add insights into the issue of syncretism and contextualization.

In terms of buildings, the issues of syncretism and contextualization can be highlighted, especially in light of the letters of Gregory to Augustine and the letters of Bonifatian correspondence. There is the tension of whether established pagan centres of worship should be Christianized and whether this would lead to syncretism or contextualisation. The *Conversio* shows that buildings were used to claim territory, but does not give information about whether these buildings were established in response to existent congregations, or in expectation of a congregation coming into being; of whether they are built by the episcopal sees or by individual landholders (and whether this difference influenced mission work in the early middle ages). Other questions to address are whether the change in the use of church building between the early church and the early middle ages affected the way mission was done and whether the existence of a church in a certain location designates evidence of conversions, or merely a claim of jurisdictional control. These and other questions highlight how missiology may help in understanding some of the tensions surrounding the use and understanding of church buildings in the early medieval times.

Some questions to address in examining ecclesial structures are, whether these structures helped or hindered mission work; or whether the structure became more important than the actual preaching and teaching of the gospel, and whether this top-down approach was truly accompanied by individual understanding of the faith by those under the control of a bishop. There is the issue of the tensions stemming from an individual being given control over a people, such as Methodius to the Slavs or Anskar to the 'Peoples of the North', rather than a specific, territorially delineated, group of churches. Connected to this is whether this affected the way these individuals not only did mission work themselves, but also helped others to understand their task. Then there is the question of whether or not a strong

ecclesial structure would keep syncretism at bay or whether this is an issue no matter what structure is in place. Within the ecclesial organisations one wonders how the top-down structure interacted with the bottom-up growth hinted at in some of the sources.

These are just a few of the aspects of mission work that could benefit from an examination of the sources through the lens of missiology. In summary, therefore, the themes and tensions examined in this thesis can be valuably applied to other areas of study connected with the church and mission in the early middle ages.

4. Overall Conclusion

This thesis has argued against the blanket acceptance of the basic premise of a top-down approach to mission held both by the early medieval writers and many modern historians[2]: if the leaders of a group or territory held a certain religious persuasion, then all in the territory followed this lead. It is argued that the common interpretation of missional work as a top-down movement often fails to take into account the evidence for the bottom-up, or organic, spread of the Christian gospel message. This is not to say that the official accounts should be set aside, but rather

[2] For example: Wood, *The Missionary Life.* Wood (p.3) starts with the Matthean passage for mission work. However, as argued in this thesis, mission started before the New Testament (see chapter 1). Wood, by focusing on 'official' missionaries and mission work (p. 4, where Wood states that the main task of the missionary was to Christianise), does not balance this with the organic, spontaneous, bottom-up growth of mission. This is also seen in his work with Armstrong, Armstrong and Wood, *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals.* This title alone implies a division of mission into a formal social Christianised society over against the individual. However, as argued in this thesis, the mission process does not stop with a formal societal acceptance of Christianity (see Chapter 1, section 1.6); also Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung* Padberg (p. 31) argues that the success of a change of belief is recognizable only when a change takes place in the deeper-lying social strata, that is a social change or 'Christianisation'. Padberg (p. 32) also starts with the Matthean passage as the start of mission (see reference above in this footnote). When discussing baptism (p. 184) Padberg does bring in the individual but his overall thesis is concerned with top-down mission work as can be determined by his choosing Gregory the Great as his starting point of missional work in the early middle ages; see also, James Palmer, 'Saxon or European? Interpreting and Reinterpreting St Boniface', *History Compass* 4, no. 5 (2006): 859-60 and Palmer, 'The Frankish Cult of Martyrs', where the concern of how to interpret Boniface sets the pattern of top-down views of mission; in Palmer, 'The 'Vigorous Rule' of Bishop Lull', the emphasis in less on mission and more on how Lull and the cult of Boniface are connected (p. 249, 251, 254, 275-76); Palmer's reassessment of Anskar's work, Palmer, 'Rimbert's Vita Anskarii'), as a call for more missionaries (p. 255-56) and an evaluation of what is on the mission field (p. 248) does not go as far as seeing the tension between the group and the individual as a principal in mission work. In all of these works the approach is top-down when looking at mission figures.

these need to be balanced with the evidence for bottom-up growth. At times specific individuals are named, but many times the accounts only say that Christian slaves, merchants and others were gathering to worship the Christian God. It is important not to dismiss these accounts on the basis of scarcity and detail. Rather they are to be seen as highly significant as, for many of the people of the middle ages, it was not the official priest or bishop who brought the Christian gospel message to an area, but these unnamed folk. In many ways, it is argued, these people, whether in groups or as individuals, were the more influential in terms of mission work. Therefore, bringing these two understandings of mission into balance can result in new insights into the historical sources and their interpretation.

Along with gaining a better balance of mission work from both the top-down and bottom-up spread of the Christian gospel message, it is important to balance the role of the individual and the group in the decision-making process of rejection or acceptance of the gospel message. As argued throughout the thesis, this is not a proposal to see these two in an 'either/or' tension, but to see them in balance, acknowledging the role and the importance of both. The fact that traditional religious practices remained in place even after a group had declared itself Christian proves that the internalisation of the Christian gospel message needed to be done at the individual level. This is the strength of the bottom up spread of the gospel message, as it tended to focus on faith statements of individuals rather than on group-led decisions.

Without question, baptism was foundational to mission in the early middle ages. The issues surrounding this rite had to do with correct practice by the baptiser, which would then influence the significance of the rite for the receiver of the baptismal rite itself as well as the intended audience of the hagiographical accounts. There was a great variety of ritual practices as well as interpretation of the rite. The *Conventus*, then, becomes a significant document for the study of mission as it approaches the issue of baptism in the light of the Franks moving into Avar territory. The questions raised and answered give insights into how the Franks understood the role of baptism in mission work. Therefore, when reading the sources it is important to clarify what the authors intended to convey in terms of the significance of the baptismal rite.

The discipline of missiology has been presented as an aid to the modern historian to better balance the interpretation of the individual and the group and syncretism and contextualisation in early medieval history. The fact that missiology is centred on the transmission of the Christian gospel message should not make it unusable, especially in relation to the early middle ages, when the Church and secular power structures become intertwined. Thus, it is argued, missiology should be added to the growing interdisciplinary studies, such as ethno-historiography and socio-religious studies, that are available to historians and applied much more frequently to the study of early medieval history.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Primary Sources

Actes de la Conférence de Carthage en 411, vol 1, SC 194 (Lyon, 1972).

Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum, MGH, SRG 2* (Hanover, 1917).

———, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen,* trans. F. J. Tschan (Irvington, NY, 2002).

Adamnan, Saint, *Vita S. Columba, English & Latin. Adomnan's Life of Columba*, trans. A. O. a. A. Anderson, Marjorie Ogilvie (Oxford, 1991).

'Admonitio Generalis', in A. Boretius ed., *MGH, Capitularia regum Francorum* (Hanover, 1883), pp. 52-62.

Alcuin, *MGH Epistolae Karolini Aevi II* (Berlin, 1895).

———, 'Vita Willibrordi, archiepiscopi Traiectensis', *MGH SRM 7* (Hanover, 1920), pp. 81-141.

———, 'The Life of Saint Willibrord', in T. F. X. Noble and T. Head eds., *Soldiers of Christ* (London, 1995), pp. 189-211.

Allot, Stephen, *Alcuin of York (c. A.D. 732 to 804)--his life and letters* (York, 1974).

Ambrose, *Des Mystères, SC 25* (Lyon, 1950).

———, *La Pénitence, SC 179* (Lyon, 1971).

———, *De Officiis* (Turnhout, 2000).

Annales Bertiniani, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1891).

The Annals of St-Bertin, trans. J. T. Nelson (Manchester, 1991).

Annales Fuldenses, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1891).

The Annals of Fulda, trans. T. Reuter (Manchester, 1992).

Annales Regni Francorum, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1895).

Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories, trans. B. W. Scholz (Ann Arbor, 1970).

Augustine, 'Contra Duas Epistolas Pelangianorum Libri IV', in J. P. Migne ed., *PL, 44* (Paris, 1845), pp. 549-640.

———, 'De Gratia Christi et de Peccator Originali Libri II', in J. P. Migne ed., *PL, 44* (Paris, 1845), pp. 359-414.

———, 'De Peccatorum meritis et Remissione Libri III', in J. P. Migne ed., *PL, 44* (Paris, 1845), pp. 109-198.

———, 'Enchiridion', in J. P. Migne ed., *PL 40* (Paris, 1845), pp. 231-290.

———, 'Contra Litteras Petiliani Donatistae Cortensis Episcopi', in J. P. Migne ed., *PL 43* (Paris, 1846), pp. 245-388.

———, 'De Baptismo Contra Donatistas', in J. P. Migne ed., *PL 43* (Paris, 1846), pp. 107-244.

———, *De Civitate Dei, Libri XI-XXII, CC SL 47* (Turnhout, 1955).

———, *Confessionum Libri XIII, CC SL 27* (Turnhout, 1981).

———, *Confessions*, trans. H. Chadwick (Oxford, 1991).

———, *Confessions*, trans. A. C. Outler (London, 2002).

———, *Confessions*, trans. F. J. Sheed (Indianapolis, 2006).

———, *De Catechizandis Rudibus* (Cahors, 1991).

———, *The Trinity*, trans. E. Hill (NY, 1991).

———, *Epistolae I-LV, CC SL 31* (Turnhout, 2004).

———, *Epistolae LVI-C, CC SL 31A* (Turnhout, 2005).

———, *Epistles, PL 33* (Paris, 1845).

Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (Geneva, 1982).

Beatus of Liebana, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin* (Rome, 1985).

Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (Oxford, 1896).

———, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People with Bede's Letter to Egbert and Cuthbert's Letter on the Death of Bede*, trans. L. Sherley-Price and r. b. L. a. Farmer (London, 1968).

———, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People: The Greater Chronicle and Bede's Letter to Egbert*, trans. R. Collins and J. McClure (Oxford, 1994).

Bieler, ed., *Libri Epistolarum Sancti Patricii Episcopi* (Dublin, 1952).

Boniface, *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. E. Emerton (New York, 1973).

Boniface and M. Tangl, *Briefe des Bonifatius Willibalds Leben des Bonifatius, nebst einigen zeitgenossischen dokumenten* (Darmstadt, 1968).

Bruno of Querfurt, 'Passio sancti Adalberti episcopi et martyris', in G. H. Pertz ed., *MGH, SS 4* (Hanover, 1841), pp. 574-620.

Charlemagne, 'Capitulatio de Partibus Saxoniae', in A. Boretius ed., *MGH, Cap. 1* (Hanover, 1883), pp. 68-70.

———, 'An Exhortation to the Faithful', in P. E. Dutton ed., *Carolingian Civilization, A Reader* (Toronto, 1993), pp. 81-83.

———, 'Letter to Baugulf of Fulda', in B. Tierney and S. Painter eds., *The Middle Ages vol 1: Sources of Medieval History* (New York, 1998), pp. 113-114.

Chrysostom, 'Homilies on the Gospel According to St. John', in P. Schaff ed., *CF-NPN 1, Vol XIV* (Edinburgh, 1989), pp. 1-334.

Clement of Alexandria, 'The Instructor', in R. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson eds., *CF-AN, Vol II* (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, 1994), pp. 207-289.

'Conventus Episcoporum ad Ripas Danubii', in *MGH, Legum Sectio III Concilia, Tomi II Pars I* (Hanover, 1906), pp. 172-176.

Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum, MGH, Studien und Texte 15 (Hanover, 1997).

Losek, F., ed., *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum, MGH, Studien und Texte 15* (Hanover, 1997).

Wolfram, Herwig, *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum: Das Weißbuch der Salzburger Kirche über die erfolgreiche Mission in Karantanien und Pannonien*, (Vienna, 1979).

Cyprian, 'Epistles', in R. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson eds., *Church Fathers--The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, 1885, 1990), pp. 275-420.

———, *Epistolarium, CC SL 3C* (Turnholt, 1996).

Cyril of Jerusalem, 'Catechesis III, On Baptism', in L. P. McCauley ed., *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem* (Washington, DC, 1969).

Eigil, 'Vita Sturmi', in *MGH, Scriptores 2* (Hanover, 1829), pp. 365-377.

———, 'The Life of Saint Sturm', in T. F. X. Noble and T. Head eds., *Soldiers of Christ* (London, 1995), pp. 165-187.

Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni, MGH, SRG* (Hanover, 1911).

Einhard and Notker the Stammer, *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, trans. L. Thorpe (London, 1969).

Fredegar, *Fredegarii Chronicorum Liber Quartus cum Continuationibus*, trans. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (London, Edinburgh, 1960).

Gregory I, 'Epistola LXIV *Ad Augustinum Anglorum Episcopum*', in *PL 77* (Paris, 1849), pp. 1183-1200.

———, 'Letter of Pope Gregory I to Theodoric and Theodebert, kings of the Franks (July 596)', in P. Jaffé ed., *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum* (Lipsiae, 1885), p. 1432.

———, *MGH, Registrum Epistolarum, Vol I* (Berlin, 1891).

———, *MGH, Registrum Epistolarum, Vol 2* (Berlin, 1901).

———, *Registrum Epistularum, SC 370* (Lyon, 1991).

———, *Registrum Epistularum, SC 371* (Lyon, 1991).

Gregory of Nazianzus, 'Oration 40', in P. Schaff and H. Wace eds., *CF-NPN 2, Vol 7* (Edinburgh, 1894).

Gregory of Nyssa, *Discours Catéchétique, SC 453* (Lyon, 2000).

Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum, MGH, SRM 1* (Hanover, 1885).

———, *Decem Libri Historiarum, MGH, SRM 1* (Hanover, 1951).

———, *The History of the Franks*, trans. L. Thorpe (London, 1974).

Hillgarth, J.N., ed., *Christianity and Paganism, 350-750: The Conversion of Western Europe* (Philadelphia, 1986).

Hippolytus, *La Tradition Apostolique de Saint Hippolyte,* trans. B. Botte (Münster Westfalen, 1963).

The Holy Bible, New International Version (Nashville, 1986)

'Indiculus Superstitionum et Paganiarum', in A. Boretius ed., *MGH, Cap 1* (Hanover, 1883), pp. 222-223.

'A List of Superstitions and Pagan Practices', in P. E. Dutton ed., *Carolingian Civilization* (Peterborough, Ontario, 2004), p. no.1.

'Interrogationes et Responsiones Baptismales', in A. Boretius ed., *MGH, Cap 1, no. 107* (Hanover, 1883), p. 222.

Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses, CC, Series A* (Turnhout, 2006).

Isidore of Seville, 'De Ecclesiasticis Officiis', in C. Lawson ed., *CC, SL, 113* (Turnhout, 1989).

Kantor, Marvin, *Medieval Slavic Lives of Saints and Princes* (Ann Arbor, 1983).

Keefe, Susan A., *Water and the Word, Baptism and the Education of the Clergy in the Carolingian Empire, vol 2* (Notre Dame, IN, 2002).

King, P.D., *Charlemagne: Translated Sources* (Cumbria, 1987).

Kylie, Edward, *The English Correspondence of Saint Boniface* (London, 1911).

Leidradi, 'Liber de Sacramento Baptismi', in J. P. Migne ed., *PL, CII* (Paris, 1864), pp. 853-872.

Leo the Great, *Sermones et Epistolae, PL 54* (Paris, 1846).

———, 'The Letters and Sermons of Leo the Great', in P. Schaff ed., *CF-NPN 2, vol 12* (Edinburgh, 1889).

'Letter XCVIII, From the Synod of Chalcedon to Leo', in P. Schaff and H. Wace eds., *The Letters and Sermons of Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome* (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 72-73.

Mango, Cyril, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, MA, 1958).

Moguntinus, S. Bonifacius, 'Sermones', in J. P. Migne ed., *PL 89* (Paris, 1850), pp. 843-872.

Nicholas, 'Nicolaus ad Bulgarorum consulta respondet (866)', in *MGH, Epistolarum VI* (Berlin, 1925), pp. 568-600.

———, 'The Responses of Pope Nicholas I to the Questions of the Bulgars (Letter 99)', in E. Perels ed., *MGH, Ep VI* (Berlin, 1925), pp. 568-600.

Nithard, *Nithardi Historiarum Libri III, MGH, SRG 44* (Hanover/Leipzig, 1907).

———, 'Nithard's Histories', in *Carolingian Chronicles* (Ann Arbor, 1970), pp. 127-174.

Noble, Thomas F.X. and Thomas Head, eds., *Soldiers of Christ, Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1995).

Notker, *Gesta Karoli Magni Imperatoris, MGH, SRG 12* (Berlin, 1962).

Patrick, *Confessio and Epistola ad milites Corotici, The Book of Letters of Saint Patrick the Bishop* (Blackrock, 1994).

———, *The Confession of Saint Patrick and Letter to Coroticus*, trans. J. Skinner (N.Y., London, 1998).

———, *St. Patrick: his writings and Muirchu's Life*, trans. A. B. E. Hood (London, 1978).

Ratramnus, 'Ratramni Corbeiensis Epistolae', in E. Dümmler ed., *MGH, Epistolae Karolini Aevi IV* (Berlin, 1925), pp. 155-157.

———, 'Ratramnus and the Dog-headed Humans', in P. E. Dutton ed., *Carolingian Civilization* (Peterborough, Ontario, 2004), pp. 452-455.

Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii, MGH SRG* (Hanover, 1884, 1977).

Rimbert and Dutton, Paul Edward, 'Anskar and His Mission to Scandinavia', in *Carolingian Civilization* (Peterborough, Ontario, 2004).

Rimbert and Charles H. Robinson, *Anskar, the Apostle of the North, 801-865, translated from the Vita Anskarii by Bishop Rimbert His Fellow Missionary and Successor.* (London, 1921).

Rule of Benedict, trans. A. C. Meisel and M. L. del Mastro (New York, 1975).

Schaff, Philip, ed., *CF-NPN, 1, vol 5* (Edinburgh and Peabody, MA, 1887, 1995).

Severus, Sulpicius, 'The Life of Saint Martin of Tours', in T. F. X. Noble and T. Head eds., *Soldiers of Christ* (University Park, PA, 1995), pp. 1-29.

Stephanus, Eddius, 'Vita Wilfridi', in W. Levison ed., *MGH SRM VI* (Hanover and Liepzig, 1913), pp. 163-263.

———, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, trans. B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1927).

'Synodus Francofurtensis 794', in B. A. ed., *MGH, Capitularia regum Francorum* (Hanover, 1883), pp. 73-78.

Tertullian, 'On Baptism', in A. Roberts and J. Donaldson eds., *CF-AN Vol III* (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, 1886, 1993), pp. 669-680.

———, 'The Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas', in A. Roberts and J. Donaldson eds., *CF-ANF Vol III* (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, 1886, 1993).

———, 'Prescription Against Heretics', in R. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson eds., *CF-AN, Vol III* (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, 1993), pp. 243-268.

———, *Contra Marcion, Livre IV, SC 456* (Lyon, 2000).

Theodulf Bishop of Orléans, 'On Baptism', in *PL, 105* (Paris, 1851), pp. 223-40.

Vita Constantini, (Paris, 1968).

'The Life of Constantine', in M. Kantor ed., *Medieval Slavic Lives of Saints and Princes* (Ann Arbor, 1983), pp. 23-96.

Vita Methodii, (Paris, 1968).

'The Life of Methodius', in M. Kantor ed., *Medieval Slavic Lives of Saints and Princes* (Ann Arbor, 1983), pp. 97-138.

Whitaker, E. C., *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy* (London, 2003).

White, Stratoudaki Despina and Joseph R. Berrigan Jr., *The Patriarch and the Prince, The Letter of Patriarch Photios of Constantinople to Khan Boris of Bulgaria* (Brookline, MA, 1982).

Whitelock, Dorothy, ed., *English Historical Documents* (London, 1955).

Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii, MGH, SRG 57* (Hanover, 1905).

Willibald and C.H. Talbot, 'The Life of Saint Boniface', in T. F. X. Noble and T. Head eds., *Soldiers of Christ* (London, 1995), pp. 105-140.

2. Secondary Sources

Addison, James Thayer, *The Medieval Missionary: A Study of the Conversion of North Europe AD 500-1300* (London, 1936).

Airlie, Stuart, 'True Teachers and Pious Kings: Salzburg, Louis the German, and Christian Order', in R. Gameson and H. Leyser eds., *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 89-105.

Alexander, Paul, 'The Papacy, the Bavarian Clergy and the Slavonic Apostles', in *Religions and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1978), pp. 266-293.

Alföldi, Andrew, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome* trans. H. Mattingly (Oxford, 1969).

Allen, Roland, *Missionary Principles* (London, 1964).

Anderson, Robert T., 'Constraint and Freedom in Icelandic Conversions', in A. Buckser and S. D. Glazier eds., *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion* (New York and Oxford, 2003), pp. 123-131.

Angenendt, Arnold, 'The Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons Considered Against the Background of the Early Medieval Mission', *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo,* 32 (1986), pp. 747-792.

Ariarajah, Wesley, *The Bible and People of Other Faiths* (Geneva, 1985).

Armstrong, Guyda and Ian Wood, *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals* (Turnhout, 2000).

Armstrong, John H., ed., *Understanding Four views on Baptism* (Grand Rapids, 2007).

Arrignon, Jean-Pierre, *Les Églises slaves des origines au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1991).

Austin-Broos, Diane, 'The Anthropology of Conversion: An Introduction', in A. Buckser and S. D. Glazier eds., *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion* (New York and Oxford, 2003), pp. 1-12.

Baker, L.G.D., 'The shadow of the Christian Symbol', in, *Studies in Church History: The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 17-28.

Baldovin, John F., 'Hippolytus and the Apostolic Tradition: Recent Research and Commentary', *Theological Studies,* 64 (2003), pp. 520-542.

Barford, P.M., *The Early Slavs* (Ithaca, NY, 2001).

Bauckham, Richard, *Bible and Mission, Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Carlisle, 2003).

Beaver, R. Pierce, 'The History of Mission Strategy', *Southwestern Journal of Theology,* XII (1970), pp. 7-28.

Bevans, Stephen B and Roger P Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY, 2004).

Beyerhaus, Peter, 'Possessio and Syncretism in Biblical Perspective', in T. Yamamori and C. R. Taber eds., *Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity* (Pasadena, CA, 1975), pp. 88-106.

Bieler, Ludwig, 'Ancient Hagiography and the Lives of St Patrick', in R. Sharpe ed., *Studies on the Life and Legend of St Patrick* (London, 1986), pp. 650-655.

Birkeli, Fridjov, 'The Earliest Missionary Activities from England to Norway', *Nottingham Medieval Studies,* 15 (1971), pp. 27-37.

Bitel, Lisa M., *Isle of the Saints: Monastic Settlement and Christian Community in Early Ireland* (Cork; Cornell University, 1990).

Boniface, *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. E. Emerton (New York, 1973).

Boniface and M. Tangl, *Briefe des Bonifatius Willibalds Leben des Bonifatius, nebst einigen zeitgenossischen dokumenten* (Darmstadt, 1968).

Bosch, David J., 'The Structure of Mission: An Exposition of Matthew 28:16-20', in W. R. Shenk ed., *Exploring Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, 1983), pp. 218-248.

———, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York, 1991).

Boyd, Gregory A., 'God at War', in R. Winter and S. Hawthorne eds., *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader* (Pasadena, CA, 1999), pp. 78-89.

Brookes, Ian, ed., *The Chambers Dictionary* (Edinburgh, 2003).

Brown, Peter, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981).

———, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200-1000* (Malden, Mass; Oxford, 2003).

Browning, Robert, *Byzantium and Bulgaria, A comparative study across the early medieval frontier* (London, 1975).

Bruce, F.F., *The Spreading Flame: The Rise and Progress of Christianity from its First Beginnings to the Conversion of the English* (Exeter, 1958).

———, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, 1988).

Buc, Philippe, 'Political Rituals and Political Imagination in the Medieval West from the Fourth Century to the Eleventh', in P. Linehan and J. T. Nelson eds., *The Medieval World* (London, 2003), pp. 189-213.

Carey, John, 'Ireland and the Antipodes: The Heterodoxy of Virgil of Salzburg', *Speculum,* 64 (1989), pp. 1-10.

Carrington, Philip, *The Early Christian Church* (Cambridge, 1957).

Carroll, Christopher, 'The bishoprics of Saxony in the first century after Christianization', *Early Medieval Europe,* 8 (1999), pp. 219-246.

Carver, Martin, ed., *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe AD 300-1300* (York, 2003).

Cerrato, John, *Hippolytus Between East and West: The Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus* (Oxford, 2002).

Charles-Edwards, T.M., 'Palladius, Prosper, and Leo the Great: mission and primatial authority', in D. Dumville ed., *Saint Patrick, AD 493-1993* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1993), pp. 1-12.

———, 'Conversion to Christianity', in T. M. Charles-Edwards ed., *After Rome* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 103-139.

Coupland, Simon, 'The Rod of God's Wrath or the People of God's Wrath? The Carolingian Theology of the Viking Invasions.', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 42 (1991), pp. 535-554.

Cramer, Peter, *Baptism and Change in the Early Middle Ages c. 200- c. 1150* (Cambridge, 1993).

Curta, Florin, *The Making of the Slavs* (Cambridge, 2001).

Cusack, Carole M., *The Rise of Christianity in Northern Europe, 300-1000* (London and New York, 1998).

De Jong, Mayke, 'Carolingian monasticism: the power of prayer', in R. McKitterick ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol II* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 622-653.

Delehaye, Hippolyte, *The Legends of the Saints* trans. D. Attwater (Dublin, 1998).

Dittrich, Zdenek R., *Christianity in Great-Moravia* (Groningen, 1962).

Dowsett, Rose, *The Great Commission* (London, 2001).

Dutton, Paul Edward, 'Anskar and His Mission to Scandinavia', in *Carolingian Civilization* (Peterborough, Ontario, 2004).

Dvornik, Francis, 'Western and Eastern Traditions of Central Europe', *The Review of Politics,* 9 (1947), pp. 463-481.

———, 'The Mediaeval Cultural Heritage of the Mid-European Area', *The Review of Politics,* 18 (1956), pp. 487-507.

———, *The Slavs: Their Early History and Civilization* (Boston, 1956).

———, 'Byzantium, Rome, the Franks, and the Christianization of the Southern Slavs', in O. Helmann, Stasiewski, Zagiba ed., *Cyrillo-Methodiana: Zur Frühgeschichte des Christentums Bei den Slaven 863-1963* (Köln, 1964), pp. 85-125.

———, 'The Significance of the Missions of Cyril and Methodius', *Slavic Review,* 23 (1964), pp. 195-211.

———, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs: SS. Constantine-Cyril and Methodius* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1970).

Eberts, Harry W, 'Plurality and Ethnicity in Early Christian Mission', *Sociology of Religion,* 58 (1997), pp. 305-321.

Egmond, Wolfert Van, 'Converting Monks: Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Frisia and Saxony', in G. Armstrong and I. Wood eds., *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals* (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 37-45.

Elm, Susanna, 'Inscriptions and Conversions: Gregory of Nazianzus on Baptism (Or. 38-40)', in K. Mills and A. Grafton eds., *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Rochester, 2003), pp. 1-35.

Ericsson, K., 'The Earliest Conversion of the Rus' to Christianity', *The Slavonic and East European Review,* 11 (1966), pp. 98-121.

Escobar, J. Samuel, 'Mission Studies Past, Present, and Future', *Missiology,* 24 (1996), pp. 3-29.

Farmer, D. H., 'St Gregory and St Augustine', in D. H. Farmer ed., *Benedict's Disciples* (Leominster, 1980), pp. 41-51.

Fine, John V. A., *The Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century* (Ann Arbor, 1983).

Firth, Raymond, 'Conversion from Paganism to Christianity', *RAIN,* 14 (1976), pp. 3-7.

Fisher, J.D.C., *Christian Initiation, Baptism in the Medieval West: A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation* (London, 1965).

Fleming, Kenneth, *Asian Christian Theologians in Dialogue with Buddhism* (Oxford and New York, 2002).

Flemming, Dean, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Leicester, 2005).

Fletcher, Richard, *The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity* (Berkeley, 1997).

Fouracre, Paul, 'Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography', *Past and Present* (1990), pp. 3-38.

———, *The Age of Charles Martel* (Harlow, 2000).

Fouracre, Paul and Richard Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography 640-720* (Manchester, 1996).

Fox, Robin Lane, *Pagans and Christians* (London, 1986).

Gameson, Richard, 'Augustine of Canterbury: Context and Achievement', in R. Gameson ed., *St Augustine and the Conversion of England* (Stroud, 1999), pp. 1-40.

Ganz, D, 'Mass Production of Early Medieval Manuscripts', in R. Gameson ed., *The Early Medieval Bible* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 53-62.

Geary, Patrick J, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London, 1994).

Gibson, Margaret, 'Carolingian Glossed Psalters', in R. Gameson ed., *The Early Medieval Bible* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 78-100.

Goffart, Walter, 'The Fredegar Problem Reconsidered', *Speculum,* 38 (Apr., 1963), pp. 206-241.

Golden, Peter B., Haggai Ben-Shammai and András Roná-Tas, *The World of the Khazars* (Leiden, 2007).

Gottwald, Norman K. and Richard A. Horsley, eds., *The Bible and Liberation, Political and Social Hernemeutics* (Maryknoll, NY, 1993).

Green, Dennis H., *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge, 1998).

Green, Dennis H. and Frank Siegmund, eds., *The Continental Saxons from the Migration Period to the Tenth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective* (Suffolk, 2003).

Green, Michael, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Guildford, Surrey, 1970).

Hassing, Pier, 'Religious Change in Eleventh Century Norway', *Missiology,* 3 (1975), pp. 469-485.

Hawthorne, Steven, 'Mandate on the Mountain', in R. Winter and S. Hawthorne eds., *Perspectives* (Pasadena, CA, 1999), pp. 108-112.

Hayward, Douglas, 'Contextualizing the Gospel among the Saxons: An example from the ninth century of the cultural adaptation of the gospel as found in *The Heliand*', *Missiology,* 22 (1994), pp. 439-453.

Head, Thomas, 'Introduction', in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology* (London and New York, 2000), pp. xiii-xxvi.

———, 'Great Lessons from Bad History', *Christianity History,* 20 (2001), pp. 22-26.

Hebrew/Aramaic to English Dictionary and Index to the NIV Old Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI, 1999).

Hefner, Robert L., ed., *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation* (Oxford, 1993).

Heideman, Eugene S., 'Syncretism, Contextualization, Orthodoxy, and Heresy', *Missiology,* XXV (1997), pp. 37-49.

Hen, Yitzhak, 'Charlemagne's Jihad', *Viator, Medieval and Renaissance Studies,* 37 (2006), pp. 33-51.

Herrin, Judith, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton, 1987).

Hesselgrave, David J, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1978).

———, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Mission* (Grand Rapids, 2005).

Hesselgrave, David J and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (Leicester, 1989).

Hiebert, Paul G., *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, 1994).

———, 'The Flaw of the Excluded Middle', in R. Winter and S. Hawthorne eds., *Perspectives* (Pasadena, 1999), pp. 414-421.

Higham, N. J., *The Convert Kings: Power and Religious Affiliation in Early Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester and New York, 1997).

Hines, J., 'The Conversion of the Old Saxons', in D. H. Green and F. Siegmund eds., *The Continental Saxons from the Migration Period to the Tenth Century* (Suffolk, 2003), pp. 299-314.

Hippolytus, *La Tradition Apostolique de Saint Hippolyte*, trans. B. Botte (Münster Westfalen, 1963).

Hoekendijk, J.C., 'A Perspective on Indonesia', in T. Yamamori and C. R. Taber eds., *Christopaganism or Indegenous Christianity* (Pasadena, CA, 1975), pp. 39-54.

Jochens, Jenny, 'Late and Peaceful: Iceland's Conversion Through Arbitration in 1000', *Speculum,* 74 (1999), pp. 621-655.

Johnson, Maxwell E., *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville, MN, 1999).

Kaiser, Walter C., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a light to the nations* (Grand Rapids, 2000).

Karokaran, Anto, 'The Relationship of Mission, Conversion and Baptism', *International Review of Mission,* 72 (1983), pp. 344-364.

Keefe, Susan A., *Water and the Word, Baptism and the Education of the Clergy in the Carolingian Empire, 1* (Notre Dame, IN, 2002).

Keep, David, *St. Boniface and His World* (Exeter, 1979).

———, 'Cultural Conflicts in the Missions of Saint Boniface', in S. Mews ed., *Religion and National Identity* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 47-58.

Knitter, Paul F., *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions* (London, 1985).

———, *Introducing Theologies of Religions* (Maryknoll, NY, 2002).

Kraft, Charles H., *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY, 1994).

———, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY, 1996).

———, 'Three Encounters in Christian Witness', in R. Winter and S. Hawthorne eds., *Perspectives* (Pasadena, CA, 1999), pp. 408-413.

Kroeger, James H., 'Naming the Conversion We Seek', *Missiology,* 24 (1996), pp. 369-381.

Kuznetsova, Anna, 'Signs of Conversion in *Vitae sanctorum*', in G. Armstrong and I. Wood eds., *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals* (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 125-132.

LaGrand, James, 'The Great Commission', in, *The Earliest Christian Mission to 'All Nations', In the Light of Matthew's Gospel* (Atlanta, 1995), pp. 235-247.

Larson, Donald N., 'The Viable Missionary: Learner, Trader, Story Teller', in R. Winter and S. Hawthorne eds., *Perspectives* (Pasadena, 1999), pp. 438-443.

Latourette, Kenneth Scott, *The Thousand Years of Uncertainty AD 500- AD 1500* (New York, 1938, 1966).

———, *The First Five Centuries* (London, 1945).

———, *A History of Christianity I: to A.D. 1500* (New York, 1953, 1975).

Lee, Moonjang, 'Experience of Religious Plurality in Korea: It's Theological Implications', *International Review of Mission,* 88 (1999), pp. 399-413.

Leopold, Anita M and Jensen Jeppe S, eds., *Syncretism in Religion, A Reader* (London, 2004).

Levison, Wilhelm, 'Boniface: German Mission and Reform of the Frankish Church', in *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 70-93.

———, 'The Frisian Mission', in *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 45-69.

Lewis, Charlton T. and Charles Short, eds., *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1879, 1966).

Louth, Andrew, *Greek East and Latin West: The Church AD 681-1071* (Crestwood, NY, 2007).

Lund, Niels, 'Scandinavia, c. 700-1066', in R. McKitterick ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History II c. 700- c. 900* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 202-227.

Luzbetak, Louis J., 'Toward an Applied Missionary Anthropology', *Anthropological Quarterly,* 34 (1961), pp. 165-176.

———, *The Church and Cultures, An Applied Anthropology for the Religious Worker* (Pasadena, 1977).

———, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (Maryknoll, NY, 1989).

MacMullen, Ramsay, 'Two Types of Conversion in Early Christianity', *Vigiliae Christianane,* 37 (1983), pp. 174-192.

———, *Christianizing the Roman Empire A.D. 100-400* (New Haven; London, 1984).

———, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven, 1997).

Macquarrie, Alan, *The Saints of Scotland: Essays in Scottish Church History AD 450-1093* (Edinburgh, 1997).

Maier III, Walter A., 'The Healing of Naaman in Missiological Perspective', *Concordia Theological Quarterly,* 61 (1997), pp. 177-96.

Malony, H. Newton and Samuel Southard, eds., *Handbook of Religious Conversion* (Birmingham, AL, 1992).

Mango, Cyril, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, MA, 1958).

Markus, R.A., 'Gregory the Great and a Papal Missionary Strategy', in G. J. Cuming ed., *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 29-38.

———, 'Gregory the Great's Europe', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th Series,* 31 (1981), pp. 21-36.

———, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990).

———, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge, 1997).

———, 'Augustine and Gregory the Great', in R. Gameson ed., *St Augustine and the Conversion of England* (Stroud, 1999), pp. 41-49.

Maroney, Eric, *Religious syncretism* (London, 2006).

Marsden, R., 'The Old Testament in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in R. Gameson ed., *The Early Medieval Bible* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 101-124.

Maurier, Henri, *The Other Covenant: A Theology of Paganism*, trans. C. McGrath (New York and London, 1968).

Mayr-Harting, Henry, *Two Conversions to Christianity: The Bulgarians and the Anglo-Saxons* (Reading, 1994).

———, 'Charlemagne, the Saxons, and the Imperial Coronation of 800', *The English Historical Review,* 111 (1996), pp. 1113-1133.

McCormick, Michael, 'Byzantium and the West, 700-900', in R. McKitterick ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History II c.700-c.900* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 349-380.

McCulloch, Robert, 'Gregorian Adaptation in the Augustinian Mission to England', *Missiology,* VI (1978), pp. 323-334.

McGavran, Donald A, 'The Biblical Basis From Which Adjustments are Made', in T. Yamamori and C. R. Taber eds., *Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity* (Pasadena, CA, 1975), pp. 22-38.

McGavran, Donald A and Peter C Wagner, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, 1990).

McKitterick, R., *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms, 789-895* (London, 1977).

———, 'Carolingian Bible production', in R. Gameson ed., *The Early Medieval Bible* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 63-77.

———, 'Political Ideology in Carolingian Historiography', in Y. Hen and M. Innes eds., *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 162-174.

———, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004).

McKoen, P. R., 'Archbishop Ebbo of Rheims (816-835): A Study in the Carolingian Empire and Church', *Church History,* 43 (1974), pp. 437-447.

McNally, Robert E., *The Bible in the Early Middle Ages* (Atlanta, Ga., 1959, reprint 1986).

McNamara, Kevin, "Go Make Disciples'- The Implications for a Believing Community', in *The Church is Mission* (London, 1969), pp. 24-39.

Meissner, Erhard, *Mediators between East and West, Reflections on the Cyril and Methodian Idea*, trans. F. Fergus (Cleveland, Ohio, 1990).

Meslin, Michel, 'Baptism', in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (NY, 1987), pp. 59-62.

Mills, Kenneth and Anthony Grafton, eds., *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Seeing and Believing* (Rochester, 2003).

Moravcsik, Gyula, 'Byzantine Christianity and the Magyars in the Period of Their Migration', *American Slavic and East European Review,* 5 (1946), pp. 29-45.

Nedungatt, George and Michael Featherston, eds., *Council in Trullo Revisited* (Rome, 1995).

Neill, Stephen, *A History of Christian Missions* (Middlesex, 1964).

Nelson, J. T., 'Presidential Address: England and the Continent in the Ninth Century: 1, Ends and Beginnings', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 12 (2002).

Nida, Eugene, *Message and Mission* (Pasadena, 1990).

Nida, Eugene and Willam D Rayburn, *Meaning Across Cultures* (New York, 1981).

Niebuhr, H. Richard, *Christ and Culture* (New York, 1951).

Nikolov, Stephen, 'The Pagan Bulgars and Byzantine Christianity in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries', *Journal of Historical Sociology,* 13 (2000), pp. 325-364.

Nock, A.D., *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford, 1933).

Noonan, Thomas S., 'Why Orthodoxy Did Not Spread among the Bulgars of the Crimea during the Early Medieval Era: An Early Byzantine Conversion Model', in G. Armstrong and I. Wood eds., *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals* (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 15-24.

Norris, Rebecca Sachs, 'Converting to What? Embodied Culture and the Adoption of New Beliefs', in A. Buckser and S. D. Glazier eds., *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion* (New York and Oxford, 2003), pp. 171-81.

Nürnberger, Klaus, 'God's Mission in Practice: The Struggle for Liberation, Dignity and Justice in African Societies', *International Review of Mission,* XCII (2003), pp. 498-520.

Ó Riain, Pádraig, 'Towards a Methodology in Early Irish Hagiography', *Peritia,* 1 (1982), pp. 146-159.

Obolensky, Dimitri, 'Cyrille et Méthode et la Christianisation des Slaves', in *Byzantium and the Slavs* (London, 1971), pp. 587-609.

———, 'St. Cyril and Methodius, Apostles of the Slavs', in *Byzantine and the Slavs* (London, 1971), pp. 1-11.

———, *The Byzantine Commonwealth, Eastern Europe, 500-1453* (London, 1971).

———, 'The Empire and Its Northern Neighbors, 565-1018', in *Byzantium and the Slavs* (London, 1971).

Oden, Thomas C., *Requiem: A Lament in Three Movements* (Nashville, 1995).

Okey, Robin, 'Central Europe/Eastern Europe: Behind the Definitions', *Past and Present* (1992), pp. 102-133.

Orchard, Andy, 'Old Source, New Resources: Finding the Right Formula for Boniface', *Anglo-Saxon England,* 30 (2001), pp. 15-38.

———, 'Latin and the Vernacular Languages: The Creation of a Bilingual Textual Culture', in T. M. Charles-Edwards ed., *After Rome* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 191-219.

Ostrogorsky, George, 'The Byzantine Background of the Moravian Mission', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* 19 (1965), pp. 1-18.

Padberg, Lutz von, *Mission und Christianisierung, Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken im 7 und 8 Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1995).

———, *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen: Theorie und Praxis der Missionspredigt im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 2003).

Palmer, James, 'Defining paganism in the Carolingian world', *Early Medieval Europe,* 15 (2007), pp. 402-425.

———, 'Rimbert's Vita Anskarii and Scandinavian Mission in the Ninth Century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 55 (2004), pp. 235-256.

———,'Saxon or European? Interpreting and Reinterpreting St Boniface', *History Compass,* 4 (2006), pp. 852-869.

———, 'The Frankish Cult of Martyrs and the Case of the Two Saints Boniface', *Revue Bénédictine,* 114 (2004), pp. 326-348.

———, 'The 'Vigorous Rule' of Bishop Lull: Between Bonifatian Mission and Carolingian Church Control', *Early Medieval Europe,* 13 (2005), pp. 249-276.

———, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690-900* (Turnhout, 2009).

Peace, Richard, *Conversion in the New Testament: Paul and the Twelve* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999).

———, 'Conflicting Understandings of Christian Conversion: A Missiological Challenge', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* 28 (2004), pp. 8-14.

Pearse, Meic, 'Soundly Converted?', in A. Billington, T. Lane and M. Turner eds., *Message and Meaning, Essays Presented to Peter Cotterell* (Carlisle, UK, 1995), pp. 230-241.

Peskett, Howard and Vinoth Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission* (Nottingham, 2003).

Phan, Peter C., *In Our Own Tongues, Perspectives from Asia on Mission and Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY, 2003).

Poitras, Edward W., 'St. Augustine and the *Missio Dei*: A Reflection on Mission at the Close of the Twentieth Century', *Mission Studies,* XVI-2 (1999), pp. 28-46.

Poulík, Josef, 'The Origins of Christianity in Slavonic Countries North of the Middle Danube Basin', *World Archaeology,* 10 (1978), pp. 158-171.

———, *Great Moravia and the Mission of Cyril and Methodius* (Prague, 1985).

Pui-lan, Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (London, 2005).

Ramachandra, Vinoth, *The Recovery of Mission, Beyond the Pluralist Paradigm* (Devon, 1996).

Rambo, Lewis R. 'Conversion', in M. Eliade ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York, 1987), pp. 73-79.

———, 'Anthropology and the Study of Conversion', in A. Buckser and S. D. Glazier eds., *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion* (New York and Oxford, 2003), pp. 211-22.

Reuter, Timothy, 'Saint Boniface and Europe', in *The Greatest Englishman* (Exeter, 1980), pp. 71-94.

———, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages c. 800-1056* (New York, 1991).

———, ed., *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on St. Boniface and the Church at Crediton* (Exeter, 1980).

Russell, James C., *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation* (New York, Oxford, 1994).

Samartha, S. J., *One Christ--Many Religions: Toward a Revised Christology* (Maryknoll, NY, 1991).

Samuel, Vinay and Chris Sugden, 'Dialogue with other Religions--an Evangelical View', in V. Samuel and C. Sugden eds., *Sharing Jesus in the Two Thirds World* (Bangalore, 1983), pp. 177-204.

Sanmark, Alexandra, *Power and Conversion: a comparative study of Christianization in Scandinavia* (Uppsala, 2004).

Sanneh, Lamin O., *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY, 1989).

Sawyer, Birgit, 'Scandinavian Conversion Histories', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies,* 12/13 (1988/1989), pp. 46-60.

Sawyer, Birgit and Peter, 'Christianization and Church Organization', in *Medieval Scandinavia* (Minneapolis and London, 1993).

Sawyer, Birgit, Peter Sawyer and Ian Wood, eds., *The Christianization of Scandinavia: Report of a Symposium held at Kungälv, Sweden, August 4-9 August 1985* (Alingsås, Sweden, 1987).

Sawyer, Peter, *Kings and Vikings: Scandinavia and Europe, AD 700-1100* (London, 1982).

———, 'The Process of Scandinavian Christianization in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', in B. Sawyer, P. Sawyer and I. Wood eds., *The Christianization of Scandinavia* (Alingsås, Sweden, 1987), pp. 68-87.

Scharer, Anton, 'The Gregorian Tradition in Early England', in R. Gameson ed., *St Augustine and the Conversion of England* (Stroud, 1999), pp. 187-201.

Schmitz, Kenneth L., 'The Language of Conversion and the Conversion of Language', *Communio,* 21 (1992), pp. 742-764.

Ševčenko, Igor, 'Three Paradoxes of the Cyrill-Methodian Mission', *Slavic Review,* 23 (1964), pp. 220-236.

———, 'Religious Missions Seen from Byzantium', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies,* 12/13 (1990), pp. 7-27.

Shepard, Jonathan, 'Slavs and Bulgars', in R. McKitterick ed., *New Cambridge Medieval History, Volume II c.700-c.900* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 228-248.

Singh, David Emmanuel and Bernard C. Farr, eds., *Christianity and Cultures: Shaping Christian Thinking in Context* (Eugene, OR, 2008).

Skreslet, Stanley H., 'Thinking Missiologically About the History of Mission', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* 31 (2007), pp. 59-65.

Smalley, Beryl, *The Bible in the Medieval World* (Oxford, 1985).

Smith, Julia M. H., 'Fines Imperii: The Marches', in R. McKitterick ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History II c. 700-c. 900* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 169-189.

———, *Europe After Rome, A New Cultural History 500-1000* (Oxford, 2005).

Smith, Nico, 'From Missio Dei to Missio Hominum; En Route in Christian mission and missiology', *Missionalia,* 30 (2002), pp. 1-21.

Snow, David A. and Richard Machalek, 'The Sociology of Conversion', *Annual Review of Sociology,* 10 (1984), pp. 167-190.

Soulis, George C., 'Legacy of Cyril and Methodius to the Southern Slavs', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* 19 (1965), pp. 19-43.

Spindler, Marc R., 'Conversion Revisited: Present Understanding of a Classic Missionary Motive', *Missiology,* 25 (1997), pp. 293-305.

Spinka, Matthew, 'Slavic Translations of the Scriptures', *The Journal of Religion,* 13 (1933), pp. 415-432.

Stafford, Pauline, *Queens, concubines, and dowagers: the king's wife in the early Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1983).

Stancliffe, C. E., 'Kings and Conversion: some comparisons between the Roman mission to England and Patrick's to Ireland', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien,* 14 (1980), pp. 59-94.

———, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom', in D. Whitelock, R. McKitterick and D. Dumville eds., *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 21-46.

———, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford, 1983).

Stark, Rodney, *The Rise of Christianity, How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (Princeton, N.J., 1996).

———, *One True God, Historical Consequences of Monotheism* (Princeton, N.J.; Oxford, 2001).

Stott, John R. W., *The Message of Acts* (Nottingham, 1990).

Sullivan, Richard E., 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', *Speculum,* 28 (1953), pp. 705-740.

———, 'Carolingian Missionary Theories', in *Christian Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages* (Hampshire, 1994), pp. 273-95.

———, 'Early Medieval Missionary Activity: A Comparative Study of Eastern and Western Methods ', in *Christian Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 17-35.

———, 'Khan Boris and the Conversion of Bulgaria: A Case Study of the Impact of Christianity on the Barbarian Society', in *Christian Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 55-139.

Tachiaos, Anthony-Emil. 'The Cult of Saint Methodius in the Byzantino-Slavonic World', in E. G. Farrugia ed., *International Congress on the Eleventh Century of the Death of St. Methodius* (Rome, Italy, 1985), pp. 131-142.

Talbot, C.H., 'St. Boniface and the German Mission', in G. J. Cuming ed., *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 45-57.

———, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany* (London, 1954).

'The Oxford English Dictionary'. in J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner eds. (Oxford, 1989).

Tippett, Alan R, 'Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity', in T. Yamamori and C. R. Taber eds., *Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity* (Pasadena, 1975), pp. 4-21.

———, 'Formal Transformation and Faith Distortion', in T. Yamamori and C. R. Taber eds., *Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity* (Pasadena, CA, 1975), pp. 70-87.

———, 'Conversion as a Dynamic Process in Christian Mission', *Missiology, An International Review,* V (1977), pp. 203-211.

Tomlin, E. W. F., *The World of St. Boniface* (Exeter, 1981).

Ullmann, Walter, 'Reflections on the Medieval Empire', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th Series* (London, 1964), pp. 89-108.

———, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London, 1967).

Van Engen, John, 'The Future of Medieval Church History', *Church History,* 71 (2002), pp. 492-522.

Van Rheenen, Gailyn, ed., *Contextualization and Syncretism, Navigating Cultural Currents* (Pasadena, CA, 2006).

Vanderputten, Steven, 'Faith and Politics in Early Medieval Society: Charlemagne and the Frustrating Failure of an Ecclesiological Project', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique,* 96 (2001), pp. 311-330.

Visser't Hooft, W. A., *No Other Name: The Choice Between Syncretism and Christian Universalism* (Philadelphia, 1963).

Vlasto, A.P., *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom: An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs* (London, 1970).

———, 'The Mission of SS. Cyril and Methodius and Its Aftermath in Central Europe', in G. J. Cuming ed., *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 1-16.

Wagner, Peter C, *Strategies for Church Growth* (East Sussex, 1988).

———, *Warfare Prayer: How to Seek God's Power and Protection in the Battle to Build His Kingdom* (Ventura, CA, 1992).

Wallace-Hadrill, J. M., 'A Background to St Boniface's Mission', in P. Clemoes and K. Hughes eds., *England Before the Conquest* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 35-48.

———, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983).

Walls, Andrew F., *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (New York, 1996).

———, *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY, 2002).

———, 'Converts or Proselytes? The Crisis over Conversion in the Early Church', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* 28 (2004), pp. 2-6.

Wells, David F., *Turning to God: Biblical Conversion in the Modern World* (Exeter, 1989).

Wessels, Anton, *Europe: Was it Ever Really Christian? The interaction Between Gospel and Culture*, trans. J. Bowden (London, 1994).

Wilken, Robert L., *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven; London, 1984).

Wimber, John and Kevin Springer, *Power Evangelism* (London, 1986).

Winter, Ralph D., 'The New Macedonia: A Revolutionary New Era in Mission Begins', in R. D. Winter and S. C. Hawthorne eds., *Perspectives* (Pasadena, CA, 1999), pp. 339-353.

Wolfram, Herwig, 'Frontier and Mission--the Role of Salzburg in the Ecclesiastical and Socioecomonic Structure of the Imperial Church', *The Iliff Review,* 29 (1972), pp. 11-24.

———, 'Virgil of St Peter's at Salzburg', in N. P. Catháin and M. Richter eds., *Ireland and Christendom* (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 415-420.

Wood, Ian, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', in B. Sawyer, P. Sawyer and I. Wood eds., *The Christianization of Scandinavia* (Alingsås, Sweden, 1987), pp. 36-67.

———, 'The Mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English', *Speculum,* 69 (1994), pp. 1-17.

———, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400-1050* (Essex, 2001).

———, 'Pagan Religions and Superstitions East of the Rhine from the Fifth to the Ninth Century', in G. Ausenda ed., *After Empire* (Suffolk, UK and Rochester, NY, 2002), pp. 253-264.

Wright, Christopher J. H., *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's grand narrative* (Nottingham, 2006).

Wright, David F., *What has Infant Baptism done to Baptism?, An enquiry at the end of Christendom* (Milton Keynes, 2005).

———, *Infant Baptism in Historical Perspective* (Milton Keynes, 2007).

Wright, Melanie J., *Understanding Judaism* (Cambridge, 2003).

Yong, A, 'Syncretism', in J. Corrie ed., *Dictionary of Mission Theology* (Nottingham and Downers Grove, Illinois, 2007), pp. 373-376.

Yung, Hwa, 'Towards an evangelical approach to religions and cultures', *Transformation,* 17 (2000), pp. 86-91.

3. Online resources and software

Church Fathers — The Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series and Second Series. The original electronic text is from the Christian Classics Ethereal Library: http://www.ccel.org. This electronic text was hypertexted, corrected, and prepared by OakTree Software, Inc. Version 1.1

Digital MGH - http://www.mgh.de/dmgh

Internet Medieval Sourcebook - http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html

The ORB: On-Line Reference Book for Medieval Studies - http://www.the-orb.net

Patrologiae Latina Database - http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk

Patrologiae Graecae Database – http://phoenix.reltech.org.ezproxy.webfeat.lib.ed.ac.uk/Ebind/docs/Migne/Migne.html