

# MISSIOLOGY AS A THEOLOGICAL AND ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

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**Аннотация:** Миссиология является относительно молодой дисциплиной в богословском исследовании и часто использовалась в сочетании с другими дисциплинами. В первой части данной статьи представлен краткий обзор развития миссиологии. Исторически, исследования в миссии считались прагматическими. Но в миссиологии также есть история академических исследований, которые играют важную роль в богословии. Сегодня миссиология предлагает различные методологические подходы и герменевтическую линзу. Но в ней также используются методы других дисциплин, особенно если речь идет о междисциплинарных исследованиях. Вторая часть статьи приводит примеры, как в миссиологии, с одной стороны, применяются методы, например, практической теологии. Однако контекстуальная линза, в качестве основного ингредиента в миссиологии, расширяет миссиологическое исследование за пределы практической теологии, как представляется в “цикле практики” Крицингера. В сочетании с другими теологическими дисциплинами, миссиология предлагает подобные возможности и показывает новые перспективы в богословских исследованиях.

**Ключевые слова:** миссия, миссиология, миссиологические исследования, практическая теология, контекст, междисциплинарные исследования, Библия, герменевтика.

**Abstract:** Missiology is a relatively young discipline in the faculty of theology and has often found its place in combination with other disciplines. The first part of the article offers an overview on missiology. Historically mission studies have been identified as pragmatical. But missiology has a history of academic research and claims an important role in theology. Today missiology offers different methodological approaches and a hermeneutical lens. But it also uses methods from other disciplines, especially as part of interdisciplinary studies. The second part of the article shows exemplary how missiology, on the one hand, applies methods, for example, from practical theology. But as one main ingredient in missiology, the contextual lens expands research in missiology beyond practical theology, as presented in the praxis cycle of Kritzinger. Missiology offers, in combination with other theological disciplines, similar possibilities and provides new perspectives in theological research.

**Key words:** mission, missiology, missiological research, practical theology, context, interdisciplinary studies, Bible, hermeneutics.

## Introduction

Missiology today is a complex and somewhat controversial discipline in theological faculties. Even though Christian mission is the starting point of Christian history and theology, many would not consider it an academic discipline. Others place it at the heart of Christianity and want it included in every curriculum. Again others feel embarrassed when speaking about the mission of the Christian church. For others yet, the subject seems so much part of each of the areas of theological studies that they don't see a need for a special role of mission as academic discipline.<sup>1</sup> The different views on mission theology and praxis are part of the problem why mission studies are mostly absent in curricula and research at theological faculties.

The role of this article is not to find a solution for the place of missiology. As the author himself is missiologist, he supports the second and fourth of the above positions on mission studies and research. These two positions encourage mission research and methodology and speak into different theological disciplines or take a role in interdisciplinary research areas. Others continue to do research and use approaches and methods of the classical theological disciplines, from which they come, as they study aspects of Christian mission. In the first part of the study, the article will show the spectrum of missiology and then introduce 3 or 4 different methodological approaches in mission research. The methodological approaches will look at praxis first from a practical theology perspective and then from a mission theology perspective in order to demonstrate the two by the author favoured views mentioned above.

### 1. Missiology as discipline

Missiology is a relatively young discipline in the faculty of theology, and since its appearance it continues the conversation with the other disciplines in order to prove its place and position in the theological faculties.<sup>2</sup> It was interesting to watch the conversation on mission studies during the previous decade when the author participated in discussions of the "Community of Protestant Churches in Europe" on behalf of the European Baptist Federation. Engaging representatives of theological faculties, they tried to avoid the term mission and preferred the Greek *euangelion*. A different language was used when speaking to church representatives who avoided the term evangelism, mostly in response to evangelistic activities of Pietistic and free churches, and preferred the word mission. They pointed to their mission involvement as a church in the world. Can mission be a theological and academic discipline for the one or the other? Since the times of Schleiermacher, missiology continues to search for its place in theological studies as well as tries to prove that it is an academic research discipline. Schleiermacher organized theology in the classical 4 areas:

#### (1) Biblical Studies (Theology)

<sup>1</sup> Charles Edward van Engen, *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1996), 18-26.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Richard Tippett, *Introduction to missiology* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1987), 11 and Andrew James Prince, *Contextualization of the Gospel: Towards an Evangelical Approach in the Light of Scripture and the Church Fathers* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017), 25.

- (2) Theological Studies (Theology)
- (3) Historical Studies (Theology) and
- (4) Practical Studies (Theology)

In his structure missiology belongs to practical theology where, in those days, some future missionaries trained to leave as missionaries to the colonies outside of Europe.<sup>3</sup> Theological institutions organized outside of the established universities, known as the “Bible School movement”, which responded to the mission movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, did not add much to the academic character of missiology. Bernhard Ott has a longer discussion on this issue in *“Beyond Fragmentation: Integrating Mission and Theological Education”*, beside some other authors, such as Gensichen, Banks and others.<sup>4</sup> The discussion demonstrates that even today, as in the past, it is difficult for mission studies to position themselves as a theological discipline in theological higher education and especially in an university setting.

A short walk through history may help to recognise the theological value of mission studies. During the same time period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Schleiermacher organised theological education and mission studies, missiologists – Gustav Warneck, Martin Kähler and others – identified the role of mission studies in a bigger picture, and their publications have become foundational. The famous statement by Martin Kähler “Mission is the mother of theology” even today inspires missiologists. In his introduction, Scott W. Sunquist offers a “History of the Concept of the Study of Christian Mission” suggesting that the discipline is less than 150 years old,<sup>5</sup> as he tells the story of mission and its academic research. The 1910 Edinburgh Mission Conference has impacted the further development of missiology. Shortly before and since Edinburgh 1910 a number of publications on mission appeared. The first academic chairs in mission appeared at universities and seminaries during that time and individual scholars pioneered theological education.<sup>6</sup> Some of the fine publications came from Gustav Warneck, professor at the Halle University,<sup>7</sup> who authored a number of books and initiated the first periodical on mission “Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift” already in 1874.<sup>8</sup> This helped to develop mission studies

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<sup>3</sup> On Schleiermacher, see „Idealistische Missionstheorie: Schleiermacher“ in: Klaus W. Müller et al, eds., *Mission und Reflexion im Kontext: Perspektiven evangelikaler Missionswissenschaft im 21. Jahrhundert: Festschrift für Klaus W. Müller zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, Edition AFEM Mission Academics 31 (Nürnberg : Bonn: VTR ; VKW, 2010), 354.

<sup>4</sup> Bernhard Ott, *Beyond Fragmentation: Integrating Mission and Theological Education – A Critical Assessment of some Recent Developments in Evangelical Theological Education*, Regnum Studies in Mission (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2001), 46-56. Hans-Werner Gensichen, *Missionsgeschichte der neueren Zeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), 30-47. Klaus Fiedler, *The story of Faith Missions* (Regnum Books, Oxford and Lynx Communications, Oxford, 1994), 11-31. Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education. Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Scott W. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Baker Academic, 2013), 2.

<sup>6</sup> *ibidem*, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Müller u. a., *Mission und Reflexion im Kontext*, 356-57.

<sup>8</sup> Hans Kasdorf, *Gustav Warnecks missiologisches Erbe: eine biographisch-historische Untersuchung* (Giessen: Brunnen Verlag, 1990).

as a discipline. But only in the mid-1950s, mission theory and theology have been established more widely in theological institutions, which then resulted in the term Missiology.<sup>9</sup>

Developments in missiology in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were mostly not noticed by European and North American theological faculties and did not play a significant role in the Majority world. It seemed that missiology was still a narrow group activity looking at mission practice from a scholarly point of view. But missiology was noticed by some known theologians of the twentieth century, writes Sunquist, such as Barth, Brunner, Bonhoeffer, Visser't, Hooft, Blauw, Hoekendijk and Newbigin.<sup>10</sup> It produced many well-known missiologists, such as Peters, Bosch, Kane, Gensichen, Shenk, Walls, Hiebert, Schreiter, Bevans, Wright, and others. They all contributed to the scholarship of missiology and tried to connect missiology with other disciplines. Still, missiology seems to be too much dominated by the West and needs to get back into balance with the worldwide church. Interestingly, however, as missiology develops, the church in the West seems to lose its impact on western society,<sup>11</sup> while in the Majority world missiology is only developing but the church has a much stronger role and impact in society.<sup>12</sup> It seems that in the Majority world mission thinking and theology are more integrated and so have a greater influence on the context and society than in the West. This impact of the Majority world will also lead to much more balanced mission studies and a bigger role in missions of the Majority world. Such development will make mission studies, on the one hand, even more complex and, on the other hand, expand the horizon on what mission is.<sup>13</sup>

Even though mission was studied and researched before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, only in the mid and late 19<sup>th</sup> century mission studies became a concern of the universities. But the university has been hesitant, up to this day, to recognise missiology as an equal theological discipline and only infrequently offered full professor chairs for it in its faculties.<sup>14</sup> Already at that time, mission was studied from the perspective of history. The already mentioned Gustav Warneck published in 1882, just before the Mission conference in Edinburgh, his famous study of Protestant mission “Abriss einer Geschichte der protestantischen Missionen von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart: ein Beitrag zur neueren Kirchengeschichte”<sup>15</sup>. Even though the book has seen a number of editions, Warneck’s publication was recognised and appreciated only much later.<sup>16</sup> In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, missiology was primarily present in the area of practical and historical theology and later started to move beyond this scope and connect with biblical studies, systematic theology, ethics, etc. Still, up to the present, practical and historical theology seem to be the niche for missiology.

<sup>9</sup> Ott, *Beyond Fragmentation*, 14-15.

<sup>10</sup> Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 5.

<sup>11</sup> Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century* (Kregel Academic, 2010), 105.

<sup>12</sup> *ibidem*, 225.

<sup>13</sup> Stanley H. Skreslet (II.), *Comprehending Mission: The Questions, Methods, Themes, Problems, and Prospects of Missiology* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2012), 15.

<sup>14</sup> Müller u. a., *Mission und Reflexion im Kontext*, 355.

<sup>15</sup> Gustav Warneck, *Abriss einer Geschichte der protestantischen Missionen von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart: ein Beitrag zur neueren Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin: J.C. Hinrichs Buchhandlung, 1882).

<sup>16</sup> Kasdorf, *Gustav Warnecks missiologisches Erbe: eine biographisch-historische Untersuchung*.

In mission praxis, the biblical text has played a central role but often without any consideration of and consultation with the biblical studies research. Especially evangelical mission insisted on the centrality of the bible. At the same time, the use of it often had little solid exegetical background. David Bosch, who as missiologist has had a solid biblical education, criticised the traditional use of the bible in mission. Carey as initiator of modern missions, like many missiologists still today follow this assumption, so Bosch, "That we already know what 'mission' is and now have only to discover it in Scripture."<sup>17</sup> He continues to critique the use of the bible in mission with the words: "the Bible was used as a mine from which 'missionary texts' could be extracted".<sup>18</sup> He himself demonstrates with his compendium on mission a method and a lens for mission studies, using a model of mission paradigms and in his first chapters applying recent NT research on apostolic mission.<sup>19</sup>

But it seems that mission praxis was for a long time happy in its non-academic corner, criticising from there, the useless exercise of modern historical-critical methods, developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. They presented the true message and needed no liberal help. The change of attitude in biblical studies on the mission issue in the Bible is represented by biblical scholars like Martin Hengel<sup>20</sup>, Howard Marshall<sup>21</sup>, Eckhard Schnabel<sup>22</sup> and others. A more constructive interest on the side of missiologists opened the door to mission research in the bible and led to discussions on missional hermeneutics<sup>23</sup>.

Critique of missionaries of colonial times and of some present missionaries triggered in mission studies an interest in ethnology,<sup>24</sup> anthropology, rural and urban studies. Some areas seemed to have more of pseudo-academic social studies in their background, such as church planting and growth. They primarily used some tools from social research for quantitative or qualitative studies, analysing how certain social trends or changes of the church in society affected its context and how such studies can be used to lead a church to grow. Ethnological and anthropological studies primarily used existing material and methods of that field in order to help missionaries and churches understand the cultural, social and economic factors in a particular context.<sup>25</sup> As the church moved toward a global

<sup>17</sup> David J. Bosch, „Hermeneutical Principles in the Biblical Foundation for Mission“, *Evangelical Review of Theology* 17, Nr. 4 (1993): 438.

<sup>18</sup> *ibidem*, 438.

<sup>19</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming mission. Paradigm shifts in the Theology of mission*, The American Society of Missiology Series 16 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 15-178.

<sup>20</sup> Martin Hengel, *Studien zum Urchristentum* (Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> I. Howard Marshall und David Peterson, Hrsg., *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 1998).

<sup>22</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Urchristliche Mission* (R. Brockhaus Verlag GmbH &, 2002).

<sup>23</sup> Darrell Guder, „Missional Hermeneutics: The Missional Authority of Scripture – Interpreting Scripture as Missional Formation“, *Mission Focus: Annual Review* 15 (2007): 106-21. Michael D Barram, „The Bible, mission, and social location: toward a missional hermeneutic“, *Interpretation* 61, Nr. 1 (Januar 2007): 42-58. Петр Пеннер, *Миссиология и герменевтика: Прочтение библейских текстов в контексте миссии* (Черкассы: Коллоквиум, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Judith Becker, *European Missions in Contact Zones: Transformation through Interaction in a (Post-) Colonial World* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

<sup>25</sup> Stephen B. Bevans, *Mission & Culture: The Louis J. Luzbetak Lectures* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, o. J.).

setting recognising that mission works not from the West to the rest, but is communication, partnership, holistic and contextual, it was important to analyse differences in cultures, social structures and more.<sup>26</sup> This trend led to contextual theologies, that many identify as part of mission studies. Contextual studies include liberation theology, Black-African, Asian and other contextual theologies, as well as local and global studies.<sup>27</sup> With the Edinburg World Mission conference in 1910, mission studies have received a historical connectedness and lead into areas such as ecumenical studies, dialogue and engagement with other religions, etc.<sup>28</sup> Instruments from social studies, like quantitative and qualitative research methods, are frequently used in mission studies to affirm and illustrate the interdisciplinary character of missiology.

## 2. Research Methods in Missiology

Missiology has become a lens for studies in different areas as well as a bridge for moving into interdisciplinary studies. This makes it difficult to present only one or two methodologies in missiology. In the second part of this article a few methods that are used in missiology will be discussed. As missiology has become a bridge and a vehicle in interdisciplinary studies, many other methods, used in the related disciplines, can be used, such as historical research methodologies, biblical studies hermeneutics and methods, etc. A helpful chapter, written by Bruce Ashford and Scott Bridger, shows an evangelical discussion on methodology and the areas of missiology as discipline.<sup>29</sup> The chapter shows, on the one hand, the discussion on methodology driven by different theological disciplines. On the other hand, missiology touches and relates to many theological disciplines and needs to pick up methods they offer. In lieu of an example, two different areas of mission studies and the methodological approaches will be presented for this article, one in the classical field of practical theology and the other in contextual studies.

Missiology has been often studied from a practical theology perspective and it indeed needs to focus and analyse its practical dimension. Therefore, well-known methods that are used in practical studies of mission: LIM, Osmer, the Browning method, the DECIDE, EDNA and others can be quite helpful.<sup>30</sup> Richard R. Osmer's approach is widely known and used today in practical theology.<sup>31</sup> It is useful for research and evaluation of concrete situations and contexts of practical ministry. For research that qualifies as practical theology he offers four tasks as methodology:

<sup>26</sup> Bosch, *Transforming mission*, 447-57.

<sup>27</sup> Mariasuai Dhavamony, *Local Theologies* (Roma: Gregorian Biblical BookShop, 1996).

<sup>28</sup> Anna-Marie Kool und Peter Penner, „Theological Education in Eastern and Central Europe – Major Developments and Challenges since 1910“, in *History and Mission in Europe: Continuing the Conversation*, ed. Mary Raber and Peter F. Penner (Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld Verlag, 2011), 95-100.

<sup>29</sup> Bruce Ashford und Scott Bridger, „Missiological Method“, in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. by John Mark Terry (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2015).

<sup>30</sup> Noel Woodbridge, „The EDNA Model for Doing Research in Practical Theology: A Biblical Approach“, *Conspectus* 17 (2014): 90.

<sup>31</sup> Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008).

- (1) The *descriptive-empirical* task – The main goal in this task is to gather information, to understand the situation and to answer the question: What is actually going on?
- (2) The *interpretive task* – Here the “Why” question is asked to understand and to explain why something is going on in a particular situation or context.
- (3) The *normative task* – It looks for how things should be, the “good praxis” that needs to happen or be aimed for.
- (4) The *pragmatic task* – Comes to the practice of how to reach the goal and how to respond to the present situation in order to improve it.<sup>32</sup>

Osmer constructs his methodology as a hermeneutical spiral in order to interpret particular ministry aspects in context. With this, he follows Gadamer’s approach in *Truth and Method*.<sup>33</sup> One of the weak points of the approach is the limited role given to biblical texts and a stronger emphasis on theological concepts. The pragmatic task seems to be more of a discussion rather than a concrete theological model or system.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, it is a very helpful approach in doing study and analysis of practice in mission.

Kevin Smith in his book: “Academic Writing and Theological Research”<sup>35</sup> proposes the LIM method. The LIM (Loyola Institute for Ministry) method has been frequently used in a variety of contexts since it was developed by Michael A. Cowan to explore the situation of ministry “as it is” and to lead it to where “it should be”.<sup>36</sup> Applications of the LIM model can be found in a PhD dissertation can be found, for example, in African publications, such as by Johnson Nganga Mbugua on “*Funeral Rites Reformation for any African Ethnic Community Based on the Proposed New Funeral Practices for the Agikuyu*”.<sup>37</sup> It follows a similar approach as Osmer but is a bit more nuanced:

- (1) *Identify a real-life problem*. It invites to start from a real case or situation and asks to describe how the situation appeared and developed up to this point.<sup>38</sup>
- (2) *Interpret the world as it is*. It invites to an analytical study of the current situation and the present standing and to a formulation of the issues involved.
- (3) *Interpret the world as it should be*. At this point, Scripture can come in as a reflective critique of the present reality. Classical theological literature

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<sup>32</sup> Osmer, 4. The entire book is organized around these four tasks, so that a complete reading of it is important to understand each task and its role in the whole study.

<sup>33</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London ; New York ; A&C Black, 2013).

<sup>34</sup> Kevin Gary Smith, „Review of Richard Osmer, Practical theology: an Introduction“, *Conspectus* 10 (2010): 99-113.

<sup>35</sup> Kevin Gary Smith, *Academic Writing and Theological Research: A Guide for Students* (Johannesburg: SATS, 2008), 203-12. In Russian: КЕВИН Г. СМИТ, *Богословские письменные работы* (Херсон: ТХИ, 2016), 167-75.

<sup>36</sup> Michael A. Cowan, „Introduction to practical theology“, *Online article*, Nr. <http://www.loyno.edu> (2000).

<sup>37</sup> Johnson Nganga Mbugua, *Funeral Rites Reformation for Any African Ethnic Community Based on the Proposed New Funeral Practices for the Agikuyu* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016), 12-13.

<sup>38</sup> Woodbridge, „The EDNA Model for Doing Research in Practical Theology: A Biblical Approach“, 105.

and faith tradition can be taken into consideration. It intends to present how things should be.<sup>39</sup>

- (4) *Interpret our contemporary obligations.* This last stage allows strategic and practical steps and solutions to the question on how to change what is to how it should be.

This model offers, in comparison to Osmer, in the third step a broader base, including the actual teaching of the church and the biblical foundation, as well as other theological foundations to develop how the situation should be.<sup>40</sup> Both methods remind of the approach presented by Richard Hays in “The Moral Vision of the New Testament”<sup>41</sup> with its four steps: (1) The Descriptive Task, (2) the Synthetic Task, (3) the Hermeneutical Task and (4) the Pragmatic Task, with some variations. All of them can be used to study, evaluate and offer solutions to present scenarios in mission praxis.<sup>42</sup> Hays approach expects a much stronger biblical and theological study as a foundation for his approach to case studies.

The praxis cycle of missiologist J.N.J. (Klippiess) Kritzinger formulates a model for research that comes from missiology and will be presented in contrast to the other already briefly described methods. The “Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology”<sup>43</sup> at UNISA, of which Kritzinger is part, offers a praxis cycle to its students as a method of contextualisation that includes four tasks. Kritzinger himself, in his article “A Question of Mission a Mission of Questions”<sup>44</sup> adds a fifth point that will be specially commented on.<sup>45</sup>

- (1) The first step means *insertion into action* and focuses on practical involvement of a person or group. Kritzinger speaks of *involvement*, also asking about the context of the researcher: “Who are the people that inform my decision-making and the way I interpret what I read in newspapers or see on television? Who are the privileged people... that we allow to interrupt our other conversations, whom we accord the status of “trump card” over our other cards.”<sup>46</sup> It is important to identify who and what effects a person’s thinking and action.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, *Academic Writing and Theological Research*, 106.

<sup>40</sup> Woodbridge, „The EDNA Model for Doing Research in Practical Theology: A Biblical Approach“, 109. Woodbridge offers in his article some additional research models in Practical Theology.

<sup>41</sup> Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation – A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethic* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> Smith, *Academic Writing and Theological Research*, 204.

<sup>43</sup> UNISA: Missiology Department, „Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology – MTHMS15/101“ (UNISA, 2012), 5.

<sup>44</sup> J. N. J. (Klippiess) Kritzinger, „A Question of Mission: a Mission of Questions“, *Missionalia* 30, Nr. 1 (2002): 144-73.

<sup>45</sup> Klippiess Kritzinger, „Violence against women and children – Challenge to the church“ (United Theological Seminary, Windhoek, 9. August 2005), 2, Annual Symposium of the Council of Churches in Namibia and the TRIN (Theological Research Institute in Namibia). Kritzinger also speaks here of the praxis cycle, offering the following elements: “Involvement – Social analysis – Theological reflection – Spirituality – Planning for action”.

<sup>46</sup> Kritzinger, „A Question of Mission“, 156.

- (2) The *context analysis*, which is central to mission studies. The particular situation is analysed with a careful recognition of the context. Kritzinger speaks of *a question of social analysis*. He comments that we need to “analyse the church in all its diversity – in its greatness and brokenness – as a primary context in which we seek to confess the name of Christ and to become agents of God’s mission.” But the analysis is not “a preparation for mission praxis; it is an integral part of mission praxis itself...”<sup>47</sup>
- Therefore, he speaks of a “communal hermeneutic – a journey of learning and embrace” involving the community in this contextual analysis. He formulates: “I believe that context analysis is an inherent necessity for theology, not as an afterthought or merely as an element of “application” after the “explication” of the normative Scripture has been completed, but as an indispensable dimension of the praxis cycle.”<sup>48</sup>
- (3) The *biblical and theological reflection* on the situation – it includes scripture, church history and tradition, the grassroots, or primary theology of the church and mission community. In his question of theological reflection, he invites to read the text and the church’s theology in “this pluralistic and market-dominated world, where we meet other religions who are actively pursuing their own missions, we find people switching their religious allegiances more easily”. Instead of ignoring, condemning or letting go easily, Kritzinger invites to recognise the different church traditions in this changing context.<sup>49</sup>
- (4) The question of *spirituality* is delimited by Kritzinger as a separate step in the cycle, before he comes to the final step which coincides with the model of his department. While Pietistic spirituality and mission was formed especially through personal Bible reading, present spirituality also effects the praxis of current mission and needs reflection. Kritzinger: “For the spirituality to be authentically missionary...the gentle power of the Spirit the “go-between God” ..., has to give the Christian community the discernment and empowerment it needs for the task.”<sup>50</sup> This step in the praxis cycle is often overlooked but it is very important in the action and motivation of mission praxis.
- (5) The final step calls for *planning for further action* and needs to answer the questions of preparation and praxis. This leads to contextual mission theology and to praxis, not just an abstract answer to a concrete problem. “The praxis cycle will remain incomplete unless the cumulative effect of the earlier dimensions of involvement, context analysis, theological reflection, and spirituality leads to concrete projects – and unless those projects in turn lead to a renewed cycle of involvement, analysis, etc., spiralling onwards into a progressively more rooted

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<sup>47</sup> Kritzinger, 159.

<sup>48</sup> Kritzinger, 162.

<sup>49</sup> Kritzinger, 168.

<sup>50</sup> Kritzinger, 171.

and winged mission praxis.”<sup>51</sup> It is therefore important to see this not just as a four/five step study but as a continuing praxis cycle.

In comparison to the other models of research, Klippies Kritzinger emphasizes context. The diversity of missional, social, ecclesiological and spiritual contexts in his research model is its strength. This addition is an important adaptation of the classical practical theology methods.

The issue of contextualisation and contextual studies is, as already commented, the strength of mission studies, that brings praxis questions into conversation with theological studies. There are many theories on contextualisation and also a big number of models and concepts offered in missiology today.<sup>52</sup> The discussion is led by the different representatives of church traditions and also on different levels. Scholars, such as Paul Hiebert, Charles Kraft, Richard Niebuhr, Robert Schreiter, Stephen Bevans and many others, are at the center of the contextualisation debate.<sup>53</sup> As all theology is contextual, missiology brings this important aspect to all different studies of theology. One of the standard readings on contextualisation is Schreiter’s book on *Constructing Local Theologies*. Local and contextual theologies, so Schreiter, are built from three main blocks: gospel, church and context.<sup>54</sup> Theology is and needs to be local and relevant, why also Bevans offers ways how theology can be relevant for a particular context.<sup>55</sup> Evangelical missiologists agree on the contextuality of theology and speak, as Paul Hiebert does, not only of the need of a conversation between the different local theologies, but propose that missionaries be those who bridge in this conversation and offer a fruitful engagement on how to develop a global theology out of these local theologies.<sup>56</sup> The contextual debate, coming from missiology, invites therefore to interdisciplinary studies, making missiology an instrument of conversation between cultures, contexts, denominations and even in interreligious dialogue.

## Conclusion

The overall goal of this article was to present mission studies as a relevant theological discipline that often connects with other disciplines and invites to interdisciplinary studies. There is a need for separate research in missiology, as well as studies on mission-

<sup>51</sup> Kritzinger, 171.

<sup>52</sup> Engen, *Mission on the Way*, 72.

<sup>53</sup> Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross Cultural Perspective*, Revised 25th anniversary (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2005). Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2009). H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (San Francisco: Harper, 2001). Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1985). Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, Rev., Faith and Culture Series (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2002).

<sup>54</sup> Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 20.

<sup>55</sup> Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 26-27.

<sup>56</sup> Paul G. Hiebert, *The Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts: Affirming Truth in a Modern/postmodern World*, Christian Mission and Modern Culture (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1999), 107.

related topics in other disciplines.<sup>57</sup> The methodological part of the article demonstrated how mission and practical theology studies relate. On the one hand, the article shows that missiology is able to use existing methods, for example different recent approaches from practical theology. At the same time, mission studies contribute with their specific issues, like with the contextual debate and questions, to local and global research. Awareness about contextual studies and research helps other disciplines to widen their horizons and encounter different readings of the same biblical texts through different eyes.<sup>58</sup> This experience can happen also in other classical theological disciplines, as they encounter mission studies, if they involve contextual and mission studies.

For some, missiology has become a lens for studies in different areas as well as a bridge for moving into interdisciplinary studies. But this special place of missiology makes the discipline interdependent with other areas as well. The question whether missiology should stand as a separate theological discipline or mission be part of classical studies can be answered for both presented positions positively. As missiology develops, it opens up areas and, at the same time, searches for its limits. Both, the openness and the limits, will impact the continuing debate of missiology and as a discipline in relation to other disciplines.

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<sup>57</sup> Bernhard Ott, in his tenth chapter, speaks about the marginalisation of mission studies in theology as of the “Old Paradigm: Neglect, Separation and Marginalisation of Mission Studies”. He favours a “New Paradigm: Mission-Centred Theological Education”, pp. 205–211, in: Ott, *Beyond Fragmentation*.

<sup>58</sup> Hans de Wit, *Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible*, Institute of Mennonite Studies (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2004). Robert McAfee Brown, *Unexpected News: Reading the Bible with Third World Eyes* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984).

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