

# MISSIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL INEQUALITIES

## *Reclaiming the Economy of God*

AT A TIME OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL INJUSTICES

Ekon Dr Eskil Jonsson, Uppsala University,

Department of World Christianity and Interreligious Studies

PAPER FOR PRESENTATION AT THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON MISSION STUDIES

### Abstract

*The impact of Western and economic globalisation at the beginning of the 21st century is often believed to have led to serious threats against social, economic and ecological justice. This has also had a disintegrating impact on the prophetic mission of church and religion as a sign of peace, unity and justice. In this paper I envisage a paradigm shift towards an ecosophic worldview with a trinitarian view of an economy of God in order to find a new path for ecumenical and interreligious unity in the mission of God.*

The Western belief in economic rationality with the pressures for business orientation and privatisation is increasingly receiving critique from social ecological and ethical perspectives of justice and equality. It is commonly explained as an impact of the globalisation of modernity, which is generally seen as a disembeddedness from the social or local cultural context. As part of the economic globalisation we have also experienced how political economics with neo-classical theories and the market oriented economics which is rooted in the so called 'Chicago school' of economics, constitute threats against a common social, economic and ecological justices. The impact of globalisation also concerns the mission of churches and other faith organisations increasingly adopt market and business oriented models in order to grow and prosper. Thereby the mission of local congregations and laypeople may be marginalised and the pastors and missionaries become occupied in organisational management and planning (internal secularisation).

An historical overview of the Western church shows also that there have been serious risks of loosing the prophetic mission of the church ever since the Constantinian age of the Roman Empire during the 4th century, when Christendom was adopted as state religion. The purpose of this paper is to revisit the theology of stewardship as it was understood in the New Testament (oikonomia) and explained by the Church Fathers as trinitarian economy of God, in order to reclaim the prophetic mission identity of church.

In line with trinitarian view I suggest also that stewardship as a mission of God is interpreted as a mutual accountability within an ecosophical and ecumenical worldview where spirit,

humanity and nature are seen to be interdependent and where faith, economy and ecology are interrelated.