

# Introduction

## *An Analysis of the Development of Roland Allen's Missiology*

After extensive archival research and analysis of Roland Allen's engagement with the Pauline apostolic principles, which are recorded in the Lucan 'missionary' account in the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of St Paul, this second volume attempts to observe and unpack Allen's personal analysis of Western colonial missionary methods (1903-47) in light of Pauline practice. After Allen's initial missionary experiences in China (1895-1903) and subsequent missionary journeys to India, Canada and Africa (1910-47), it makes sense that he developed as an acute missionary methods analyst. During his missionary survey work, he observed that the practices of benevolent paternalism within 'mission stations' was a major problem and came to the conclusion that the mission societies of his day tended to impede indigenous Church growth and maturity. Therefore, he spent the rest of his life addressing the missionary situation through his itinerant teaching ministry and writings. It is within this historical context of colonial missionary efforts (good and bad) that an overview for the discipline of missiology is provided by demonstrating Allen's significant contribution as a missionary methods analyst: first, through examination of the church-planting principles, which he claimed resided in Pauline practice; and second, through his analysis of Western colonial missionary methods contrasted with, what he believed were, apostolic methods. In many ways, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission* examines and seeks to advance his understanding of a Pauline hermeneutic for missionary principles and practices.

This volume, therefore, consists of ten chapters and aims to disclose the central planks of the apostolic principles that shaped his missionary ecclesiology of 'Spirit and Order'. In Chapter 1, 'The Problem: Allen's Assessment of Western Missions', the problem is located as seen through Allen's diagnosis of Western missionary paternalism and institutional devolution. This identification will be contrasted with what he believed was a biblical missionary methodology, which originated from his hermeneutic of Pauline practice. Roland Allen, on one hand, on one hand,

believed that the *Pax Britannica* made it possible for missionaries to freely advance Gospel ministry within the colonies, similar to the way that the *Pax Romana* provided a *milieu* for the Gospel to advance during the early Church era. As a missionary, he was an enthusiastic advocate of Christian mission through evangelism and church-planting. On the other hand, he was the first to acknowledge that there existed a problem of ‘mission station’ hegemony. His diagnosis of this problem of institutional devolution (termed here ‘Peter Pan’ paternalism) was forthrightly confronted by him through his writings because he saw how various missionary societies’ structural systems kept indigenous leadership dependent upon the foreign missionaries and did not allow them to ‘grow up’. Allen observed how the indigenous ‘natives’ understood the mission stations as foreign businesses – held in trust by Europeans – where the missionaries financially organized and permanently managed these properties. For Allen, the ‘mission station’ system lacked apostolic precedent and created a dependency on foreigners. This chapter unpacks Allen’s analysis of the problem and discloses his solution for church-planting strategies.

Allen’s solution to the problem is addressed within Chapter 2 entitled ‘Allen’s Missiological Remedy: What Would Paul Do?’ Allen conformed to and argued for the quintessence of St Paul’s missionary methods and practices in order to address the problem. His writings were shaped more and more by Pauline practice and it was this understanding that motivated Allen to proactively argue for implementing a ‘Gospel method’ for Church growth. He believed that as a trans-local church planter, Paul’s example of investing his time and energy in mentoring and appointing indigenous leadership was indicative of why he was so successful with church-planting in Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia and Asia. This significantly influenced Allen’s thought, especially because of how Paul proactively applied these principles to promote self-extending churches that were not dependent on him to be their resident leader. His understanding of what Paul did cannot be understood from an autocratic practice – operating in isolation – Allen argued, but from a selfless practice of his apostolic ministry which sought the wellbeing of the indigenous Church and the Church’s ability to be self-governing.

Allen’s argument for the planting of the indigenous Church is supported by and stemmed from the central planks of the apostolic principles disclosed within Chapter 3 – ‘Unpacking Roland Allen’s Missionary Theology’. He wasted no time in defining his ‘missionary theology’ than by contrasting the difference between the Church and the ‘mission station’ system. It is interesting to discover that Allen’s

thinking, which tended towards solving some of these problems, was actually shaped by various educational principles which were promoted by some contemporaneous educators such as Montessori, Herbart and Pestalozzi. This chapter aims to show, in particular, how Maria Montessori's educational methods provided some impetus for Allen's emphasis on 'timeless principles' that are designed to work in any area of life. The basis for the argument at hand tugs at the development of a pedagogy that was based upon Montessori's principles, which enable the educational process to adapt to any given situation. Allen believed that these educational principles could easily work within the missionary *milieu*. Rather than only criticizing certain missionary practices, he drew attention (within his writings from 1913-19) to these scholastics of his day and showed that the way they challenged various educational institutions could also, by analogy, be proposed to the current missionary setting so that the missionaries could possibly learn from them. Further clarity is revealed in Chapter 4 – 'Allen's Theology of 'Spirit and Order' in order to set the parameters for his missionary ecclesiology, the apostolic principles that encompass his missionary theology need to be unpacked. This chapter discloses his belief in the transcendence of the Spirit's work in the life of the Church and argued for a return to, what he believed was, a proper apostolic emphasis – *Spirit* and *Order*. His integrated pneumatology and ecclesiology formed the basis for his church-planting missionary theology, which he was convinced encompassed true historic apostolicity and catholicity. The focus of Chapter 5 – 'Roland Allen's Charismatic Missiology' consists of my analysis of two of his published works: *Missionary Principles – and Practice* (1913) and *Pentecost and the World: the Revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles* (1917); also, his sermons, teaching notes, articles and correspondence, especially his teaching notes, which he entitled 'The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit'. These writings disclose his understanding of the Holy Spirit's transcendence and imminence with the advancement of the Church's global expansion and provides an *apologia* for the significance of the Spirit's descent at Pentecost and the ongoing empowerment of the Church. In particular, his teaching notes incorporate a symphonic blend of 'pneumatology, ecclesiology and missiology' which shaped his overall missionary ecclesiology.

The emphasis turns to a specific case study in Chapter 6 – 'The Influence of Roland Allen's Missiology in India'. This consists of an analysis of the ecclesiastical conversation between Allen and two Indian bishops – both critical and complimentary – disclosing the relevance of his thought for leadership issues then (and now). In general, Allen

frequently corresponded with bishops throughout the global Anglican Communion, as my research has already disclosed. Attempts to carefully analyze the significant contribution he made to missionary ecclesiology as he engaged with various bishops who embraced his teachings, and conversely, with other bishops who refused to adapt to changing structures within the Church of England, are highlighted in this volume. The following case study of two such bishops in India – Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah (1874-1945) of the diocese of Dornakal and George Clay Hubback (1882-1955) of the diocese of Assam – will provide greater clarity on the way that Allen tended to engage with duly appointed episcopal leadership, in particular, during his itinerant missionary journeys within India (1927-28). By examining these two bishops' responses of his ideas, we will be able to see how, on one hand, Allen's missiology was able to facilitate Church renewal and transformation significantly without costly infrastructural apparatuses within the diocese of Dornakal, while, on the other, this missiological renewal was inhibited by leadership inflexibility and a lack of missional foresight within the diocese of Assam.

This case study is now augmented in Chapter 7 by the infrastructure of Allen's missionary ecclesiology and is entitled *Spontaneous Church Growth: Catholicity, Sacramentalism & Volunteerism*. Firstly, Allen believed that the Church is the true mission society. He believed that the Church expresses her true catholicity from the essence of *e pluribus unum* – out of many, one. He believed that the Church (universal) is *one* and that local churches (particular) are spiritually united to the *one*, holy, catholic and apostolic Church by the Holy Trinity. For Allen, the *missio Dei* means that because our Triune God is 'One' and 'Missional', it ought to be understood that the Church (the 'one' body of Christ) is also 'missional' – a mission society – that is sent and empowered by the Trinity. He understood Church growth in organic terms, in which the essence of God's life in the Church 'naturally' (supernaturally!) flows to the world, thereby releasing the spontaneous expansion of the Church. Secondly, he believed that the substance of the Church's health and growth was determined by her belief in the Bible, creedal confessions, ministry gifts, and sacramental life. Thirdly, he believed that 'every Christian is a missionary' and that the expansion of the Church is enhanced by volunteer service. This chapter explores his belief that Church growth is spontaneous when she is spiritually nourished by the sacraments and that the pneumatological dynamic works in harmony to nurture an emerging Church in which 'the missionary Spirit' empowers *all members* for missionary action. This chapter carefully unpacks various articles and books that Allen wrote

from 1920-30, in order to highlight his thoughts on: volunteerism within Islam and Christianity, Church indigenization, devolution, voluntary clergy practice and spontaneous Church growth.

Chapter 8 is entitled 'Roland Allen's Apostolic Principles: An Analysis of his 'The Ministry of Expansion: the Priesthood of the Laity'.<sup>1</sup> This chapter highlights the historical context of the missionary situation in certain parts of the British colonies, where there existed a shortage of ordained clergymen. This presented a problem because the Church of England required that the sacraments could only be administered by duly ordained clergy. He dealt with this apparent tension between a strict form of clericalism, which denied sacramental celebration as a means of grace whenever professional clerics were absent, in contrast to a sacramental practice that refused to withhold grace to those who gathered together as a community of faith. His response, simply, was to argue that Christ was 'spiritually present' to consecrate the elements of bread and wine whenever clergy were not present to preside over the Holy Communion. This chapter reveals his belief that to withhold the sacrament was a violation of apostolic principle, especially because Anglican doctrine emphasizes the necessity to administer the Eucharist for the believer's spiritual health. His sacramental emphasis moved away from a theoretical treatise on the subject by personally identifying himself with the Anglican 'scattered sheep' in various countries who were living where no ordained priests existed. From one angle, as a High Church Anglican, he did believe in the appropriate administration of the Holy Communion by ordained priests and bishops (that was divine order), but from another, his view for the Church's expansion to pioneer regions organically emerging within new territories – even if properly ordained clergy were not locally present – still necessitated the continuance of the sacramental meal whenever Christians met together. I carefully explain how Allen understood this as 'Spirit-directed apostolic order' within pioneer regions in which Christianity was beginning to spread throughout Africa.

Furthermore, Roland Allen continued to unpack his sacramental theology at the mature age of 75 by disclosing with great clarity the ways in which the sacramental practice impacts the Church's growth, which is the topic of Chapter 9 – 'The Church as 'The Family Rite'.<sup>2</sup> The thesis

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1. Formerly an unpublished work by Roland Allen – 'The Ministry of Expansion: the Priesthood of the Laity' (1930), USPG X622, Box 3, Number 27, Oxford, Bodleian Library. Recently published edition: *The Ministry of Expansion by Roland Allen: The Priesthood of the Laity*, ed. J.D. Payne (William Carey Library, 2017).
  2. Roland Allen, 'The Family Rite' (1943), USPG X622, Box 7, Oxford, Bodleian

of this work is an *apologia* for ‘The Family Rite’ as the core foundation for the local church and he believed that it is to be understood that the head of the household was to lead his family in worship. ‘The Family Rite’, as Allen argued, sheds light on his understanding of the father’s priestly role within the family structure, as patterned and practised by families during the Feast of Passover (Exodus 12). According to this form of reasoning, he believed that the Passover provided a basis for a New Covenant model of church-planting within homes. He argued that this was the normal pattern during the early stages of the Church’s expansion. But, he argued, a ‘Temple Rite’ replaced the ‘Family Rite’ once the Church began to become more organized and professionalized. This chapter aims to explain his thinking and does include ongoing discussions with his son, John (Iohn), on this matter during the early to mid-1940s. That said, during Roland Allen’s later years of life in Africa, he argued for and consistently practised a ‘Family Rite’ sacramental approach on a daily basis with his wife in their home and believed this to be a model for the Church’s expansion. In many ways, this ‘Family Rite’ emphasis within Allen’s theology of mission is an advocacy for the planting of house churches.

*Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission* concludes with Chapter 10 – ‘Epilogue: Volume One and Volume Two’ and proposes to summarize what Allen believed was a prototypical apostolic ministry of the Apostle Paul for the indigenous Church’s expansion. The changing circumstances within colonial hegemony compelled Allen to argue for a missionary ecclesiology of indigenous nature that was *in, of* and *by* the Church. The conclusion itemizes Allen’s contribution to missiological studies within a framework of a historical theology. Critical observations concerning his missionary ecclesiology in light of postcolonial theory are addressed, as well as a critique of some anti-Western biased assumptions within postcolonial studies. A proposal to apply Allen’s missionary ecclesiology to contemporary missiology is encouraged due to the current missionary situation within World Christianity.

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Library. This was later published in David M. Paton’s *Reform of the Ministry: a Study of the Work of Roland Allen* (London: The Lutterworth Press, 1968).