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Witness Flows Through Weakness

Abstract

Throughout history the missionary enterprise has often struggled with power. Meanwhile, the way of Jesus and the early church teach an approach to gospel witness which approaches power in an inverse way.

In *Transforming Mission*, New Testament scholar, David Bosch observes in Jesus and Paul, “This is, however, how authentic mission always presents itself—in weakness” (Bosch 2011, 51). One wonders why little ink has been spilled in exploring this provocative statement. This paper argues that our witness to God flows through our weakness. A mission theology of weakness brings cohesion to 2 Corinthians as an approach, posture and presence of gospel witness takes place in Paul’s life and founding of a fledgling church. Weakness speaks to our humanness with the metaphor of jars of clay, or a multitude of ways witness moves through our weaknesses, suffering that others are comforted, dying in our life that others live, as poor to make many rich (2 Cor 1:4-5, 4:10-13, 6:8) displaying the reversal motif of the gospel, from death to life, or humiliation to exultation. Paul articulates this motif in a climactic statement, “for whenever I am weak, I am strong”. Our weakness, humility and humanness create a platform for God to be seen in this world. We will explore what can be learned from a careful reading of Paul as it relates to mission praxis in a world where power and prestige are valued and those with so called weakness are marginalized.

References Cited

Bosch, David. 1991. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books.