

Course: CS 502 – Church as a Social and Cultural Institution Date: 01/30/23
Instructor: Professor Stanley John Name of Student: Mark Ampah
Topic: Interaction Paper on *The Mission of God's People*

Ralph D Winter in his paper *The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission* discussed how the Christian movement built itself upon two different kinds of structures that had pre-existed in the Jewish cultural traditions.

The first structure is the “Jewish synagogue” and the second is the “Jewish missionary band”. These two structures began over hundred years before Christ. The New Testament Church was built along Jewish synagogue and the Jewish missionary band structure lines. Paul’s missionary or evangelistic outreach is considered a prototype of Jewish Missionary band while the congregational worship adopted the Jewish Synagogue-type of fellowship. One of the major differences is that whereas each synagogue was considerably independent of the others, the Roman Catholic Church soon assimilated the Roman civil government pattern. The church had the modality (diocesan Christianity) and sodality which is the monastic Christianity. However, while the Roman Catholic Church harmoniously blended all these to succeed, Protestant churches struggled in the beginning before finally adopting the sodality in addition to the modality structure. Ralph concluded that these two structures must coexist and work together to fulfill the Great Commission and all of God’s desire for our time.

Undoubtedly, the Jewish synagogue and missionary band structure provided Christianity with a structure it needed to succeed in its mission. Green mentioned that the synagogue system provided for Christian evangelists something to exploit in order to spread the faith.¹ It could be argued that if Christianity succeeded, it succeeded because the Jewish synagogue and missionary band had set the pace for them by putting in structures that furthered the spread of the gospel.

The question, probably one would ask is what would have Christianity done differently if these Jewish structures were not there?

¹Green, Michael *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 301