

*Servant Witness:
Reshaping Mission for
Solidarity and
Empowerment.*



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Anthony, Catalina, Evy, Sara.

Team Members

We are Master's students in Theology and Religious Studies, specializing in Peace, Trauma, and Religion. Coming from diverse backgrounds, we share a commitment to peacebuilding, justice, and intercultural dialogue in response to today's global challenges.



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Why should we talk about mission?

Origins:

- Latin: missio, derived from mittere ("to send")
- Missiologist Michael Stroope (2017): "Mission" as term for cross-cultural evangelism and ministry arose among the Jesuits in the 16th century
 - Intertwined with the colonizing mindset of that time

Problematics:

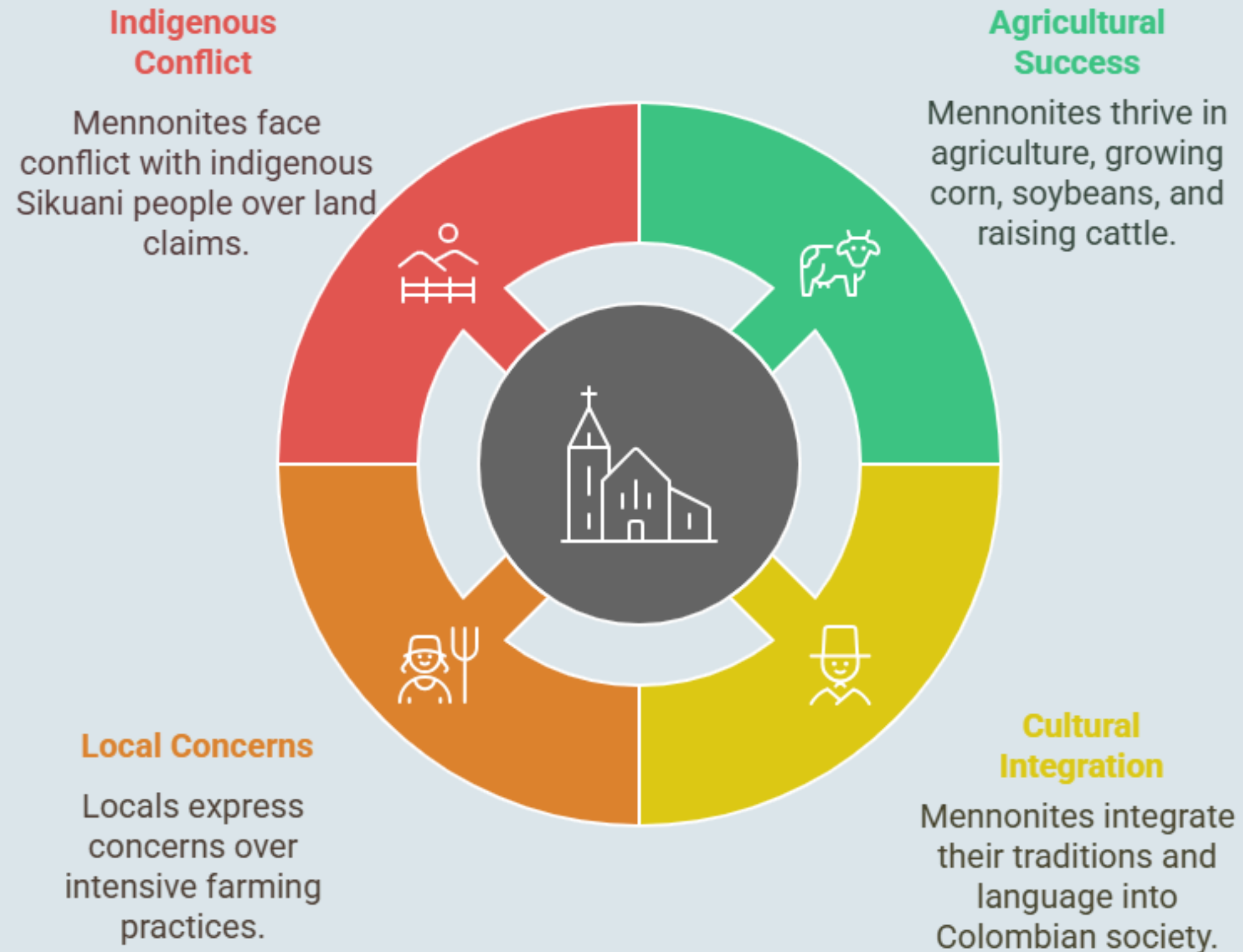
- History of crusading, colonization, and violence
- Ongoing concerns about mission practices:
 - Sense of superiority
 - Lack of genuine relational engagement
 - Focus on saving souls can come at people's expense

Should the church stop with mission?

Missiologist
Stefan Paas
(2019): Mission is human — we share what matters to us

Mission Under Critique - A Colombian case

Mennonite Settlement in Colombia



Mission Under Critique - A Dutch case

Hillsong Church

- Neo-Pentecostal church founded in Sydney in 1983
- Planted Hillsong churches all over the world
 - Including Amsterdam
- (Worship) services with “decisions for Jesus” as primary goal

Problematics

- “Colonizing attitude” (Klaver, 2021)
 - Imagining the world as “empty lands to be discovered and to be developed yet leaving out the possibility of ‘others’ (including God) already present” (Klaver, 2021)
- Sense of superiority and detachment from the world outside Hillsong Church



Mission Under Critique - A Brazilian case

"Ethnocide is not the physical destruction of men, but the systematic destruction of their ways of life and thought. While genocide kills peoples in their bodies, ethnocide kills them in their spirit."

(Pierre Clastres, 1974)

Rooted in Catholic tradition, missions aimed to:

- Understand Indigenous life to convert, control, and support colonial rule
- Reshape beliefs, bodies, land, and labor through the “pedagogy of example”

Current mission work, though framed as spiritual, have political and social impacts

Missão Novas Tribos do Brasil & Missão Caiua

- Claimed to be apolitical, yet shaped Indigenous realities through religious intervention
- Missionary work operates as a political force, influencing power, identity, and land through faith-based actions disguised as neutral.



Changing narratives - A Palestinian case.

The West, generally speaking, has dominated the production and distribution of knowledge, including biblical studies and scholarship, for centuries. Since the Enlightenment, the West considered itself as the center, manufacturer, and distributor of knowledge.” (Yousef AlKhoury, 2024)

“Since childhood, the colonized have been taught to see and interpret reality through Eurocentric eyes. Eurocentric thought specializes in sustaining and maintaining a way of thinking which at best ignores its complicity with advancing the neoliberal goals of empire, and at worst, justifies empire.” (Miguel A. De La Torre, 2022)

Palestinian Christians due to misinterpreted versions of biblical hermeneutics were subjected to Christian Zionists ideologies.

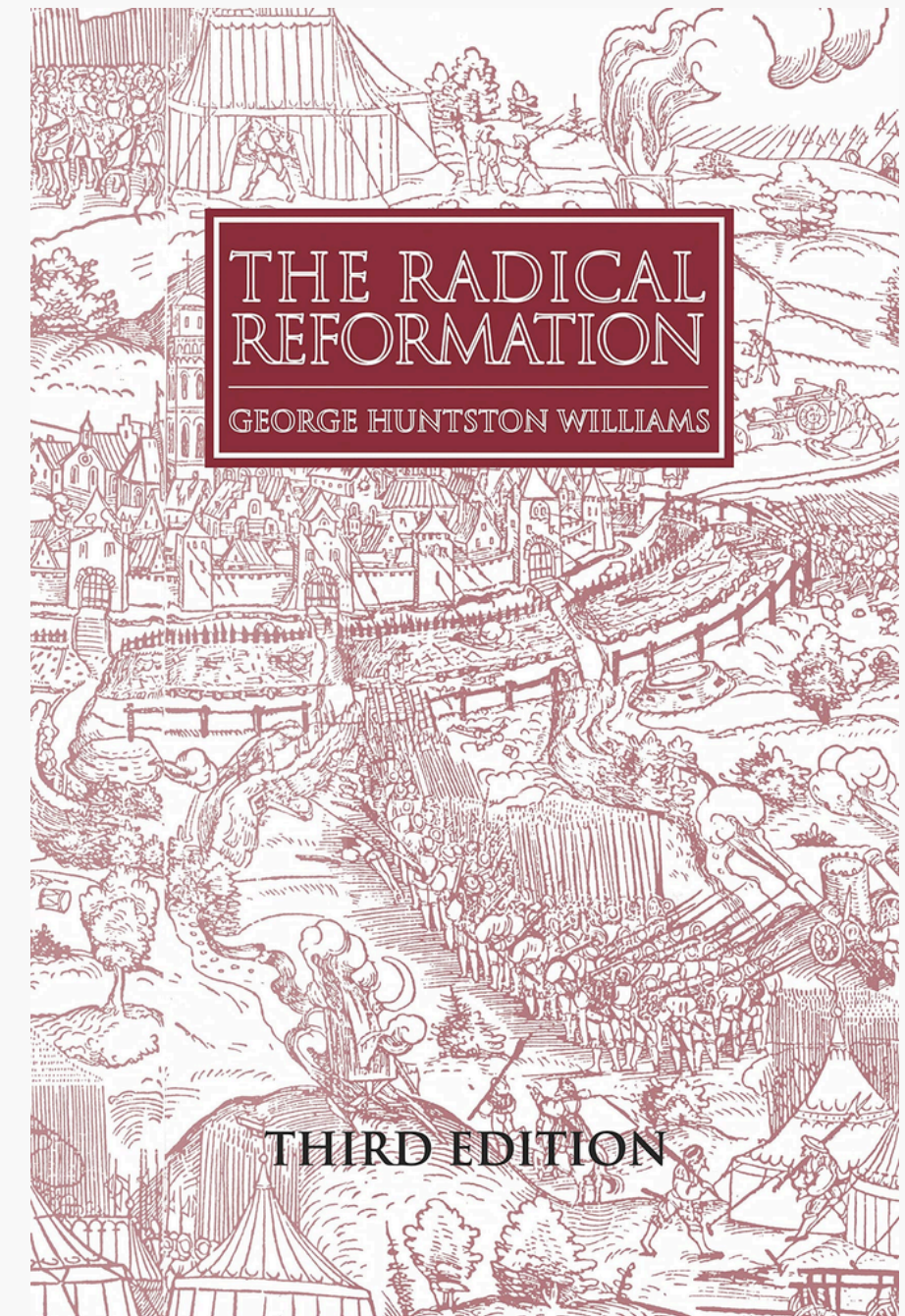
“These colonial education avenues attempted to substitute indigenous cultures and religious practices with those of the Christian West.” (Yousef AlKhoury, 2024)

Reimagining Mission

The Radical Reformation Movement

Origins (Williams, 1993):

- Radical wing of 16th-century Reformation (ca. 1525)
- Rejected both Catholic and Magisterial Protestant authority
- Return to early church practices, voluntary faith, divine justice
- Emphasis on discipleship, community, and ethical living
- Influenced ideals of religious freedom and social reform (Bender, 1994)



Three Pillars of Anabaptist Belief

1. Discipleship as the center of Christian life

- Nachfolge: embodying Christ's way in daily life
- Faith expressed through action, not just belief
- Simple, accessible spirituality over complex theology
- Kingdom of God lived here and now through everyday practice

2. Church as a brotherhood

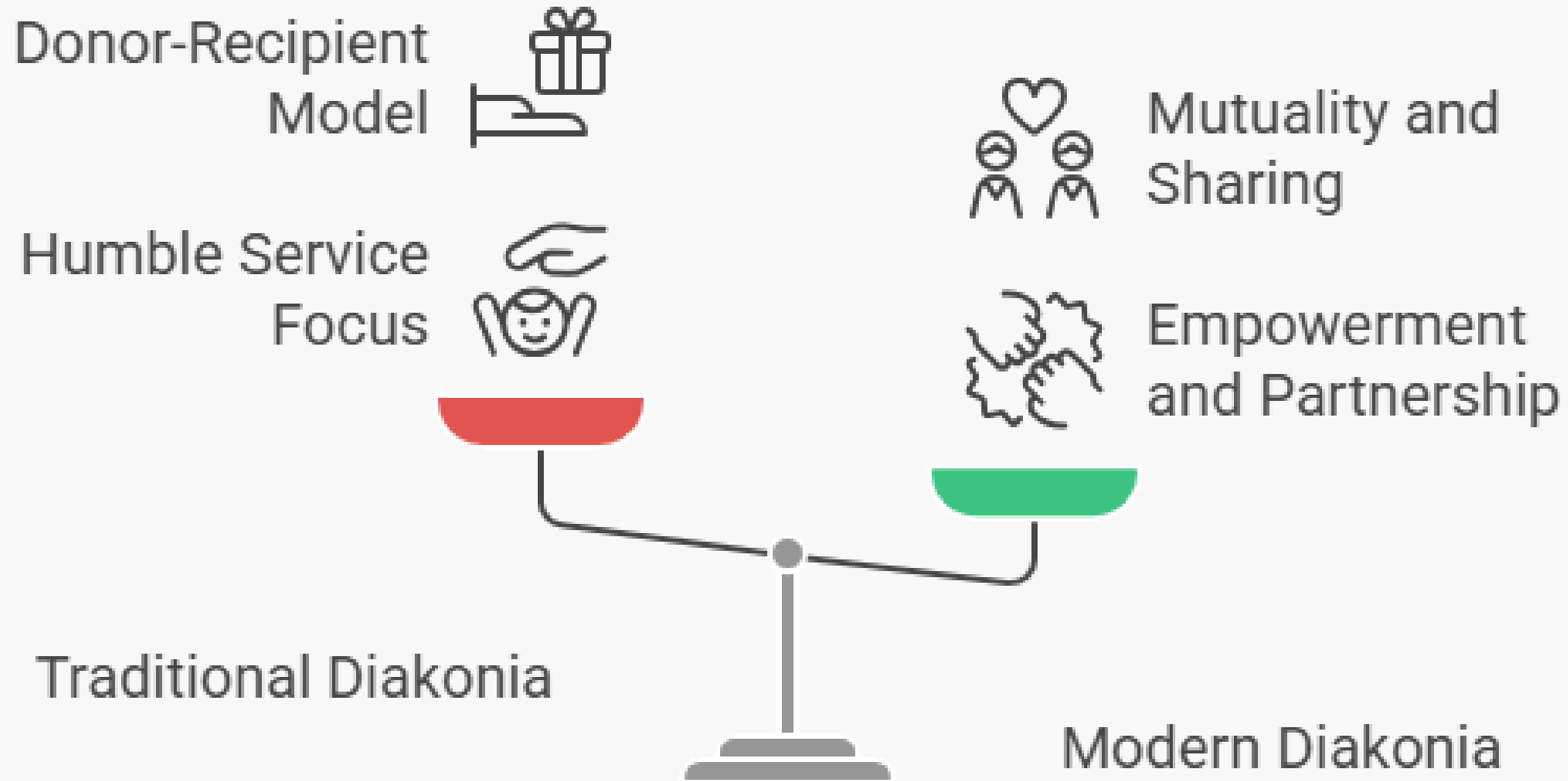
- The Church is seen as a brotherhood, where sharing possessions and meeting the needs of others is central to community life.

3. Ethic of love and non-resistance

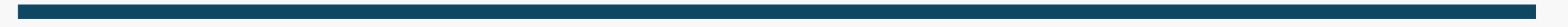
- An ethic of love and non-resistance, advocating for the complete abandonment of violence, strife, and killing.

(Bender, 1994)

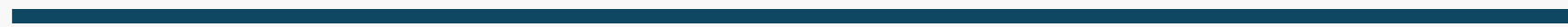
Core Aspects of Diakonia



Shifting Paradigms in Diakonia



*Reimagining Mission:
Practical Steps*





Thank you



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