EMQ

Credible.
Comprehensive.
Christ-focused.

Credible. Comprehensive. Christ-focused.

EMQ

Editor: Marv Newell
Managing Editor: Peggy Newell
Book Review Editor: Marcus Dean
Layout & Cover Design: Kurtis Amundson
Missio Nexus President: Ted Esler

Contents

Missionary Faith

Marvin Newell

In a recent visit to Singapore at the international headquarters of a long-established mission, I was greeted at the entrance by words in huge letters, "Have Faith in God." Clearly that mission, like many others, places a high value on the faith principle—high enough so as to prominently display it to the public.

Having an active faith in God is fundamental to the work of missions. If the glory of God is the fuel of missions, then faith in God proves it to be so. We evidence this faith by prayer. Missions of faith are missions of prayer. There are times when, by faith, missionaries and mission administrators do things that seem counter-intuitive because, in full reliance on Him and after deep communion with Him, the Spirit of God has lead them to do so.

Here are some observations on missionary faith that we in the mission community do well to acknowledge.

Missionary faith has it own peculiar culture and identity.

The first editor of this journal, writing in its inaugural edition in 1964, recognized this. Jim Reapsome wrote:

> Missionary faith is concerned almost entirely with supernatural values, principles and ideas. The real meaning of regeneration of men by the Holy Spirit can only be comprehended by faith. Missionary faith is willingness to live and die for truths that have little significance if one's standards are solely those of natural reason and empirical observation.[1]

We need to realize that missionary faith is no different from any other expression of faith; however, it is applied differently.

Missionary faith extends beyond the procuring of funds for missions.

At times we lean toward thinking that the faith principle in missions relates mainly to fund raising. Although important, we dare not limit our faith solely to that. Again, Reapsome is helpful:

> The faith principle has at times been equated improperly with only a method of

financing operations. Faith has been clearly manifest in heroic efforts; many have gone forth to serve, looking only to God and abandoning dependence on any humanly guaranteed resources. What was basic was not the procurement of living allowances and project funds, but unqualified commitment to God and a burning desire to do His will in the world.[2]

We need to remember that missionary faith is multifaceted in its application.

Missionary faith must be passed from one generation to the next.

What I like about that entrance sign in Singapore is that it implores us to continue to perform our ministries by faith. "Have Faith in God." Missionary faith can diminish over time. Every generation of missionaries and mission administrators must reaffirm their dependence on the transcendence of the Person they serve. They must astutely navigate the tension between day-to-day managerial routines, human ingenuity, and applied technologies, with unqualified reliance upon God. Let us remember that, if not maintained, missionary faith is vulnerable to erosion. I often hear that our current "missionary model" no longer works. No doubt you have heard that also. Most of the time it relates to our current funding model–a model based on faith. My response is this question: Is it the model that is no longer valid or that the faith principle that undergirds the model has weakened dangerously? Let's pause and give this due consideration before hastily abandoning what has worked for generations.

Missionary faith must continue to be foundational to the work of missions. It is the bedrock upon which our labors rest and our efforts endure. God is pleased when we express it by our prayers to Him. We are confident and more assured in what we are doing when we exercise it together. "Have Faith in God." 📖

Marv Newell is Senior Vice President of Missio Nexus and Editor of the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*.

Endnotes

1 https://missionexus.org/missionary-faith-a-statement-of-definition-purpose-and-belief-by-the-emq-editorial-committee/

2 Ibid.

Movement Maturity and Missionary Participation

Craig Ott

INTRODUCTION

Today there are many contrasting and often conflicting descriptions of what the role of expatriate missionaries, and in particular Western missionaries, should be in the current world of global missions. Advocates of frontier missions emphasize the priority of pioneer efforts to bring the gospel to ethnic groups and subcultures that are yet unreached. Yet others argue that local national workers and Majority World missionaries are more effective in pioneer evangelism, and that expatriate missionaries should focus their efforts on mobilizing and training such workers. Still others maintain that the only role remaining for Western missionaries is that of consultants or short-term workers who are involved in specialized projects. Local churches are often bewildered by the range of seemingly mutually exclusive mission strategies that they should adopt and support for maximum advancement of the Great Commission. At a meeting of local church mission pastors that I recently attended as an observer, the confusion during table discussions was evident and disturbing.

I believe that part of the confusion arises by overlooking the various stages through which gospel movements develop, and the different needs each phase faces. The appropriate role of missionaries should not be determined by a one size fits all strategy, but rather by understanding the developmental phases of church planting movements, and by wisely contributing to the further maturity of these movements and their involvement in global mission.

In this article I will map out four phases of movement development and describe how missionaries can best contribute at each phase. The four phases are (1) pioneer indigenization, (2) local multiplication, (3) regional organization, and (4) global participation. These phases are more fluid than this typology suggests and they may not progress in a strictly linear manner. Yet these distinctions can serve as a helpful guide and as markers to discern the most strategic missionary involvement.

Pioneer Indigenization

Although the gospel has made remarkable progress and the church has been planted among the majority of ethnic groups of the world, there remain many that are still unreached or under-reached. There is still urgent need for pioneer evangelism and church planting among such peoples that will require a cross-cultural witness, that is, a missionary. Though estimates vary widely depending on how one defines if a people group is "reached," best estimates are that a quarter to a third of the world's population remain in need of pioneer mission work. The greatest needs are among Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist populations where traditional missionary work is prohibited or very difficult. There also remain large numbers of small, isolated ethnic groups without a gospel witness or Scripture available in their mother language. Indeed, Western missionaries may not be the best suited to reach some of these groups. But the Western church cannot simply excuse itself from participating in the difficult and often dangerous work of reaching such peoples with the Gospel. There remains a need to send Western missionaries as frontline, pioneer workers.

During the pioneer phase of launching a movement the goal is to undertake initial evangelistic efforts and plant the first churches. Missionaries serve not only as evangelists, disciple-makers, and church planters, but will seek to quickly transition to equipping and empowering local believers to take responsibility for reaching their own people and leading their own churches. Although the concept of planting "three-self" indigenous churches (self-propagating, self-governing, self-supporting) has been criticized and alone is inadequate, missionaries will nevertheless want to plant churches that are contextualized, take root, and reproduce in the local culture. The shape of the first churches planted typically become the model for those that follow. Thus establishing a missional-ecclesial DNA that is easily reproduced, under local leadership, and with minimal outside dependence will be a key to longer-term growth, reproduction, and health. This often requires employing methods that initially are slower, but have greater potential for long-term multiplication. The dangers facing this phase include discouragement due to slow progress, foreign dominance, and use of methods that cannot be sustained and reproduced by local believers with local resources. Attention must also be given to contextualize churches that are able to adequately communicate and live out the gospel in culturally relevant ways.

Local Multiplication

Once the first churches have been planted, the goal during this phase is to reproduce, and indeed to multiply these churches. At least two conditions are critical at this phase. First, churches must develop in a healthy manner with spiritual vitality, sound theology, and strong spiritual leaders. Second, local believers must take the lead in facilitating churches planting churches with minimal dependence on outside resources. This is why during the pioneer phase methods need to be employed that are not heavily dependent upon foreign resources or personnel, but rather methods that are easily replicated by local people using local resources. Unfortunately, not a few movements have been started whereby local believers pastor the churches, but the responsibility for evangelism and church planting is left to foreigners. This will not lead to church multiplication and will hinder healthy movement development.

Local leadership, not only in pastoral care, but also in evangelism, discipleship, and church planting, is essential to a self-reproducing movement. Thus at this stage the

missionary role transitions from being a frontline worker to an equipper and partner with national workers. Missionaries who have gained firsthand experience in the local culture and earned ministry credibility can become the mentors, coaches, and cheerleaders of national workers. Especially where churches grow rapidly, the need for discipleship and leadership development will increase proportionately. There will be growing need for missionary assistance in developing leaders who will serve the church well and in developing contextual theologies that will address cultural issues and concerns.

There is some debate whether during this phase more emphasis should be placed upon rapid church multiplication, or upon strengthening the churches. Is quality or quantity more important? However, it is a mistake to play one priority off against the other. Rapidly reproducing churches can also be healthy churches if they emphasize discipleship, spiritual vitality, and biblical instruction. The dangers during this phase are twofold: on the one hand churches can stagnate and cease to grow by becoming ingrown and overemphasizing quality. On the other hand churches can become unhealthy or syncretistic if they overemphasize quantity, multiplication being emphasized at the cost of church health. Developing healthy, missional leaders is perhaps the most important key to healthy movements that are also growing movements. This can be a strategic role for missionary involvement.

Regional Organization

As the number of churches increases, the need for cooperation and organization also increases. There are many needs that can best be met by churches working together on projects such as training workers. This can be done regionally thus increasing the quality of the training and creating a sense of fellowship and mutual commitment among the churches. Churches may need formal representation and the ability to speak with a single voice to the government. A common legal status may be necessary to own property or to obtain permission for public events or services. Shared conferences and publications can create a sense of unity among churches. Charitable efforts and social projects can be coordinated for greater impact and efficiency. Local leaders may come together to decide upon a biblical approach to local traditions, ethical matters or theological questions. We see this happening among the churches of the first century in cooperative efforts such as the offering of the Gentile churches for the poor in Jerusalem and in the decisions of the Jerusalem conference described in Acts 15.

At this phase, missionary assistance is often appreciated to provide counsel and to help create infrastructure. Missionaries may bring specialized expertise in such areas as economic development, ministry to special needs groups (such as addictions treatment or serving the disabled), organizational management, or legal and financial counsel. Particularly in the area of theological education, missionaries may be needed until local believers have attained higher levels of education.

One of the pitfalls at this phase is for missionaries to import denominational structures and ministries that are unsuited to the local needs and context. Such structures may have served their sending churches well. But these have usually developed over many years in response to clearly felt needs. I recall one emerging movement that created a denominational office complete with a fully salaried president, although there were only a handful of churches. The churches neither felt the need for such bureaucracy, nor were they convinced that the person appointed as president was the right person. Some groups have

formed a plethora of committees, working groups, and projects that may appear mature, advanced, and even prestigious, but end up being a hindrance like Saul's armor upon David. Schools, seminaries, hospitals, publishing houses and the like can serve the church well. But they can also be costly prestige objects. They should only be created at the initiative of the local churches and when those churches are adequately committed to bearing the lion's share of the financial responsibility and organizational leadership. Missionary enthusiasm should not push such projects ahead of the local churches' ownership and commitment.

Global Participation

One of the most exciting developments in recent decades has been the increase of cross-cultural missionaries being sent from the churches of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Of course, national workers have long been responsible for evangelism and mission efforts within their own country, but by some estimates the number of international missionaries being sent by Majority World churches now surpasses those sent from Western nations. As emerging movements grow and organize, participation in global missions through sending cross-cultural missionaries is the next step of development. This marks the full coming of age of any church planting movement. It is the very nature of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ and convince the world of its spiritual need (John 16:8-11, 14). The mark of a Spirit filled church is that its members become witnesses not only in their "Jerusalem," but also to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Emerging movements often struggle in two ways as they seek to send cross-cultural missionaries. The first is creating adequate sending and support structures, and the second is providing adequate preparation for cross-cultural ministry. For example, churches of China have not only experienced the most dramatic growth in the history of Christianity, but have developed a vision to send many thousands of international missionaries. Yet until now the actual numbers sent have been relatively low, and the attrition rate of missionaries sent exceedingly high. Some have been sent directly by their home church with little preparation, support or infrastructure. Others have cooperated with existing mission agencies outside of China, but with mixed and frustrating results. Emerging movements typically have little experience at cross-cultural ministry and lack missionary training opportunities. Sometimes it is assumed that the "missionary call" is preparation enough. But zeal without wisdom can result in harmful practices, repeating mistakes of the past, unnecessary failures, and a squandering of human and financial resources.

This fourth phase of movement development presents strategic opportunities for expatriate missionaries to leverage their impact for world missions. The Protestant church of the West has over two centuries of history and experience in missionary sending. Western missionaries can be valuable consultants and partners with emerging missionary movements. Here again, contextual approaches to missionary sending will need to be developed that do not merely replicate the historic sending structures of the Western church. In some cases, internationalization of mission agencies can be a healthy way forward as evidenced in the internationalization of agencies such as OMF, SIM, Pioneers, and others. However, in other cases, such partnerships may not be suitable or workable, and creative approaches will need to be developed.

International studies, such as those conducted by the World Evangelical Alliance, have found that thorough pre-field missionary orientation and formal missiological training

correspond to a reduction of avoidable missionary attrition. Until missionaries sent by emerging movements have gained more experience, assistance from experienced expatriate missionaries and missiologists will be necessary to develop cross-cultural missionary training programs. Western missionaries can offer valuable expertise and experience, teaching subjects such as intercultural communication, theology of mission, contextualization, mission history, language acquisition, and world religions—to name only a few.

Conclusion

A comprehensive approach to world mission requires an understanding of how movements develop and of the most strategic mission efforts at each of the four phases described here. Missionaries must partner with movements in ways appropriate to their level of development and need. In this sense it is not so much a matter of choosing between competing mission strategies, but of discerning which missionary role best fits a given local situation as part of the larger progress of emerging movements and world evangelization.

Of course each individual missionary has particular gifts, talents, and experience, and is thus better suited for the needs of some developmental phases than for others. As mission agencies and local churches discern how to best deploy personnel, they will need to consider the particular missionary's profile, and then discern the developmental needs of the various locations of ministry. Matching missionary profile with local need will be a key to effectiveness in advancing movements.

Craig Ott is professor of mission and intercultural studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School where he also directs the PhD program in intercultural studies. He has authored and edited numerous books and ministered in over forty countries.

Is "Missions" One More Casualty of Postmodern Wordplay?

Denny Spitters & Matthew Ellison

The last 24 months have been a tumultuous time for the evangelical community in America. The cultural and political fragmenting that were revealed in the 2016 presidential election have had ripple effects in the church, and the perennial debate surrounding the definition of the word "evangelical" has only intensified as some tribal lines defined by generational divisions, race, and political loyalty have become calcified and others have crumbled. "Evangelical" is not the only casualty of the postmodern battles waged over who gets to define the words that shape our understanding of the world. Consider words such as "gospel," "marriage," "male," and "female"—each of which possesses a broad range of definition, depending on one's theological and ideological presuppositions.

Although not laden with the same political and cultural baggage as the words above, we would argue that "missions" and "missionary" have faced similar definitional broadening—with eternal consequences. Just how much confusion is there in the Church about the meaning of these terms? Our combined experiences in working with hundreds of churches suggest the confusion is massive, and not just among churchgoers and members but church and missions leaders as well. If you were to do a quick survey of church leaders and mission-minded, missions-active people in your church, asking them just a couple of basic questions about the Great Commission, we are convinced that you would get many different and often conflicting answers.

Does the Bible provide any clear definitions for *mission, missions,* and *missionaries*? If these words aren't even found in the Bible, how can we expect the Bible to tell us what they mean? Eckhard Schnabel is considered one of the world's leading experts on missions in the New Testament and author of two 1000-page volumes on early Christian mission as well as the 500-page work *Paul the Missionary.* He says decisively, "The argument that the word *mission* does not occur in the New Testament is incorrect. The Latin verb *mittere* corresponds to the Greek verb *apostellein*, which occurs 136 times in the New Testament (97 times in the Gospels, used both for Jesus having been 'sent' by God and for the Twelve being 'sent' by Jesus)."[1] So mission-based words are in the Bible, and the core meaning has to

do with being "sent." But since definitions matter, how do we approach the multiple ways these words are used in the Church?

The terms *missio Dei, mission, missions,* and *missional* are used in many ways, and often not defined or clearly distinguished. But these terms are as different from one another as they are related and even interconnected to one another. Keeping Schnabel's observations in mind, let's take a closer look.

1. *Missio Dei* translates as "mission of God" and is used to signify all that God does in the world and all that He is doing to accomplish His objective, the complete exaltation of the fame of His name: "I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psalm 46:10).

2. *Mission* has a secular meaning; it often refers to either an underlying purpose (as in the term "mission statement") or a specific campaign or objective (as in a military or diplomatic mission). But it is also used to define the scope of all that God has given His Church to accomplish within the *missio Dei*; it may include all that God has called the Church to do in the world.

3. *Missional,* the most modern of the four terms, is an adjective used primarily to distinguish the ministry of the Church that happens beyond its four walls (as opposed to caring for its own). Some now use the term *missional* where they may have previously used *mission* or *missions*. This term has also been co-opted to describe a specific, progressive style of church, which is intentionally outreach-oriented (a missional church or a missional community).

4. *Missions* may be used as a synonym, perhaps a clunky or outdated one, for any of the terms above, and our British brothers and sisters are among those who prefer the more graceful term "mission" without necessarily a switch in meaning between the two. But *missions* also has a narrower meaning. It is used to refer to the work of the Church in reaching across cultural, religious, ethnic, and geographic barriers to advance the work of making disciples of all nations.

Missiologist Gary Corwin, in the article "MissionS: Why the 'S' Is Still Important," compares these four terms and one more: "In addition, establishing churches among those people groups and communities where Christ is least known has been distinguished over the last several decades as what *frontier missions* is all about."[2] Are all four terms needed? Despite the overlapping meanings, says Corwin, each has an important, particular emphasis, and when they are properly understood, each serves a useful purpose. The problem arises when the terms are used in ways for which they are inadequate and these emphases are lost, "To say, for example, that either the *missio Dei* and the mission of the church is synonymous, or that the mission of the church is all that one needs to focus on or be concerned about, runs the very real risk of simply defining everything as mission."[3]

In his book *Commissioned: What Jesus Wants You to Know As You Go,* Marvin Newell writes about the compelling unity of the five commissioning statements in the New Testament (John 20:21, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:44-49, and Acts 1:8), claiming that they contain all the essential ingredients for successful mission. Newell also makes the case that these commissions were given on five different occasions, in five different places, and each

with its own emphasis.[4] John 20:21 takes place immediately after the Resurrection, with the events described in Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:18-20, and Luke 24:44-49 coming next. Finally, Acts 1:8 takes place 40 days after the Resurrection, immediately before the Ascension. "Without question these five mission statements of Jesus make up the missional Magna Carta of the Church, from its inception, for today, and into the future," says Newell.[5] Within this biblical narrative, who is sending and who is being sent? To answer this question well, it is imperative to begin with the alignment of our thoughts and attitudes to God's master kingdom blueprint plan, the commission of His Church—starting with the end in mind.

God the Missionary

Revelation 7:9-10 provides the picture of the end of the mission. John's vision ushers us right to the final scene of the triumphant reality: the enthroned King is adored and worshipped by people from every tribe, language, and people. The divine initiation of this mission centers on the Messiah first mentioned in Genesis 3:15, making God both the sender and the sent one. God has woven this thread through biblical history for every age. This seems to be the central plot and theme of the Bible—it is the story of a missionary God who is both the "sent" one and the one "sending out." God has a mission. He Himself is the main character of the story—engaged as initiator and participant in the grand design of redeeming the greatest tragedy in history, the Fall of man, as He brings glory to Himself. He made the way for us to be reconciled and brought back into intimate relationship with Him by breaking the cycle of sin and judgment. God initiates by "sending out" the hope of redemption, His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus directly validates this plan and purpose in John 17: "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3).

What an incredible amazing God, whose intentional design and purpose both provides His people with the final framing picture and supplies the means to its fulfillment through the person and work of His Son—the One being sent from the God who is sending. This story of redemption is at the heart of the *missio Dei*. But is there a difference between the mission of God and the mission of the church?

The Mission of God and the Mission of the Church

Is the Church's mission everything God's mission is, or are there distinctions and differences? Here we see the influence of Christopher Wright, whose books *Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* and *The Mission of God's People* tackle this question. We find much to agree with in *The Mission of God*. Wright supports the concept of reading the Bible within the structure of its grand narrative. Rather than shining a spotlight on various parts of the inspired Scripture to discover what missions is, he fully asserts, "The God who walks the paths of history through the pages of the Bible pins a mission statement to every signpost on the way."[6] He is clear that we must look to Scripture for our understanding of missions: "…not just that the Bible contains a number of texts which happen to provide a rationale for missionary endeavor but that the whole Bible is itself a 'missional' phenomenon."[7]

Even as Wright aggressively addresses postmodern thinking with the Bible, he however blurs biblical distinctions about the mission of God and the mission of the Church. "It is of course not just a single narrative, like a river with only one channel. It is rather a complex

mixture of all kinds of smaller narratives, many of them rather self-contained, with all kinds of other material embedded within them—more like a delta."[8] Wright advances this concept by equating "all that God is doing in his great purpose for the whole of creation," with "all that he calls us to do in cooperation with that purpose," further expanding, "And it seems to me there are as many kinds of missions as there are kinds of sciences—probably far more in fact. … That is why I also dislike the old knock-down line that sought to ring-fence the word 'mission' for specifically cross-cultural sending of missionaries for evangelism: 'If everything is mission, then nothing is mission.' It would seem more biblical to say, 'If everything is mission… everything is mission.'"[9]

Though Wright seems to conclude that everything is mission, he provides little biblical hermeneutic to support his case. The Church was given a very specific mandate from Jesus, passed on to the disciples at His ascension; the Church is by no means equipped to carry out all that God does on the earth or in the universe. Though the mission of God, a divine gargantuan task, is assumed by Wright to be given to the Church, none of the early disciples or church fathers seem to have been occupied with this idea or this task.

Wright seems concerned that a Great Commission-based understanding of missions is too narrow. His view, in contrast, is surprisingly broad: "Holistic mission, then, is not truly holistic if it includes only human beings (even if it includes them holistically!) and excludes the rest of the creation for whose reconciliation Christ shed his blood (Colossians 1:20). Those Christians show they have responded to God's call to serve him through serving his nonhuman creatures in ecological projects are engaged in a specialized form of mission that has its rightful place within the broad framework of all that God's mission has as its goal."[10]

It is a given that missions is not one-dimensional proclamation divorced from demonstration. Yet does Wright's position go to too far in saying that creation care is an arm of holistic missions validated by "its rightful place within the broad framework of all the God's mission has as its goal?" We would assert that God's reconciliation of creation will not occur in the preservation of the earth through the endeavors of holistic ministry; God's reconciliation of the earth will be its purification by fire and the creation of a new one (Revelation 21:1). Becoming a "missionary to creation" may reflect on the renewal-of-nature theme in the *missio Dei,* but can only be embraced by stretching the mission of the Church far beyond the focus provided in the parameters of Scripture.

For many in evangelicalism today, God's mission of reconciling everything to Himself and the mission of the church are one and the same. Clearly the two must be connected. But we assert that they are not the same. God's scope is from eternity to eternity. As His disciples, we have a specific sub-plot in the redemption story and a distinct role under the authority of Christ and the commission of His Church.

Modern missions history shows us this: Whenever the primacy of disciple making and church planting have been replaced with efforts to eradicate the world's evil systems, diseases, and oppressions, the global disciple-making activities of the church have foundered. And, on the flip side, we can observe that the regions of the world that have seen the greatest democratic reforms and social welfare in the last 300 years are those where missionaries focused *most* on personal conversion through the preaching of the gospel and *least* on social transformation. Making disciples who birth the local church is the key to both evangelism and social transformation. Compassion ministry as missions—without the gospel as its primary vehicle for existence and expression—easily lapses into little more than humanistic accomplishment.

Centrality of Discipleship and the Nations

The historical, orthodox view of missions which has as its bulls-eye, its innermost circle, the making of disciples, has served the Church well—as is evidenced by the rapid world-wide expansion of Christianity during the past millennium. Careful observation of the book of Acts reveals that the primacy of making disciples of all nations and teaching them to obey all that Jesus had commanded them was the path the Church was to follow. Ferdinando emphasizes, "…There is a distinctive apostolic mission taking place in Acts which is an expression of explicit obedience to the great commission. Its focus is on winning people to the faith and to the way of life which that faith produces, and its method is proclamation of the word of Christ. It is also true that Acts portrays believers engaging in social action—caring for widows, for example—but that is a consequence of apostolic mission rather than its substance."[11]

A Case for Setting Priorities

Theologian and missiologist Christopher Little describes two positions held by evangelicals as "holism" and "prioritism." Those who view mission holistically see evangelism, disciple-making, and church planting as no more important than ministries of social justice and humanitarianism, while those who hold the prioritist position say that they are. And, Little says, "Those who advance evangelism as the priority in the mission of the church are now in the clear minority among self-described evangelicals."[12]

While few evangelicals want to see a dichotomy between word and deed—believing the church should minister through both—the author points out that one cannot logically claim that both, "there are priorities" and "there are no priorities" in mission; "One must be true and the other false; there are no other options. Hence, a choice must be made."[13] Little is also concerned that Christians in the West now give more to relief and development and other humanitarian causes than to foreign missions and are redefining the terms *gospel, kingdom,* and *missions* in unprecedented ways. These shifts in missions are largely unchallenged, but he sees them as a clear case of "mission drift."[14]

Staying on the Path

We are unapologetic and ardent activists for a narrow, Great-Commission-focused definition of missions that will that keep the Church on the path of making disciples of all nations. Maintaining a narrow definition of missions will be a more useful tool for the Church in fulfilling her mission, and the overall thrust of Scripture readily supports this emphasis. To cross the barriers that missions requires, we must bring significant focus and special emphasis in the Church to making disciples resulting in churches. Without this regular and specific emphasis on "making disciples of the nations," the needs and outreach of the local church will always, quite naturally, receive the greatest attention of our efforts and attention, while the voices of those with no access become a distant memory until next year's "Missions Sunday."

A sound biblical missions definition is crucial to the future of the evangelical Church. Defining missions in our relativistic, pluralistic era requires that we are committed to walking the path of God's redemptive mission, culminating in the collective worship of the Lamb by all nations, peoples, tribes, and tongues. That is the bedrock path of missions

to which we are called. No matter what process we use to define and carry out missions activity, this is the path our boots must travel. 📖

Article adapted from *When Everything Is Missions* (BottomLine Media, 2017)

Denny Spitters, Vice President of Church Partnerships for Pioneers USA, has served in many church staff roles as worship, missions, and small group pastor and understands the significance of missions in the local church.

Matthew Ellison, President and Church Missions Coach at Sixteen: Fifteen, served as a missions pastor at a mega-church for nine years, helping them transition from a reactive approach to world missions to proactive one. Since 2004 he has been coaching churches across the United States, helping them to develop missions vision and strategy that fulfills the biblical mandate.

Endnotes

1 Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies, and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 27-28.

2 Gary Corwin, "MissionS: Why the "S" Is Still Important," *EMQ* 53:2 (April 2017), https://emqonline.com/node/3643.

3 Ibid.

4 Marvin J. Newell, *Commissioned: What Jesus Wants You to Know as You Go* (Saint Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 2010), 23.

5 Ibid, 28.

6 Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IVP Academic, 2006), 23.

7 Ibid, 47.

8 Ibid, 22.

9 Ibid, 61.

10 Ibid, 416.

11 Ferdinando, "Mission: A Problem of Definition," 55.

12 Christopher R. Little, "The Case for Prioritism, Part 1," *Great Commission Research Journal* 7:2 (Winter 2016), 140, http://journals.biola.edu/gcr/volumes/7/issues/2/articles/139.

13 Ibid, 148

14 Ibid.

International Day for the Unreached: An Interview

Steve Johnson

The International Day for the Unreached (IDU) is now in its third year. As a movement, it is increasingly gaining momentum and recognition. However, many are still unaware of this concerted focus on the unreached. To help bring a broader awareness to this important day and movement, EMQ interviewed Steve Johnson, a founding member and a spokesperson for IDU.

EMQ: Steve, just what is the International Day for the Unreached?

Steve: About four years ago a colleague of mine and I were talking about all of the different things people advocate for—everything from lost puppies to the persecuted church. That conversation sparked a burden in my friend's heart that was really the birth of the International Day for the Unreached.

When you consider there are more than 2.5 billion people who haven't heard the gospel in a relevant or accurate way, it's simply staggering. How can it be that in today's world of mass communication, Internet technology, and the ability to travel anywhere in the world in a matter of hours, that nearly 1/3 of the world's population hasn't heard? Of the 2.5 billion people who have yet to hear, about 90% of them live in places where teaching the message of Christ openly is forbidden at some level. As a result, most of these people will likely never personally meet a Christian.

EMQ: What is the purpose of observing this special day focused on the unreached?

Steve: Our purpose with IDU is three-fold:

We want to educate believers about the plight of those who have never heard. So many Christians today are unaware because the issue isn't talked about much anymore.

We want to inspire people to care. Jesus was clear. Eternity is at stake. The lost are close to His heart, and therefore, they need to be close to ours. I believe that when a Christian begins to really understand the depth of God's love for them as

an individual, that understanding naturally leads to a passion for those who have not yet experienced His love.

We want to motivate people to action. The Alliance for the Unreached has a manifesto that begins, "We will not stand idly by as people enter eternity without Christ, when we can reach them." The last two dialogues Jesus had on earth had to do with taking the message to the world. He did not give us the "Great Suggestion." These were marching orders to His disciples. That's the bottom line. We want people to respond to God's love for us by passing it on to those who still desperately need it.

EMQ: You just mentioned the Alliance for the Unreached. What is that?

Steve: The more we dug into the modern challenges of reaching the unreached, it became clear that organizations, churches, and individuals who were concerned about the plight of the unreached needed to do something to raise the banner. That realization birthed IDU. It was also the beginning of the work to form a coalition of like-minded organizations to unite around this cause and begin to advocate for a renewed passion among believers to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Today, this coalition is called the Alliance for the Unreached, and these ministries all work together to host the International Day for the Unreached.

It didn't take long for several ministries to catch the vision. In 2016 we officially formed the Alliance for the Unreached. It was originally comprised of Reach Beyond, Wycliffe Bible Translators, The Seed Company, Bibles For The World, Operation Mobilization, and Missio Nexus. Since then we have added World Mission, Partners International, ZimZam Global, and Mission Network News.

We'd love to have others join in! Our prayer is that one day, any ministry focused on reaching the unreached would stand with the Alliance in some form or fashion so that the Christian world would see us united in fulfilling the Great Commission in our generation.

EMQ: Remind our readers of the importance of focusing on the unreached. How many people are still considered outside the reach of the Gospel? What is the current reality?

Steve: On one hand, we're closer than ever to reaching those who have never heard. On the other hand, we've got a long way to go. When you consider the number 2.5 billion in total, the number is pretty daunting. But when you break that number down into the details, suddenly it becomes much more manageable if churches and ministries would simply come together with a unified strategy.

Today there are roughly 1,900 people groups that are less than 2% Christian by population. There are about 500 people groups that have no Christian witness whatsoever. Again, this may seem a bit discouraging. But consider that in the U.S. alone, there are more than 300,000 churches. What would it look like for each church to implement even a small effort to reach just one unreached group? If that happened, we could make significant progress toward the goal. I realize that this is a gross oversimplification. The point is, fulfilling the Great Commission is not impossible. We as churches and believers just need to be committed to making it happen.

EMQ: Is it really possible to reach the remaining unreached?

Steve: The resources are available if we choose to allocate them. We have the technical and logistical tools to pull it off. The real question is, do we have the will and passion? To me that's the foundational question.

I heard a quote that said, "Since 9/11 the church has built its own twin towers called 'safety and security.'" That really struck me. So many churches today fall into one of two categories. First, they simply aren't aware of the issue of unreached people. If they were aware, they would spring into action and do their part.

Second, they may not be aware, but more alarmingly, they may not care. Many churches have turned inward. In some respects, many churches have a rich worship experience or solid biblical teaching, but sometimes that has replaced the outward expression Jesus commanded us as believers to demonstrate.

David Platt said in his 2017 IDU keynote address, "When it comes to reaching the world with the gospel, we are Plan A and there is no Plan B." Certainly the Spirit of God moves in amazing ways and places. But in the end, the responsibility to proclaim the name of Christ to the nations was given to us. It was intended to be a core byproduct of our faith. It seems that in many cases, there is a disconnect between our understanding of the Scripture and our efforts to see that everyone has a chance to hear the Word.

I don't mean to paint with a broad brush, but in some cases the numbers speak for themselves. For instance, of all the money given to Christian causes, only about one percent goes to reaching the unreached. In addition, only about five percent of the missionaries serving in foreign fields are serving among unreached people.

At the same time, I'm convinced that if every believer and every church did just their part, giving, praying, advocating, and going, we might be shocked at what happens. Again, the work is up to the Holy Spirit, but if we as His vessels were pulling together, who knows what could happen.

EMQ: Why was the Day of Pentecost chosen as the specific day to focus on the unreached annually?

Steve: We all know the story—the wind begins to blow, tongues of fire descend from heaven and light on the heads of the believers. People from all over the world suddenly had the ability to communicate the gospel in languages that were completely foreign to them. From there, believers were dispersed around the known world, and they took the gospel with them. Of all the miracles of God, the spread of the church from Pentecost forward is perhaps one of the least talked about, yet most astounding. Never before and never since has a message that faced so much opposition spread so quickly and had so much impact. I truly believe it is one of the greatest miracles in all of Scripture.

When you really stop to think about it, Pentecost gives us a special glimpse into the heart of God. In the Matthew passage Jesus begins by saying, "All authority in heaven has been given to me. Therefore…" Then again, in Acts 1:8, Jesus said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will be my witnesses…" In both of those cases, Jesus refers to the power that equips believers to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

God was literally willing to impart the power of His Spirit to us so that we could point others to Him. That's how important the lost are in God's economy. When the Holy Spirit descended on Pentecost, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy, God enabled his people to do what He commanded them to do. They weren't alone. They were operating in the divine power of His Spirit.

That was the beginning of the gospel going global, *but it certainly wasn't intended to be the end.* The same Spirit that empowered the first century believers to spread the Word still empowers us today. While the methods may be different, the message and power are the same.

So when we asked the question, "When should we host the International Day for the Unreached?" the answer, which actually came from Wayne Pederson, our Chairman, was obvious—Pentecost Sunday. What better day to raise the cause and reignite the passion for the unreached?

EMQ: What special event has a broadcast on that day, and how can it be attended/viewed?

Steve: We really feel our efforts to raise awareness and advocacy for this cause needs to culminate with an annual event that captures the hearts and minds of Christ-followers in North America and beyond.

On Pentecost Sunday in 2017, we hosted an event that featured Phil Stacey, Christian recording artist, former American Idol finalist, and passionate missionary. Becky Harling, noted author and speaker and wife of Steve Harling from Reach Beyond, co-hosted the virtual event. David Platt, author of *Radical* and President of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptists, was our keynote speaker. David is recognized as one of the world's leading voices of advocacy for the unreached.

Finally, we featured the president of each of the Alliance members sharing their heart and passion for the gospel and the globe. The whole event was tremendous. It was filled with music, information, vision, and motivation. To date, more than 20,000 people have viewed the event that was streamed on Facebook.

In 2018, we want to extend the reach even further. Ultimately, we want every believer reaching out until everyone is reached. In the meantime, all of the resources for the International Day for the Unreached are available at dayfortheunreached.org, including the 2017 full-length event.

EMQ: Is IDU a one-day event only or is it more than that?

Steve: The International Day for the Unreached is a day—that's true. But by God's grace, it's the culmination of the ongoing effort to reignite a passion for the unreached. The term "grassroots movement" is thrown around a lot these days. But that's what we hope IDU becomes.

The members of the Alliance want to "lead from behind" so to speak. We want to be vehicles through which thousands of Christ's followers can exercise their role in reaching the least reached. We all long for the day when every ministry focused on the unreached works themselves out of business—a day when everyone on earth has access to the gospel and the opportunity to make a decision.

That's the vision—people residing in the presence of God because the Church rose up and determined to make His name known to all people, everywhere. That may sound grandiose, but Revelation 5:9 tells us that His blood ransomed people from *every* tribe and language and people and nation. That pretty much covers everyone.

But for that vision to be fully realized, the Body of Christ must unite around the common goal of being His ambassadors around the world.

EMQ: What resources are available, especially to churches, so that they can lead their people into a greater understanding of the unreached?

Steve: The Alliance for the Unreached wanted to make sure anyone interested in participating is fully equipped. As a result, we developed an entire suite of content for use by churches, media outlets, and individuals. These resources include video spots, sermon outlines, geo-data, radio spots, bulletin inserts, the Manifesto for the Unreached, and a lot more.

All these resources are available to anyone free of charge. Simply by visiting dayfortheunreached.org, people can download any of the resources for use from the pulpit, small groups, Sunday school, social media—really anywhere a person wants to advocate for the cause.

In 2017, we were hoping to reach a significant audience in the U.S. Little did we know what God had in mind. We received web hits from people downloading these resources from more than 170 countries, including some of the most gospel-resistant places on earth. God is definitely at work in this initiative.

EMQ: Can you give us a story of how IDU helped impact a church to more fully focus on the unreached:

Steve: Certainly. Thousands of churches in North America benefited from the resources provided by the Alliance at dayfortheunreached.org. But there were two unexpected encounters in 2017 that brought a smile of thanks and tears to my eyes.

One afternoon I received an email from a Christian publisher in France. He was burdened by the cause of the unreached, especially with the influx of Middle Eastern refugees flooding into Western Europe. He stumbled across our website doing some research and was astounded by the content and message he found.

He immediately reached out to me and asked for a license to translate the content into French and launch the initiative there. "No license required," I told him. The resources are there for you to use. He ended up translating all of the resources and launched a French version of IDU.

In another "chance encounter," I received a message from an evangelist in Ireland. He wanted to share with churches why the story of Pentecost was still relevant today. While doing some research, he "stumbled" across the website, saying that the content and initiative were answers to his prayer. He asked if he could use the resources. He ended up getting several churches in Ireland involved in IDU.

EMQ: Media and social media are used to promote awareness of not only the specific IDU day, but also of the unreached in general. How do the IDU organizers utilize these? Where might one encounter such?

Steve: Traditional and social media have been primary drivers of our message to churches, radio listeners, social media users, etc. In today's world of instantaneous mass communication, there aren't many causes that gain traction without leveraging these channels.

The primary channels we're using to raise awareness are our website, dayfortheunreached.org and a Facebook page, Facebook.com/dayfortheunreached. We want everyone to make their voice heard through these channels. In addition, radio has been a huge

channel through which the message has been shared. Moody Radio Network, many Salem stations, and countless independent stations have joined the cause in promoting IDU and the cause of the unreached in general.

I encourage anyone interested in being a part of raising awareness to visit the IDU website to find web banners, Facebook images, radio spots, sermon outlines, bulletin inserts, and a host of other resources that will equip you with all the tools you need.

EMQ: How can other groups or organizations join the IDU coalition as either Alliance members or advocates, and what are the expectations?

Steve: We have an invitation process through which we consider new Alliance members. Any organization interested in joining the Alliance should contact our leadership directly. Jon Fugler from Reach Beyond is the current chairman of the Alliance. He can be reached at jfugler@reachbeyond.org. Jeff McLinden, of Bibles For The World is the vice chair of the Alliance and can be reached at jmclinden@bftw.org.

We don't want joining the Alliance to be cumbersome for anyone. However, we do require that the organization is established and effective in reaching those who have never heard. We have historically never required a financial commitment, but we now realize that each member organization should have some "stake in the game." We also recognize that it takes resources to proclaim any message.

In addition, each member ministry is required to advocate for the cause through their respective channels including media presence, donors and constituents, church networks, etc. Each member is asked to carry their load in elevating the cause in general.

EMQ: Thanks, Steve, for helping us understand more fully the International Day for the Unreached movement. In closing is there anything else you would like to add?

Steve: Ultimately, the cause of reaching unreached peoples isn't about the Alliance or about those who participate as advocates. The task belongs to *every* believer—our final order from the King of Kings, who has left this challenge to us and to His Church. It's time to finish the task. 📖

Steve Johnson, until recently, a vice president at Reach Beyond, is now Associate Publisher with Focus On The Family.

Discipleship in Christendom … and Beyond

Gerald L. Sittser and Carlos Calderon

JOHN 15:16
You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain.

JOHN 15:8
By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

After close to 74 years of cross-cultural experience, primarily among Muslims but also among animists, Hindus and Buddhists, we rejoice in what we have seen of late: A move to the understanding that glorifying God is not only about sharing the Gospel, but intentionally discipling and fostering spiritual growth among those who make the decision to follow Christ. The goal is disciples, not just converts. The result of such an aim is that in striving for disciples, we ourselves prove to be disciples! Missions efforts around the world are increasingly bringing to the forefront the fact that the Great Commission has not changed its emphasis from "teaching them to obey everything."

At Partners International, we are heavily involved in Disciple Making Movements (DMM), and we are strong advocates of Training for Trainers (T4T), "Big 1,"and many indigenous adaptations of such methodologies. We concentrate on the 10/40 Window, or the area of the world with the greatest number of unreached people groups in Africa and Asia between 10 and 40 degrees latitude north of the Equator.

But it is not by might, nor by power, or methodologies, but by "my Spirit" says the Lord. While the results reported from the field indicate a crescendo in the number of people coming to faith in Christ, we are even more delighted to say that "converts" are not the objective. Rather the indigenous or local church planters we work with (in some 37 countries in the 10/40 Window) are resolutely aiming at "fruit that will last." They are going for disciples, by God's grace, in the power of the Spirit.

During a recent exchange with Matt, the Partners International Area Directors

in Asia, we posed the question of shallow conversions and of fruit that would NOT last. The answer was reaffirming:

"We share this concern. We find that those who pray with us to receive Christ but do not take the step of baptism, we are treating as an open person and not a believer. Open people are led through a six-lesson Bible study of sacrifice stories from the prophets in the Old Testament. We are working to re-teach the Gospel to them rather than just go off and leave them in limbo.

"Secondly, we are seeing a much higher rate of people joining groups, fellowships, and house churches where the open people are reached through the new believers. So, our emphasis and goal is to make disciples and make the local believer the disciple maker. We are now seeing our fifth generation of church planters/disciple makers."

Historical overview of discipleship through the ages

As we increasingly move to implement more intentional disciple making strategies, it is good to make a quick review of history, with applications to our own current American reality.

The West's experience and memory of Christendom has shaped how Christians have viewed and practiced missions for centuries. It has carried and in some cases imposed several bad habits on non-western cultures, even and especially in its mission efforts. Since about the year 1000, the entire West, except for pockets of Jews and Muslims, has identified itself as Christian. Christianity has functioned as the "default" faith for the vast majority of people. If we could travel back in time to the year 1200 or the year 1600, we would be hard pressed to find a person living in the West who did not claim to be Christian, and we would observe the visible and concrete presence of Christianity everywhere.

The dominance of Christendom has forced the church to adapt, especially in recognizing the gap between nominal Christians and functional disciples, which reflects the difference between the Christianity of Christendom and the Christianity of the kingdom. Much of the religious fervor and creativity of Christian renewal movements in the West have embodied attempts to make the Christian West truly Christian, to turn converts into disciples and church-goers into true believers.

Meanwhile, the church in other parts of the world is growing, and it has not had to fuss nearly as much with the problems that have preoccupied the West for so many centuries. It has no interest—and no need, in fact—to Christianize Christendom. If anything, it has had to resist or purge the bad habits it inherited from the West. Chief among them is the assumption that Christians can actually choose their level of commitment to Christ, as if there were a kind of A level, B level, and C level of Christian faith and practice. For example, one can become a church member but remain relatively inactive. One can experience a conversion but not progress much beyond it. One can get involved in church programs and activities but not translate that to secular spheres of influence (like work and neighborhood). Only a few will take discipleship seriously. Christendom allows for gradations of commitment, from low to high, and makes choice concerning level of commitment a genuine option. Jesus did not give us that option. He called his followers to deny self, take up cross and follow him. In Jesus' mind, that was—and is—true Christianity.

It might be wise at this point to return to a period of history before Christendom ever existed. For its first 250 years, the Christian movement grew and flourished with no state favoritism and cultural support. It was an outsider religion, both new and different. It faced suspicion and opposition, and it challenged most everything that pagan Rome held dear. One reason for the church's success is that it cultivated a culture of discipleship among its members, as if to give the impression that there was only one kind of Christianity and one level of commitment. We would suggest that there is much we can learn from this movement.

Christians knew how to both blend in AND stand out. On the surface of things, they appeared to live like everyone else. They spoke the local language, wore local styles of clothing, ate local food, shopped in local markets, and followed local customs. "For Christians cannot be distinguished from the rest of the human race by country or language or custom. They constituted a new race of people and followed a new way of life. Rome could not so easily monitor and control this group.[1]

This movement grew steadily, though unevenly, for some 250 years under Rome's watchful and sometimes hostile eye. It is impossible to calculate exact figures. But it is safe to say that Christians numbered roughly 5,000 in the year 50 and 5,000,000 by the year 300, worshipping in some 65,000 house churches of varying sizes.[2] Yet Christians enjoyed few of the benefits that Christians take for granted today, at least in the West. They faced sporadic persecution for over 200 years. Rodney Stark argues that this sustained growth over such a long period of time and under such circumstances is unprecedented in the history of new religious movements.[3]

The movement was different enough from its rivals to require the Church to develop a process, lasting from one to three years, that helped transition converts from paganism to Christianity. This process was called the *catechumenate*. It allowed Christianity to grow slowly and steadily over a long period of time, largely because the process itself turned a critical mass of converts into functional disciples. They adapted to the culture without excessive compromise. They also kept their distance from the culture without excessive withdrawal and isolation. Rome had good reason to be nervous![4]

Early Christian leaders borrowed and adapted the language of Roman athletic competition to reinforce the importance of readiness, training, and rigor. There could be no spectators in the church, only athletes, for spectators were sure to fail and fold under the pressure of living in pagan culture and facing possible persecution. The references to athletic training and competition appear often in early Christian literature, and the intent is nearly always the same—to encourage and charge Christians to submit themselves to a regimen of discipline and to live as real disciples.

The use of athletic metaphors points to a view of discipleship which was embodied in a commitment to genuine faith in Christ, discipline of the appetites, cultivation of virtue, service to the needy, and faithfulness under persecution. Spiritual training in the Church was intended to include everyone, not simply men but women, not simply the young but the old and infirmed, not simply elites but ordinary people. The only qualification was a willingness to follow Jesus as Lord.[5]

The use of the *catechumenate*

By the early third century it appears that some kind of formal training program was in place, which the documents refer to as the *catechumenate*. The most comprehensive

description we have comes from the *Apostolic Tradition*.[6] Corroborating evidence from Church Fathers like Tertullian and Origen tells us that the *catechumenate* was in wide use by the early third century.[7]

The *Apostolic Tradition* outlines the basic structure of the ancient *catechumenate*, highlighting three features in particular: enrollment, instruction, and rites of initiation. What becomes immediately obvious is the importance of relationships (or what sociologists call social networks), the value of training that addressed behavior as well as belief, and the necessity of a concrete process of initiation that would mark the point of entrance into the community of faith.

First, the document explains the process of enrollment. The Christian movement grew at the grassroots level, at least in the second and third centuries. Christians reached their relatives, friends, and neighbors through daily interaction in public places. Such a web of relationships demonstrated the kind of love that existed within the Christian community, which meant that the church itself became a primary means of evangelization, a relational womb of rebirth.[8] Thus evangelism occurred in the setting of natural social relationships.[9] Once contact was made and interest awakened, believers invited their friends to meet with a church leader, who would examine them to see if they were ready to be enrolled in the *catechumenate* and thus enroll and become "catechumens" and begin the process of training. In most cases the believers who brought their friends served as the "sponsor," also known as the godparent, moving through the entire process with them as a companion and mentor. Relationships, therefore, functioned as a necessary part of the training program.

Second, the document requires church leaders to provide instruction to catechumens, and it adds that sponsors should sit through the instruction with them. Sponsors were thus exposed to basic instruction in the faith more than once. Moreover, they served as a kind of relational link between the catechumens and the church, which put them in a position to clarify the instruction and help apply it to the daily life of catechumens, as if participating in a kind of spiritual apprenticeship program.

The *Apostolic Tradition* states the intended outcome of the instruction, which was not simply greater knowledge but also change in conduct. Moreover, it requires that instructors do more than teach doctrine; it urges them to pray for the catechumens. Finally, it makes clear that catechumens were welcomed into the fellowship but could not become full and final members until after they were baptized. Thus after instruction and prayer, the catechumens were dismissed before baptized members gave the kiss of peace and received the Eucharist. Such exclusion from certain rites only buttressed their sacred quality.

Third, at the end of the formal training period catechumens participated in a highly choreographed "rites of initiation," which usually occurred during Holy Week and culminated on Easter when the bishop administered baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist. The process began with another examination, with the sponsor bearing witness to the catechumen's readiness. What one believed mattered, of course; but how one lived mattered, too. "And when they have chosen who are set apart to receive baptism let their life be examined, whether they lived piously while catechumens, whether 'they honored the widows,' whether they visited the sick, whether they have fulfilled every good work. If those who bring them witness to them that they have done thus, then let them hear the Gospel."[10]

Rites of initiation

The rites of initiation included exorcisms, anointing, fasting, vigils, scrutiny, renunciation of the devil, affirmation of faith, Trinitarian baptism, symbolic use of clothing, congregational welcome, kiss of peace, recitation of the Creed, administration of the Eucharist, exhortation, and final instructions during Easter week.[11]

Thus by the early third century the *catechumenate* involved three discrete stages.[12] It began with informal contact with non-believers, which led to formal enrollment, initial examination, and involvement of a sponsor. It then provided instruction in the biblical story, the creed, and the Christian way of life, assuming that such knowledge would lead to genuine change of life. Finally, it culminated in Holy Week, when church leaders scrutinized candidates one more time and led them through a highly choreographed process of initiation that involved fasting, prayer, vigils, exorcisms, anointing, baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist. Thus belief, belonging, and behavior were woven together into a seamless whole, no one element predominating over the others.

The long reign of Christendom in the West is coming to an end, which is forcing the Church to consider once again what it means to function as an outsider institution.[13] Such a change of status is also challenging the Church to reconsider the role of the ancient *catechumenate*. What might rediscovery and recovery of this ancient institution imply?

Application to the West today

At this point, the West has a great deal to learn from the global Church, for most churches around the world do not function in a Christendom setting. They cannot afford to make discipleship an option for the few. The various DMM movements flourishing around the world are starting to make their way to the western world. The emergence of Christendom created bad habits in the West. We are being forced now to unlearn them and purge them. There is only one option in the Christian faith, and that is discipleship—an apprenticeship with Jesus, a life imbued with grace and devoted to radical obedience. That is the kind of culture that the western Church needs. The early Christian period provides us with one model, the global Church is providing many more models.

The goal is the same: Making Disciples. 📖

Gerald L. Sittser is Professor of Theology and Senior Fellow in the Office of Church Engagement at Whitworth University.

Carlos Calderon serves as Vice President of International Ministries, Partners International. Visit: https://www.partnersintl.org/

Endnotes

1   *The So-Called Letter to Diognetus*, in *Early Christian Fathers*, ed. Cyril C. Richardson (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 215-16.

2   The best we can do is estimate. Adolf Harnack was the first to calculate numbers. He identified the specific cities and towns to which Christianity spread by the year 300 and even tried to count actual numbers of churches. See Adolf Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, Vol II, trans. James Moffatt (San Bernardino, 2017) and Rodney Stark, *The Cities of God* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006).

3   Rodney Stark, *Cities of God: The Real Story of How Christianity Became an Urban Movement and Conquered Rome* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006).

4   See Gerald L. Sittser, "The Catechumenate and the Rise of Christianity," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care*, Vol. 6, Issue 2 (Fall 2013), 179-203; Edward Yarnold, S.J., *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: The Origins of the R.C.I.A.*, Second Edition (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1994); Michel Dujarier, *The History of the Catechumenate: The First Six Centuries*, trans. Edward J. Haasl (New York: Sadier, 1979); Alan Kreider, *The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom* (Eugen: Wipf & Stock, 1999).

5   Donald G. Kyle, *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007); Victor C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967).

6   Hippolytus, *On the Apostolic Tradition*, trans. Alistair Stewart-Sykes (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001).

7   It is natural to ask to what extent a document such as this merely described what was already widely practiced or prescribed what the author hoped would happen. This problem presents itself when reading any descriptive document from the early Christian period. That it reads as a manual indicates that it probably describes what in fact was practiced, however inadequately and incompletely.

8   Thomas Finn, "Ritual Process and the Survival of Early Christianity: A Study of the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus," *Journal of Ritual Studies* Vol. 3, No. 1, 69-89; Robert E. Webber, *Journey to Jesus: The Worship, Evangelism, and Nurture Mission of the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 65-72; Tory K. Baucum, *Evangelical Hospitality: Catechetical Evangelism in the Early Church and Its Recovery for Today* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2008).

9   Both Jan Bremmer and Robin Lane Fox argue that we know of few if any evangelists during this period, implying that the work of evangelism was done by ordinary believers.

10   *Apostolic Tradition*, 105-06.

11   *Apostolic Tradition*, 106.

12   By the fourth century, and perhaps earlier, the church added a fourth stage, largely because catechumens waited so long before submitting to baptism. In this case catechumens enrolled in a short training program that occurred during Lent, which culminated in their participation of the rites of initiation during Holy Week. The western church called this special group *competentes*.

13   See two recent books on the end of Christendom in the west: Stuart Murray, *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004) and Douglas John Hall, ed., *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1997).

A Biblical Theology of Partnership in Mission

Atul Y. Aghamkar, PhD

The words partnership, cooperation, coalition, alliances, networking, and inter-dependence have become buzzwords and have taken on greater significance in mission circles in recent years. Although the issue of partnership is discussed, reflected upon and responded to at various levels, the Church's mission, especially in our globalized world, is far from being involved in real and meaningful partnerships that are biblically grounded and theologically appropriate. In an increasingly globalized world, it is imperative that we develop a sound Biblical Theology of partnership.

In general terms, partnership is understood to be an arrangement where two or more parties agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interest, objectives, and goals. Cooperation between two or more parties to pursue a set of agreed upon goals while remaining independent organizations, is at the heart of any partnership. It is neither a merger nor losing one's identity; rather it is a mutual commitment to accomplish a common goal with each party's distinct contributions. Most partnerships are aimed at amplifying mutual interest and success though they pose equally delicate challenges.

A Christian Imperative of Partnership

Scripture is filled with images, symbols, and practices of partnership and even extols it. Luis Bush and Lorry Lutz succinctly point out, "The Christian faith is replete with models of partnership." They argue that "Our partnership with Christ is a fellowship which demonstrates his life and reality to a watching world."[1] There is a strong biblical imperative for partnership in mission. The very fact that the scope of the Great Commission is global demands global partnership. The very fact that the Christian faith is not a solitary faith implies the necessity of partnership at every level.

Obviously, numerous complications arise with regard to understanding partnership let alone applying it to Christian mission and ministry contexts. This is partly due to the fact that the issue of partnership is vast, complex, and

multi-dimensional. Since partnership has different connotations for different people in different contexts, the application of partnership in real mission and ministry situations is never easy. And yet the need of partnership at every level of Christian mission and ministry is evident.

Biblical Insights for Partnership

We can derive insights on the significance of unity, partnership, and trust from the various perspectives that the Bible offers. With a general overview of the biblical understanding and guidelines for partnership, I highlight the significance of the Pauline model as a paradigm for today's partnership initiatives.

Creational Perspective

It is of interest to gain some insights about partnership and stewardship from the very first book of the Bible. The creation account in Genesis, that delineates God's original intention for men and women, is a natural starting point for developing a theology of partnership that indicates that God made all humankind in his own image—both male and female. They were jointly to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, and share dominion over all things.

Trinitarian Perspective

The doctrine of trinity is another important dimension of the mutuality of the helper/partner relationship between women and men results from the innate qualities of our Triune God—mutuality, harmony, and unity! It is important to note that God's character, person, and function as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, are uniquely and distinctly three yet also always one. Likewise, even though men and women may be different in person and function, they too can experience mutuality, harmony, and unity in service and leadership within the Kingdom of God.

Unity in Jesus' High Priestly Prayer

The prayer of Jesus found in John 17:20–23 is perhaps the most compelling passage of Scripture that addresses the subjects of unity and mission together. During this extended time of prayer, Jesus prays for himself, his disciples, and for future believers. It is within this prayer we find Jesus' prayer for the future believers. Jesus prayed for unity among the believers of the future. The unity that He prayed for was modeled after the inter-relationship, or community, within the Godhead. The unity that he prayed for was not a state of unity for unity's sake. On the contrary, this unity would have a purpose. The unity was intended to provide a convincing testimony, a believable platform upon which the gospel might be preached, so that the world would believe that the Father sent the Son.

Unity in the Body

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul exhorts the believers to practice a lifestyle of unity. Ephesians chapter 4 is a principal transition of his letter to them.[2] In the first three chapters of the epistle, Paul emphasizes the theology and truth of what it means to be a child of God. In chapter 4, he begins to teach the Ephesian believers how to act like children of God.[3] The starting point for this lifestyle of Christ-centered action is unity. Eph. 4:1–5 describes that so vividly. The church in Ephesus was a church of enormous ethnic and

regional diversities. Jews and Gentiles came to faith in Christ had been united by God in Him. We have within this early church a potential model for unity and partnership in our current mission contexts.

Koinonia – A Unique Expression of Partnership

The Greek noun, *koinonia*, is most often translated and understood to mean "fellowship." For Paul, this was the most appropriate term to be used to describe the unity and bond between Christians.[4] It is a Greek word that has found a common usage even in English-speaking churches in the West. Fellowship is a common principle, even recognized by many today as one of the fundamental purposes of the church.[5]

Interestingly, this noun, which is commonly translated as "fellowship," may also be translated as "participation" or "partnership." In texts such as Philippians 1:3–5 (NASB), it is translated as follows: "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your *participation* in the gospel from the first day until now." The New International Version (NIV) renders the same passage as follows: "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your *partnership* in the gospel from the first day until now."

It seems that *koinonia* is the New Testament word that is nearest in meaning to the English word "partnership."[6] Warren concurs with this translation, stating that *koinonia* indicates both partnership and intimate fellowship. The term expresses a two-sided connection, and it assumes that a brotherly relationship exists among believers. This connection includes purpose and results—such as giving, sharing property, and breaking bread.[7] If we share the same Lord, claim the same faith, and are indwelled by the same Holy Spirit, then we must be open both to partnership as well as fellowship. They are two sides of the same coin. This is the very heart of biblical *koinonia*. As such, we cannot ignore the biblical mandate to serve in partnership with other believers, even across great geographic and cultural distances, within the mission of God.

Paul's Model of Partnership

Although a number of principles can be drawn from the Bible for partnership in missions, Paul's ministry is relevant because most of it was undertaken in the context of comprehensive partnership in mission and ministry. Paul demonstrated a keen sense of partnership with God, since he was fully aware that his work involved fulfilling God's plan of salvation for all mankind. Therefore, he always considered himself as "God's co-worker." This collaboration at the vertical level does not denote an equal partnership. At best, it indicates the bipolarity of ministry.[8] However, he implied that as a co-worker with God, he had the authority of God himself. Because of this sense of partnering with God, Paul developed a strong commitment to partnership which was evident in various aspects of his life and ministry.

Partnership with the Church

Paul's life and ministry clearly demonstrate significant partnership with the Church. He was initially associated with the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch and then eventually with those churches that he was instrumental in planting. He maintained strong links with the church in Jerusalem, without whose blessing his mission to the Gentiles might have been in jeopardy because Paul preached about the righteousness that comes from

Christ (and not from the Law). Although he wanted to be in good relationship with Jerusalem church, Paul's preaching of the gospel wasn't entirely dependent on the blessing of the mother church; he preached regardless of their blessings. Paul remained committed to the church throughout his ministry. He was committed to the church, even when the church was not understanding and appreciative of his ministry initiatives. That's the beauty of Paul's partnership, without whose blessings his mission to the Gentiles might have been in jeopardy. For at least two decades, the Jerusalem church was regarded as the 'mother church' and Paul was wise enough to recognize the importance of keeping in touch with this influential church. Even when he moved out of Jerusalem and went as a missionary from Antioch to Asia Minor, Paul kept his commitment to the mother Church in Jerusalem.

After moving to Antioch and being sent from there as a missionary, again Paul's basic approach to missions was strongly Church-centered. He planted churches and established meaningful networks and partnership between them (Acts 11:30; 21:19). Roland Allen's comments on this are worth noting: "Paul did not set out on his missionary journey as a solitary prophet, the teacher of a solitary individualistic religion. He was sent forth as the messenger of a Church, to bring men into fellowship with that body."[9] According to Allen, Paul's mission was strongly anchored in the Church and he never forgot the central place of the Church even as he went on his missionary journeys. Paul maintained a strong sense of commitment and accountability to the sending church while working as a missionary to the Gentiles (Acts 14:27). Such commitment to the churches enabled him to develop meaningful partnerships for his ongoing mission and ministry to Jews and Gentiles in Asia Minor and beyond. Consequently, Paul's partnership with the sending Church, as well as with the churches that he was instrumental in planting, proved to be vital to his overall ministry.

Partnership with Fellow-Ministers

While being keen on partnership with the church, Paul made every effort to team up with fellow ministers. These included various kinds of people who were available for partnership in the ministry with Paul. Indeed, the whole foundation for partnership stemmed from Paul's conviction that the ministry of the gospel is a God-given ministry to all and hence all of God's people should be involved. Being a very able and educated person, the natural temptation for him would have been to be on his own, but Paul consciously developed a deep sense of partnership with other ministers even when most of his co-workers were below par.

Paul's ministry required a lot of networking and partnering with fellow ministers. His approach was similar to that of Jesus Christ who demonstrated as well as taught the importance of togetherness. Paul knew that the task was too huge for him to accomplish it on his own. He depended on many co-workers who were supportive of his efforts and who rendered their wholehearted cooperation. At times it was not easy for him to work in a team but he resolutely kept his commitment to partnership.

Initially, he was called to partner with Barnabas, who was his senior and an established leader of the Churches in Jerusalem and Antioch, but later he began selecting his fellow partners. His preference for them was not dictated solely by his desire for friendship or companionship, but was part of his strategy as an expert builder (1 Cor. 3:10). There are a range of fellow workers with different gifts and commitments playing their parts in fulfilling the task. Many times he chose people as he ministered in various contexts and allowed

them to work with him for a while before they were entrusted with the responsibility of carrying on their own. Different team members were added all the time in his ministry and occasionally some were dropped, but Paul's commitment to team ministry and partnership did not diminish.

Recognizing that each member of the team had different gifts and abilities, Paul mobilized them for the effective communication of the gospel. Acts 14:21–23 describes the sequence of activities of Paul's teams. These teams were mobile and very much on their own. They were economically self-sufficient, although not unwilling to receive funds from local congregations.[10] The composition of his team itself shows how clearly he was committed to multi-ethnic and multi-cultural and multi-lingual ministries.

Paul did not feel threatened by senior Christians but found them useful for the kind of ministry he was developing. So he engaged comfortably with some prominent senior co-workers like Barnabas. But he also had a series of other co-workers who functioned as partners. There are Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:2–3), who were already Christians before Paul met them at Corinth. Though they had begun their work independently of Paul, they became his close associates.[11] This is a testament to Paul's wisdom in using the experience and gifts of seasoned believers.

Paul also did not ignore or hesitate to recruit new converts onto his team. Many of these were ordinary people who were committed and willing to partner in the ministry with Paul and included Philemon, Phoebe, Lydia, Epaphroditus and others. Another interesting point is that Paul's networking included prominent women who proved to be a great source of encouragement and support. Besides Lydia and Prisca, there were Junia, Euodia and Syntyche, as well as Chloe who were actively involved in the ministry under the direction of Paul and his associates.

Partnership with Families

Paul worked mostly in the urban contexts where individualism tended to be elevated above the family or community. But he quickly recognized that the individual was inevitably a family member and cannot be regarded as an isolated person. He rightly perceived that every individual has a strong relationship with and commitment to the family. Therefore, to reach an individual with the gospel, Paul on numerous occasions went through the family network, since isolating an individual from the family was almost impossible, even in urban society. Paul strategically worked with this reality to reach out to families and tap their natural potential for networking with extended families. It is evident that Paul established churches that were clearly centered on family networks.

Since homes were probably the most neutral places for people of different ethnicities to gather for the purpose of instruction and worship, Paul saw the importance of families in building bridges with contemporary society. "The households of newly converted believers were important centers of Paul's missionary work, and they were centers of the life of the newly established communities of believers, who met in 'house churches'."[12] Paul appointed elders and deacons within these house churches to enable them to be strong witnesses to and beyond their own households. Most of his letters were written to the house churches, functioning almost as an instruction manual for the Christian families that met in the houses to live their faith out in daily life and be a witness for Christ among their own people. The attention of these early Christian home churches was directed toward their internal as well as external functioning. To Paul, the house church did not remain only as a worshiping group of families, but was an important means of spreading

the gospel. It is hardly surprising that the 'church in the house' became a crucial factor in the spread of the Christian faith.[13] Partnership with families in communicating the gospel was a significant aspect of Paul's strategy.

Conclusion

Just as the secular sector has made great strides by adopting partnerships and collaborative ventures, Christian workers must seriously practice partnerships. The Pauline model of partnership provides significant and comprehensive insights into how such partnerships should be initiated, put into practice and nurtured so as to make a missional difference in contemporary missions. Paul's ability to acknowledge the centrality of the Church, pick appropriate people to accompany him on missionary journeys, get support from unexpected people like women, and working within the reality of the family unit as centers to spread witness, are all relevant today. By adopting the methodology of Paul and the Scriptures, the global church will succeed in the all-important area of partnerships while doing mission. 📖

Dr. Atul Y. Aghamkar, PhD is Director of the National Centre for Urban Transformation, Bangalore, India.

Endnotes

1   Luis Bush and Lorry Lutz, Partnering in Ministry: The Direction of World Evangelism. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990, 21.

2   A. Skevington Wood, *Ephesians*, in vol. 11 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 54.

3   Max Anders, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians*, in vol. 8 of the *Holman New Testament Commentary*, ed. Max Anders (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 147.

4   Bradley Chance, "Fellowship," in the *Holman Bible Dictionary*, ed. Trent C. Butler (Nashville: Holman, 1991), 483.

5   Rick Warren, *The Purpose Drive Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 105.

6   Samuel Cueva, "A Missionary Paradigm of Partnerships Between the North and the South," <http://www.globalconnections.co.uk/ OneStopCMS/Core/CrawlerResourceServer.aspx?resource=6c63f1e62f7c 4285b3a5e8b878e37157&mode=link&guid=34731240b9f94baca2c71bb0060bbca5>, accessed June 17, 2009.

7   Max Warren, 48.

8   Thomas Manjaly, *Collaborative Ministry: An Exegetical and Theological Study of* Synergos *in Paul* (Bangalore: Asia Trading Corporation, 2001), 109.

9   Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's our Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 126.

10   Arthur Glasser, "The Apostle Paul and the Missionary Task: A Study in Perspective", in Arthur Glasser, Paul Hiebert, C. Peter Wagner and Ralph Winter eds., *Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1976), 27.

11   Manjaly, *Collaborative Ministry…*339.

12   Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission …*1303.

13   Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970), 207.

Mission Motives

Why North Americans Serve and Stay Cross-Culturally

186

missionaries serving with organizations who are Missio Nexus members participated in this survey. The survey was conducted in partnership between Dr. Benjamin Teitelbaum (Univ. of Colorado) and Missio Nexus in 2016.

My **motivation** for going....

CALLING

To a Role | To Obedience | To a People Group | Through an Invitation | Through a Short-Term Trip | Through Marriage
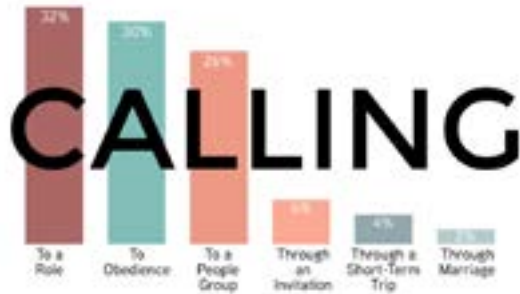
I have **ASSIMILATED** into the society where I conduct missionary work.

84% Agree

16% Disagree

"I have but one passion—it is He, it is He alone. The world is the field and the field is the world; and henceforth that country shall be my home where I can be most used in winning souls for Christ."— Count Zinzindorf

Survey Participants - *In their own words...*

Calling to a Role:

"I chose to be in Latin America because of Spanish language abilities. The position in Bolivia suited my college education."

Calling to Obedience:

"[I experienced a] very clear call by God. It came entirely through prayer."

Calling to a People Group:

"I believed this country would be an ideal location for our ministry and I could utilize my Russian language skills."

Calling Through....
an invitation/short-term trip/marriage

"We were invited by a small church who needed some help."

"When my husband was a youth pastor, we took our teens there on a missions trip."

70 Countries of Missionary Service

18   5   5
2
13   15   9
3

"In the vast plain to the north I have sometimes seen, in the morning sun, the smoke of a thousand villages where no missionary has ever been."
— Robert Moffat

I function **WELL** in the society where I conduct missionary work.

96% AGREE

30.4% Strongly Agree • 48% Agree •18% Somewhat Agree

MISSIO NEXUS

More infographics at missiographics.com

© 2017

Gain access to the full report with additional graphics, explanation, and sources at:
https://missionexus.org/mission-motives-full-report/

New Lenses for Seeing Team Conflict

Jeff Singfiel

The team meeting did not end well. Something just felt off as everyone dropped their laptops into their bags, put their notebooks away, and set their empty coffee cups into the sink. The seven-member church-planting team normally met every few weeks. However, as the national holiday approached, meetings were more frequent. The team was trying to nail down the details for an upcoming outreach event at the local theater. Everyone had been excited and felt God's leading on the project, at least at first. It had seemed so obvious when Ross first proposed the idea several weeks ago. But then again, Ross was always great on ideas but less so on execution. Today, after the opening prayer and devotional, the meeting started off well enough, but then people started rubbing each other the wrong way.

First, Ross and Matt bug each other. Ross's wife, Kerrie, has an outstanding worship ministry that serves to develop local Christian musicians; Matt does not give her enough credit. Of course, Matt feels like Ross is overly sensitive. Kerrie was coordinating the musicians for the outreach, but now she reported scheduling problems with the nationals. Matt got a little testy and said she should have started planning earlier. Ross and Kerrie's well-known worship ministry gave them a pretty high profile with supporters back home. That has generated a lot of interest, prayer, and funds, but it also created some envy.

Tricia and Tifni were coordinating the after-event refreshments. They could not settle on how many 2-liter bottles of soda to get or whether they should go with peanuts and pretzels or several large cakes. Tricia argued that salty snacks were easier to serve and that they could use the extras in the small group ministry. Tifni, on the other hand, thought that bakery cakes sent a better message to the community about the special nature of the occasion.

Peter, the team leader, and his wife Pam were handling the children's program for the outreach event. The problem was space. The main hall, of course, would be used for the adult event, but there was another large room available for the children. The problem was, Kerrie said that she and the worship group needed to use that room for rehearsal and later as an impromptu green room during the event. They had difficulty working through who could use what when. Each thought their ministry needed that resource.

It does not take long to realize that working on a missionary team is often harder than

it appears. This difficulty often feels *wrong* somehow since teammates love the Lord and presumably love both one another and the people they are trying to serve. In part, this disparity between fantasy and reality is because teams are far more complex than we want to believe. Most of us have worked on teams of different types long before we ever arrived on the mission field. We have participated on sports teams, academic teams, worship teams, or work teams. "Team" has become an all-encompassing term to describe a group of people who share a common purpose (most of the time), who have complimentary skills and depend on one another to carry out tasks and meet their needs.

This article suggests another way to look at teams and another way to look at team conflict. First, we have to acknowledge that our predominant and unconscious models of teams, often informed by our personal history, spiritually- and psychologically-informed thinking, are inadequate. Second, the discipline of organizational behavior offers a helpful model for thinking about our teams. Third, given that model, we can manage conflict better when we understand the three different kinds of conflict within a group: relational, task, and process. Each type of conflict is caused by different things, looks different, and is managed differently. In the end, we will see why teams are so challenging, how conflict works, and why we need so much grace with one another.

Seeing our Teams with New Lenses

Many of us in ministry look at our teams primarily through a couple of sets of lenses. There is nothing wrong with these lenses. These lenses, like all lenses, sharpen our focus on some elements of team life but blur our perception of others. The challenge is not the lens that we use, but an over-reliance on one lens when another may also help us better understand what we are seeing.

The first set of lenses we use when thinking about teams come from our personal history or contemporary culture. We import our experiences with our football or track teams, our debate club, or our old church worship team into our missionary teams. We carry our expectations from those experiences with us. However, your missionary team is not like any of these. The purpose is different. The skills are different. The motivation is different. In fact, almost everything is different. Importing your previous experience, models, and metaphors into your missionary team is a recipe for disillusionment and misunderstanding.

The second set of lenses which predominate on ministry teams might be called spiritual lenses. Note that these are not "biblical lenses" or even a "theological lens" per se, though we derive them from Scripture. Our spiritual lens only lets us see our teams from the perspective of spirituality. When conflict emerges, we tend to perceive spiritual causes that we can only resolve with spiritual solutions. The problem is that not all conflict is the result of defective spirituality. Statements like that tend to run across the grain of those of us in ministry. We have many years of training, and many years of experience, in seeing the world through a lens of spirituality. When there is a breakdown between a group of people, our natural reflex is to relate what we see to the fruit of the Spirit, to attribute guilt and innocence, or define all behavior as a matter of sin or holiness. These can all be real factors within group conflict, but they are not necessarily the only factors at play.

The third set of lenses through which we view our teams might be called psychological lenses. Evangelicals began a slow embrace of the social sciences, particularly psychology, in the latter half of the twentieth century (Johnson and Jones 2000). Most college graduates, whether from a private Christian or state institution, have had at least an introductory

course in psychology. We learned about people like Abraham Maslow and his hierarchy of needs. We may have studied counseling. Our niche in our organization may be member care. When we look at our teammates, we may consider Piaget and learning theory, or Kohlberg and moral development. Our teammates have issues and we consider the biblical counseling course we had in school. This set of lenses is also helpful, but they are also limited.

These spiritual and the psychological sets of lenses, each tend to see the individual in isolation from the broader context of which he or she is a part. These lenses almost always force us into thinking about me versus him, her or them. Both sets of lenses tend to reduce group dynamics down to sinful/holy, fleshly/sanctified, and sick/well. The teams on which we serve are far more complex than that. Again, these latter two sets of lenses are good. They can contribute to team health, but the modern missionary team needs another set of tools.

Teams as Complex Systems

Our model has to be as robust and as flexible as the teams on which we serve. Much of today's literature on teams, let alone team conflict, does not really scratch where missionaries itch. That is partly because much of it came out of research on groups that are very different from most missionary teams.

Take, for instance, the classic four-step model of group development: forming, storming, norming, and performing which was originally articulated by Bruce Tuckman in 1965. A group first goes through a process of *forming* as people join and begin to get to know each other. They learn what the ministry looks like, how their needs will be met, and whether they can trust each other. These dynamics lead to *storming*, increased intragroup conflict as members negotiate who does what, decide both on how to communicate and what rules to follow. Then a group settles into a set of patterns of behavior in the *norming* stage before getting down to *performing*: working together well as a team. Then, one couple leaves on home assignment, a single mid-term worker joins your team, and you are hosting a short-term group from a supporting church. Now, what happens to the process? This four-step model has been hugely influential across the team literature. Unfortunately, it does not go nearly far enough; teams are more complex than that. They rarely develop in a linear, step-by-step fashion.

Over the last twenty years, researchers have begun using a theory of systems to explain human groups. All groups, including missionary teams, are complex systems. That means a team is made up of several parts and processes that interact in various ways to fulfill members' needs and accomplish tasks. A textbook definition of a group is a "complex, adaptive, dynamic, coordinated, and bounded set of patterned relationships between members, tools, and tasks" (Arrow, McGrath, and Berdahl 2000, 34).

Imagine a triangle: that is your group. It consists of three main parts, or networks, and the relationships that connect them. The first main component, or network, is the members. This comes as no great surprise. What may come as a surprise is that there is more to a team than simply the relationship between the members. The relationships between Ross, Matt, Tricia, Tifni and the others do not exist in isolation. The second point on the triangle is the network of "tools." The tools network is all the ideas, philosophies, theologies, and resources that enable you to take your time, talents, and treasure to plant churches, make

disciples, do business-as-mission, or whatever you do. Budgets and "philosophies of minis-try" are also part of the "toolbox." They are separate from the group members because they exert influences on the team that are different from the relationships. Matt may believe strongly in saturation church planting or orality ministry. However, these approaches are not Matt; they are part of the "tool network." The third point of the triangle is the net-work of tasks that the group consciously or unconsciously wants to accomplish. Here too, the tasks are not the group, but they exert pressure and influence on the group, on the environment, and on the organization and vice versa. The outreach event is a task that is made up of many, many smaller tasks, like purchasing pretzels or cakes. The various tasks a group is involved in almost always involve some other complex system like a bakery, a grocery store, or an A/V company.

That is why there is more to the model than just a triangle of members, tools, and tasks. First, we have to consider that the members of our team are themselves complex systems made up of other spiritual, biological, psychological, and social systems. The members of your team are also members of other complex systems like their families, both on the field and at home. Second, as we look out, we have to consider the other systems in which the missionary team "triangle" is embedded. Most obviously, the team is usually embedded in a larger, parent organizational system. That organization is a much bigger complex system made up of many, many other systems like other teams, regional structures, fi-nance departments, human resources, member care, and so on. Perhaps less obviously, each member of the team also connects with a network of supporters who are themselves parts of complex networks, like their local churches. Locally, the missionary team is also often embedded in a national church system of some sort as well as the cultural, legal, and economic systems each of which exerts an influence on the team, and vice versa.

There is a lot more than meets the eye to our church-planting team. While Ross and Matt frustrate each other, Ross does not realize that Matt's relationship with his wife is struggling. That is part of his (and her) psychological, spiritual and relational systems. Peter, the team leader, is being quietly pressured by the organization to produce results. Kerrie is working with national musicians who are members of a national church or churches, another separate network. The sound equipment used for the event may come from another vendor, yet another complex system. This broad constellation of intertwin-ing complex networks looks messy … and it is. The complexity of missionary teams is what makes conflict so insidious, and so important to understand. Moreover, each component of our triangle model is susceptible to its own kinds of conflicts.

Intrapersonal Conflict on Teams

Unfortunately, our spiritual and psychological mental models tend to point us to conflict as a relational disagreement between two people. Research shows, however, that there are at least three types of conflict that exist in groups: relational, task, and process (Jehn 1997). These three types of conflict may look the same, or even feel the same, but they emerge for different reasons and have different consequences. They closely track the member, task, and tool networks of our team triangle presented above.

Relational conflict is the type with which we are most familiar. Relational conflict occurs between people about values, personalities, and compatibilities. We feel relation-al conflict on an emotional level. In the opening story, Ross and Matt are experiencing

relational conflict. Ross feels like Matt does not value his wife's worship ministry highly enough. We experience these conflicts with keenly felt, and usually negative, emotion. The emotional power of relational conflict is so great that they distract the team from their tasks and goals (Greer, Jehn, and Mannix 2008). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the amount of relational conflict is the greatest predictor of how well teams work, how committed people are to their teams, and how satisfied they are with their teams (Behfar, Mannix, Peterson, and Trochim 2010). Research also shows that relational conflict does not emerge all by itself. In fact, relational conflict is often a product of other kinds of team conflict which is not adequately managed. Remember that relational conflict is often the product of other conflicts that have been ignored for too long.

Highly diverse teams are more prone to relational conflict (Ayub and Jehn 2006) as are teams that are built with pre-existing faultlines like large differences in experience, training, or language ability (Bezrukova, Thatcher, and Jehn 2007). Teams that lack clarity on what their task is and how they should accomplish it are also prone to relational conflict. While the conflict between Ross and Matt has now become emotional, it likely started because inadequate attention to how Kerrie's worship ministry fit into the mission and strategy of the team.

Task conflict is the second major type of conflict experienced on teams. People in task conflict have different opinions about a task, job or project. Task conflicts usually emerge about how a task should best be completed. Tricia and Tifni are in task conflict about the after-event refreshments. How to do a job like host refreshments, or how much of a resource is required (soda) or what kind of a resource (pretzels or cake) are all typical of task conflicts. People in task conflict are usually *thinking* about the differences rather than *feeling* them, as in relational conflict. Tricia and Tifni will no doubt argue about how many 2-liters of soda were used at the last event and summon up their knowledge of the culture as relates to pretzels versus cakes. Left unattended, task conflict can easily grow into relational conflict, but it does not start out that way.

The last type of conflict is process conflict. Process conflict is the often unspoken or overlooked aspect of conflict on a team. When people disagree about what order something they should do something, how they should allocate budgets, how theology and event planning interact, and feel tension over philosophy of ministry issues, they are engaged in process conflict. Peter and Pam are experiencing a process conflict as they plan the children's ministry aspect of the outreach. They are not (yet) in relational conflict with Kerrie about the use of the extra, large room. They are not in task conflict with each other about how the children's component of the evening should unfold. They are in conflict about how a resource (the extra, large room) should be best utilized for the overall project. Process conflict relates to the resources, tools, philosophies, and theologies that a person brings to the group. Process conflict has profound implications for the formation and viability of a missionary team. First of all, research shows that groups who experience high levels of process conflict early in their formation experience long-lasting and negative effects down the road (Greer, Jehn, and Mannix 2008). Second, process conflict also has a negative impact on the way groups perform together. When organizational or national church leadership asserts its will, it usually initially generates process conflict, not relational conflict. These dynamics are why purely spiritualistic approaches are not always adequate.

Our model demonstrates that teams are complex systems made up of members, tools, and tasks which are embedded in, or connect to, other complex structures. Because of this,

conflict emerges in three primary ways: relational, process, and task. Understanding this is one of the keys to maintain healthy teams for the long term.

Conclusion

The outreach event went well. No one who attended knew about all the team's struggles. Ross and Matt still bug each other. Their initial process conflict over the worship ministry's place on the team has grown into relational conflict that is often harder do deal with. Kerrie's worship team and the children's ministry team decided that the kids had a higher strategic priority than rehearsal and a mid-event green room. After discussing what had worked well in the past, Tricia and Tifni decided to try cakes at this event and carefully track the budget numbers against previous events.

Missionary teams are surprisingly complex systems. That complexity makes understanding team conflict difficult. One thing is certain: we need to use a variety of lenses in looking at how teams operate. The psychological and spiritual lenses will probably be very helpful as Ross and Matt try to work together, and especially for Matt's struggling marriage. Yet, other lenses from the social sciences can help us understand why conflict is occurring and what to do about it. These other lenses help us focus on the complete picture. 📖

Jeff Singfiel has been in ministry for 24 years including ten years of pastoral ministry in the US and fourteen years in the Balkans with a denominational missions organization. He has worked in a variety of field organizational structures doing church planting in a majority Muslim country.

References

Arrow, Holly, Joseph Edward McGrath, and Jennifer L Berdahl. 2000. *Small Groups as Complex Systems: Formation, Coordination, Development, and Adaptation*. [Amazon Kindle].

Ayub, Nailah, and Karen A. Jehn. "National Diversity and Conflict in Multinational Workgroups." *International Journal of Conflict Management* 17.3 (2006): 181–202. doi: 10.1108/10444060610742317.

Behfar, Kristin J, Elizabeth A. Mannix, Randall S Peterson, and William M Trochim. "Conflict in Small Groups: The Meaning and Consequences of Process Conflict." *Small Group Research* 42.2 (2010): 127–76. http://sgr.sagepub.com/content/42/2/127.

Bezrukova, Katerina, Sherry M B Thatcher, and Karen A. Jehn. "Group Heterogeneity and Faultlines: Comparing Alignment and Dispersion Theories of Group Composition." In *Conflict in Organizational Groups: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, edited by K. J. Behfar and L. L. Thompson, (2007):57–92. http://webpages.scu.edu/ftp/bezrukova/03_BehfarCh03.pdf.

Bruce, F. F. "The Book of Acts." In *New International Commentary on the New Testament*, edited by F. F. Bruce. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. OliveTree e-book

Greer, Lindred L, Karen A. Jehn, and Elizabeth A. Mannix. "Conflict Transformation: A Longitudinal Investigation of the Relationships between Different Types of Intragroup Conflict and the Moderating Role of Conflict Resolution." *Small Group Research* 39.3 (2008): 278-302. https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496408317793.

Jehn, Karen A. "A Qualitative Analysis of Conflict Types and Dimensions in Organizational Groups." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 42.3 (1997): 530–57. http://www.academia.edu/download/32335737/A_Qualitative_Analysis_of_Conflict_Types_and_Dimensions_in_Organizational_Groups.pdf.

Johnson, Eric L., and Stanton L. Jones. 2000. "A History of Christians in Psychology." In *Psychology & Christianity: Four Views*, edited by Eric L. Johnson and Stanton L. Jones, 271. Downers Grove: IVP Academic. http://www.likewise.ivpress.com/title/exc/2263-1.pdf.

Marshall, I. Howard. "The Acts of the Apostles." In *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, edited by Leon L. Morris. Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980. OliveTree e-book.

Stott, John. *The Message of Acts*. InterVarsity Press, 2014. https://books.google.com/books?id=BMiuAwAAQBAJ&pgis=1.

Tuckman, Bruce W. "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups." *Psychological Bulletin.* 63.6 (1965): 384-. American Psychological Association: 384. http://web.mit.edu/curhan/www/docs/Articles/15341_Readings/Group_Dynamics/Tuckman_1965_Developmental_sequence_in_small_groups.pdf.

"We Reap on Zion's Hill": Adoniram Judson's Heavenly-Minded Spirituality[1]

Evan Burns

Adoniram Judson's spirituality was one of self-denying submission to the sovereign will of God, seeking chiefly to please Christ, his Lord. Pleasing Christ was his motivation, and self-denial was his means of submitting to God's will; and his heavenly-mindedness gave him a hopeful and optimistic perspective. Recording how the promises of the Bible buttressed Judson's heavenward orientation, one anonymous missionary said about Judson that there was "no man in India, or elsewhere, whom I thought riper for heaven. I was particularly impressed with his firm reliance on the promises of God."[2] Judson interpreted all of God's temporally severe providences through the lens of eternally happy prospects. This hope in future glory comforted him, and he likewise counseled others to endure with their soul's attention fixed on the same happy hope. His anticipation of receiving an eternal reward for his self-denying labors reinforced his spirituality.

A Lifelong Heavenly-Minded Disposition

Judson's heavenly-minded spirituality remained as intense during his last days as it was during his early days. He never vacillated in his patience for heaven's happiness and eternal benefits. In his early years before experiencing the struggles of missionary life, Judson had a heavenward orientation, which he demonstrated in his communications with his fiancée, Ann Hasseltine.

Judson had an eternal perspective from the beginning. Before Judson and Ann married, he was beginning to focus his lifelong vision toward heaven. As he considered the unknown risks of the missionary call, he sought to steady his hope in God's good will to reward the faithful in eternity. Though Judson did not know what God held in his temporal future, he nevertheless knew that God had ordained immeasurable happiness for his eternal future. In a letter to Ann in December 1810, Judson pondered the brevity of life and that whatever is done today, "is done to all eternity." He mused on the consequential continuity between one's earthly and eternal existence:

A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity. If it be marked with sins, the marks will be indelible. If it has been a useless life, it can never be improved. Such it will stand forever and ever. . . . When it is once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it will exhibit forever. It will never become less true that such a day was spent in such a manner. Each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will affect our everlasting destiny. No day will lose its share of influence in determining where shall be our seat in heaven. How shall we then wish to see each day marked with usefulness! It will then be too late to mend its appearance. It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power. Let us, then, each morning, resolve to send the day into eternity in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear forever. And at night let us reflect that one more day is irrevocably gone, indelibly marked.[3]

Heavenly Comfort

Having endured many hardships, when no other earthly consolation sufficed, Judson's steady source of comfort lay in his fixed hope in the promises of heavenly rest. Judson sought heavenly comfort in aloneness. There were many seasons where Judson felt the sadness of separation from his loved ones. A most grievous season of aloneness happened in 1821. Ann became very ill, and the extreme nature of her sickness necessitated a voyage back to America for recovery. Saying goodbye to her, Judson wrestled with the feelings of emptiness and sorrow in her sustained absence. He would not see her again for over two years.[4]

Judson wrote a letter to her in September 1821, a few days after her departure. He described his battle with sin and his dissatisfaction with his state of progressive holiness. He prayed that Ann would know the joy of religion more than he was enjoying it at the time. In his struggle with sin, he rejoiced in how "consoling" it was to surrender their missionary work and their lives "into the faithful hands of Jesus." He said, because "the Lord reigns," he could "safely trust all in his hands, and rejoice in whatever may betide." Suffering with Christ must precede being "glorified with him."[5]

Within a few days of writing the aforementioned letter to Ann, Judson wrote in his journal, demonstrating his struggle with melancholy. He mourned the he too often derived "daily comfort and gratification" from the wrong places, which were deceptively empty. His heart's depravity, he said, was so strong that he could not be "satisfied with the pure bread of heaven." Instead, he said he was "continually hankering after the more gross and palatable food of this world—the husks of time and sense." He explained that only when God strips away such counterfeit comforts do Christians realize the source of true satisfaction, and ostensibly, he was referring to the deprivation he felt after Ann's departure. He perceived that his heart was so "ill-disciplined" that even in those happy moments of enjoying "glimpses of heaven," temporal discouragements would "intervene, and swallow up all anticipations of future joy."[6]

Eighteen years later, while apart from his second wife, Sarah B. Judson, he wrote a series of letters to her. In a letter in March 1839, he said that he wished they could be together again to enjoy each other's company. He mused that if God allowed "sinful creatures on earth" to enjoy the "exquisite delights" of the bond of love as he and Sarah had, then "what must the joys of heaven be? Surely there is not a single lawful pleasure, the loss of which

we shall have to regret there."[7]

Judson sought heavenly comfort in death, which, more than any type of event, had a way of revealing the true source of his joy and hope. Feeling the pain of a loved one's death, Judson neither displayed a sulky defeatism nor an indifferent stiffness. His heavenly-minded piety was sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.[8] After his fellow-missionary, George Boardman, died, Judson married his widow, Sarah, in April of 1834. They were married for eleven years before Sarah's death in 1845.[9] The day after her death, Judson wrote to the Burmese mission. Though he felt crushed under a "desolate" and "dreary" mood, Judson said that he derived "consolation" from the fact that she died "longing to depart and be with Christ." His comfort was rooted in the presence of her heavenly-mindedness in death. He said he was certain that "the love of Christ sustained her to the last," and he said he happily "congratulated her on the prospect of soon beholding the Saviour in all his glory." He believed that she was in heaven resting on Christ's bosom, enjoying heavenly bliss alongside his first wife, Ann.

By meditating on the heavenly reward of Ann and Sarah and his other departed companions, he said, "Heaven seems nearer, and eternity sweeter." He concluded his letter with a hope-filled exhortation to "follow those who, through faith, inherit the promises."[10] Judson further described the anguish he felt after burying Sarah. In his "solitude," with his "poor children crying" around him, he said that he felt desolate under the "heart-breaking sorrow." However, in their distress, he said the gospel sustained him: "The promises of the Gospel came to my aid, and faith stretched her view to the bright world of eternal life, and anticipated a happy meeting with those beloved beings whose bodies are moldering at Amherst and St. Helena."[11] Judson's comfort derived not only from the good news of Christ's decisive act of forgiveness and justification on the cross, but it also included the good news of Christ's preserving sanctification and promise of glorification.

Judson sought to communicate heavenly comfort in counseling others; he had a special way with his fellow missionaries who suffered as he did. He could tenderly shepherd their souls to look to Christ, trust him for his sovereign wisdom, and hope eagerly in his promises of rest for labor and reward for service.

After George Boardman's death, Judson wrote a note in March of 1831 to console the grieving widow, Sarah Boardman. Judson said he had tasted the "dregs" of the cup she was now drinking, which was "far bitterer" than she expected. He said, though she would endure many months of "heartrending anguish," his only counsel for her was, "Take the cup with both hands, and sit down quietly to the bitter repast which God has appointed for your sanctification." Judson encouraged her to think of the "diadem which encircles [Boardman's] brow" and the fact that Boardman is now "an immortal saint, a magnificent, majestic king." Due to the present reality of Boardman's reward in heaven, Judson encouraged Sarah to cry "tears of joy." Judson repeated his earlier line, to emphasize what he learned about finding heavenly sweetness through suffering the loss of loved ones; he again advised,

> Yet take the bitter cup with both hands, and sit down to your repast. You will soon learn a secret, that there is sweetness at the bottom. You will find it the sweetest cup that you ever tasted in all your life. You will find heaven coming near to you.

In addition to family and close friends, others also were beneficiaries of the influence of Judson's heavenly-minded counsel. For instance, during his last year of life, in a letter to

an anonymous missionary in July of 1849, Judson gave words of advice to look away from worldly concerns and look heavenward:

> You must endeavor to look away from all outward things—from the satisfactions and discomforts, the commendations and censures, which are the common lot of man, and find your happiness in your own bosoms, in your work, in communion with God, and in the joyful anticipations of that blessed state, the heavenly Jerusalem, the "happy home" to which we are travelling.[12]

At the end of his life, Emily (Judson's third wife) noted that Judson would often say, "We must look *up* for direction."[13] In one of the last letters Judson wrote, in October 1849, he sought to counsel a grieving fellow-missionary, S. M. Osgood.[14] He said that he and Osgood had both experienced the immense pain of losing loved ones, and in light of the severity and sweetness of God's providence, Judson encouraged Osgood to imagine their loved ones in heaven "reposing in the arms of infinite love, who wipes away all their tears with His own hand." He charged Osgood to "travel on and look up." Judson closed by rehearsing the heavenly truth that had been so hope-giving for him; he concluded, "The longer and more tedious the way, the sweeter will be our repose."[15]

Heavenly Longing

For Judson, a heavenly-minded disposition was not merely supplemental to missionary spirituality; it was crucial. Such an upward gaze would indeed provide solace in a myriad of afflictions and anxieties. Moreover, heavenly-mindedness would be supremely useful if it were stronger than a simple awareness of or assent to heavenly realities. Judson demonstrated that a heavenly disposition must be a dominant instinct of true religion, manifesting itself in an expectant longing for the benefits of Christ, anchored in heaven. Judson believed such a longing was fundamental for any missionary and minister of the cross.

Judson saw longing for heaven as useful for the missionary spirit. In an extract from a letter to a friend in October 1818, Judson showed far more concern for the graces of heavenly-mindedness in fellow missionaries than for skill, education, and strength, though he said that the same education and "mental improvement" given to ministers should be expected of missionaries. He desired the heart of the missionary to be heavenward in its affections. He said he was fully convinced that a qualified missionary should habitually enjoy a "closet religion." He maintained that a missionary should be "abstracted from this world, and much occupied in the contemplation of heavenly glories," in addition to exuding various "spiritual graces," which include "humility, patience, meekness, love."[16]

Before the Boardman Missionary Society at Waterville College, in 1846, Judson spoke about pleasing the Lord with eternity in view as the foundation of mission work. Judson was speaking to students who were either interested in missions or who were preparing for missions. In light of the trials he had seen, he said he did not want to compel anyone to experience what he had, but he said their compelling sense of duty must come from a heavenly source. He said,

> You have but one life to live in which to prepare for eternity. . . .You have only one. Every action of that one life gives coloring to your eternity. How important, then, that you spend that life so as to please the Saviour, the blessed Saviour, who has done

everything for you![17]

Judson saw longing for heaven as useful for loving the brethren. Emily recounted that Judson's heavenly-minded disposition directly motivated his love for people. By contemplating the pervasiveness of brotherly love in heaven, Judson learned to love others for the sake of Christ. Judson would say it is insufficient to be generally pleasant to the people of God; brotherly love requires more than "[abstaining] from evil speaking, and [making] a general mention of them in our prayers." Emily said that his "ardent temperament" made him "subject to strong attachments and aversions," which, she said were difficult for him to bring "under the controlling influence of divine grace." She recorded that he would often say that the Christian's affection for other believers "should be of the most ardent and exalted character: it would be so in heaven, and we lost immeasurably by not beginning now." She recalled that the verse, "'As I have loved you, so ought ye also to love one another [see John 13:34; 15:12],' was a precept continually in his mind."[18] Judson was aware of his easily irritated nature, and through his rules of life, he sought to daily confront his lack of affection for people.[19] Throughout his life, because of his meditations on death and heaven, his various rules for spiritual maturity in his relationships generally underlined secret prayer, mortifying disaffection for others, showing benevolence to all, and being cordial in all facets of conduct "to please an ever-present Lord."[20]

Judson saw longing for heaven as useful for self-denying activity. In a letter to his parents in July 1810, in the context of describing his cordial communion with God in Christ, Judson admitted that his temporal future certainly would meet with troubles and uncertainty, yet, he said his "prospects for another life . . . are still brighter." He went on to say that the dreams of this life are empty, and he said,

> O, if we could always realize this, and live above the world—if we could tread on its trifling vanities, live far from its perplexing cares, and keep an eye fixed on our heavenly inheritance—how . . . useful we might be![21]

In her recollections of Judson, Emily highlighted how useful Judson's longing for heaven was in relation to his completion of the dictionary. She said that he was so "consecrated" to his work that he found earthly pleasures only in his family. She said, "His thoughts, which were ordinarily fixed with unusual continuity on heaven, seemed to turn thither with a more resistless longing, now that he had accomplished the work which he believed had been appointed to him."[22]

One of the clearest examples of the relationship between Judson's heavenly-minded disposition and his resolve to deny himself the comforts of this world was in a letter in December 1830 to Lucius Bolles. Judson's health had been poor, and the American Baptist Board sent an invitation for him to return home. His heart longed to return to America, he said, to enjoy sweet fellowship with his friends and family and "to witness the wide-spread and daily-increasing glories of Emanuel's kingdom in that land of liberty, blessed of Heaven with temporal and spiritual blessings above all others." Nevertheless, he was willing to postpone such an enjoyable reunion because he was waiting for "a happier meeting, brighter plains, friends the same, but more lovely and beloved." He was convinced that he would soon "enjoy that glory in comparison of which all on earth is but a shadow." Because of such heavenly anticipation, he said, "I content myself, assured that we shall not then regret any instance of self-denial or suffering endured for the Lord of life and glory."[23] After

marrying Emily in 1846, Judson said that his hopefulness in the dawn of Christ's heavenly glory led him to welcome all manner of labor, self-denial, and hazards, making his life dissonant with the world's temporal pursuits. He said that he would even spill his "blood like water in such a cause."[24]

Conclusion

That Judson fixated his mind upon and lived in light of heavenly realities is evident. His heavenly-minded disposition carried him from his early impulses of missionary devotion all the way to his final hours. Many trials and afflictions were God's will for his life, but looking heavenward, he sought to do everything to please Christ in order that in heaven his happiness in Christ would be sweeter. His heavenly-minded piety comforted him in aloneness and death. His heavenly-minded instinct helped him to comfort and counsel others in their pain. His longing for the ever-increasing blessings of heaven proved useful for his self-denying missionary activity and his relations with others. He believed that a sustained heavenly longing was essential for true missionary spirituality. Judson believed that the experience of heavenly joy corresponded directly to the love and sacrificial benevolence poured out in this life. Self-denying sacrifice was the means through which he sought to please his Savior and coming King. With bright optimism, Judson could say all his life,

> In joy or sorrow, health or pain,
> Our course be onward still;
> We sow on Burmah's barren plain,
> We reap on Zion's hill.[25] 📖

Evan Burns (Ph.D), is director of the Judson Center, a division of Western Seminary. The Judson Center is a missiological network for global proclamation, scripture centrality, missionary theology, and Christ-centered renewal. Visit: http://thejudsoncenter.org/

Endnotes

1 This essay is from selections of the author's chapter: Evan Burns, "We Reap on Zion's Hill: Heavenly-Minded Spirituality," in *A Supreme Desire to Please Him: The Spirituality of Adoniram Judson* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 143–70.

2 Ibid., 2:332.

3 Edward Judson, *The Life of Adoniram Judson, By His Son, Edward Judson* (New York: Randolph, 1883), 14–15. Even before Judson wrote this letter to Ann, he had already expressed his heavenly-minded conviction to Ann's father in asking him to allow Judson to lead Ann into a life and ministry that would certainly face hazards, pangs, and anguish of all kinds. He pleaded, "Can you consent to all this, in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with a crown of righteousness, brightened by the acclamations of praise which shall redound to her Saviour from heathens saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?" Ann Hasseltine Judson, *An Account of the*

American Baptist Mission to the Burman Empire: In a Series of Letters, Addressed to a Gentleman in London (London: Butterworth & Son and Clark, 1823), 36. See also Jesse Clemént, *Memoir of Adoniram Judson, Being a Sketch of His Life and Missionary Labors* (Auburn, NY: Derby and Miller, 1851), 25; and Robert T. Middleditch, *Burmah's Great Missionary: Records of the Life, Character, and Achievements of Adoniram Judson* (New York: Fletcher, 1854), 38.

4 Ann left on August 21, 1821 and returned on December 5, 1823. See Edward Judson, *The Life of Adoniram Judson,* 564.

5 Adoniram Judson, "Extracts from Mr. Judson's Letters to His Wife, Rangoon, Sept. 5, 1821," *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 4 (1823), 57.

6 Middleditch, *Burmah's Great Missionary*, 165.

7 Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:140.

8 See 2 Corinthians 6:10.

9 For Judson's personal records and reflections on his decision to marry Sarah, see Adoniram Judson, journal, March 12, 1834 to April 10, 1834, Box No. AJ 4, Folder 4 and Microfilm Roll 1, Judson Letters, American Baptist Historical Society. For a vivid account of Sarah's death, see Adoniram Judson to the Rev. Solomon Peck, letter, September 1, 1845, Box No. AJ 3, Folder 2 and Microfilm Roll 1, Judson Letters, American Baptist Historical Society.

10 Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:203–4.

11 He was referring to Ann, buried at Amherst, and Sarah, buried at St. Helena. Middleditch, *Burmah's Great Missionary*, 352–53.

12 Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:333.

13 Ibid., 2:372. Emphasis in original.

14 See Arthur Warren Smith, *Sewall Mason Osgood, D.D., in Missionary Service for Forty-One Years, 1834-1875* (Boston: Backus Historical Society, 1907).

15 Edward Judson, *The Life of Adoniram Judson*, 521–22. See also Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:328–29. Regarding Elhira Osgood's death in 1837, in a letter of condolence, Judson concluded as though he were writing to Elhira Osgood herself about her future glory; he said, "We know that thou sleepest in Jesus, and that when the night of death is passed away, and the resurrection morn appears, thou also wilt again appear, blooming in celestial beauty, and arrayed in thy Saviour's righteousness, a being fitted to love and to be beloved, throughout the ever-revolving hours of an eternal day." Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:118.

16 Wayland, *Memoir*, 1:211. For one biographer's apt observations of Judson's own missionary spirit, see Middleditch, *Burmah's Great Missionary*, 437. Citing comparable graces though not explicitly mentioning heavenly-mindedness, Judson wrote two years earlier to Luther Rice, in November of 1816. He wrote about the kind of missionaries to send: "In encouraging other young men to come out as missionaries, do use the greatest caution. . . . Humble, quiet, persevering men. . . . Men of an amiable, yielding temper, willing to take the lowest place, to be the least of all and the servants of all; men who enjoy much closet religion, who live near to God, and are willing to suffer all things

for Christ's sake, without being proud of it, these are the men, &c." Adoniram Judson, "Extract of a Letter from Mr. Judson to Mr. Rice, Rangoon, Novem. 14th, 1816," *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 1 (1817), 184–85. See also Wayland, *Memoir*, 1:185–86. Regarding the strategic role Luther Rice played in promoting and mobilizing for the American Baptist Board and in arousing missionary devotion in others, Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 3rd ed. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1963), 331.

17 Edward Judson, *The Life of Adoniram Judson*, 473–74. See also Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:234–35. In another address, Judson laid out his vision of the continuity of heavenly reality with earthly living. In the context of giving a charge for potential missionary candidates to count the cost of missionary sacrifice, he said, "So far as we are like Christ in this world, so far shall we be like him through eternity. So far as we sustain this cause, which is peculiarly the cause of God, so far we shall be happy through endless ages." Edward Judson, *The Life of Adoniram Judson,* 470. See also Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:233–34; and Middleditch, *Burmah's Great Missionary*, 376.

18 Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:338. In a letter to Emily in January of 1847, Judson said, "'Trust in God and keep your powder dry,' was Cromwell's word to his soldiers. Trust in God and love one another is, I think, a better watchword. Let us do the duties of religion and of love, and all will be well." Asahel Clark Kendrick, *The Life and Letters of Mrs. Emily C. Judson* (London: Nelson and Sons, 1861), 251.

19 See Wayland, *Memoir*, 1:322–23; Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:61, 103, 190; Edward Judson, *The Life of Adoniram Judson*, 315–16.

20 Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:190. See also Edward Judson, *The Life of Adoniram Judson*, 316.

21 Wayland, *Memoir*, 1:58.

22 Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:163. Wayland said, "[Judson] had a passion for saving souls, and he had reason to believe that, by this labor, many souls were saved who would be his joy and his crown in that heaven for which his whole life was a constant preparation." Ibid., 2:6–7.

23 Adoniram Judson to Dr. Lucius Bolles, letter, December 20, 1830, Box No. AJ 2, Folder 2 and Microfilm Roll 1, Judson Letters, American Baptist Historical Society; see also Middleditch, *Burmah's Great Missionary*, 271. For some of Judson's comments about bearing up under trials and suffering with Christ in order to reign with him, see Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:295.

24 Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:371.

25 In Wayland's opinion, Judson's habitual heavenly-minded disposition was never better expressed than in these words that he penciled in a book he used in making the dictionary. See Wayland, *Memoir*, 2:381–82.

Three Surveys of Aspiring Missionaries: Draws and Concerns in Deciding to Become a Long-term Missionary

Megan R. Brown and John W. McVay

What are the major obstacles to becoming a long-term missionary? In 2016, we reported on the LAUNCH Survey of 299 long-term missionaries, which provided insight into the factors that helped and hindered journeys into full-time overseas ministry (Brown & McVay, 2016). The survey was useful in identifying factors that helped participants make it to the mission field, such as the centrality of relationships in completing the marathon of preparation for long-term service. However, the biggest hindrances to launching into long-term ministry were not clear, possibly because the long-term missionaries who completed the survey had overcome the obstacles and did not remember their earlier challenges well. A follow-up survey of those who have not yet relocated for the gospel was recommended and completed. This now provides additional insights for missions mobilizers who are journeying with women and men as they actively pursue God's guidance in their lives.

The Design

The Relocating for the Gospel survey was developed with the use of an initial qualitative survey of open-ended questions that was completed by 42 individuals who had attended a missions conference. The gathered qualitative data was then reviewed and synthesized. The resulting survey was further tested by 14 respondents, edited, and finalized. The final survey was sent by email to potential participants with a link to the online survey. It included participants who had not previously relocated for the gospel (defined as having moved somewhere for one or more years that was not for education or a round trip). Participants answered questions about how far they were willing to relocate for the gospel (cannot consider a move across town, across the country, across the world) and how long they were willing to relocate. They then rated 15 factors that were potential draws to relocating for the gospel on a scale of Not a Draw, Some Draw, or Strong Draw, followed by rating 18 potential hindrances as Not a Concern, Some Concern, or Strong Concern. This survey also included questions regarding the ways in which respondents would prefer to learn about opportunities to relocate for the gospel. Demographic information was also collected.

The Participants

Participants were recruited with the offer of a free missions e-book from two large email lists geared toward missions-minded people: ShortTermMissions.com and MissionNext.org. Over 20,000 email addresses were included on these lists, but the vast majority of the emails were unopened. In the end, 563 individuals opted to take the survey. Some of these had already relocated for the gospel (as defined above) and did not complete the full survey. Others were not analyzed due to not meeting inclusion criteria, such as age and being from outside North America (those from other countries have different launch challenges). In total, 114 responses were included in final data analysis. Baby Boomers (52-70 years old as of 2016) made up 47% of the respondents, Generation X (36-51 years old) were 30% of the sample, and Millennials (21-35 years old) were 23% of the respondents. Interestingly, the Baby Boomers differed from the other groups in two ways. First, the Baby Boomer respondents were all gathered from a different email list than the Generation X and Millennial respondents. Second, more male Baby Boomers (65% of Boomer respondents) responded as opposed to the other groups in which more females responded (73% of Millennials & 65% of Generation X were female).

Data Analysis

Answers were analyzed using simple statistics. Participants ranked each draw and hindrance as "Not a Draw or Concern," "Some Draw or Concern," and Strong Draw or Concern." Percentage of response for each level of draw or concern was calculated and used to rank order draws and concerns. The data was further analyzed by generational groups, similarly ranking draws and concerns, that were most frequently endorsed.

The margin of error for the sample was 4.8% for the ShortTermMissions respondents (Millennials, Gen-Xers) and 7.8% for MissionNext participants (Boomers). A limitation of the survey was that all respondents had previous missions interest and were already subscribers to a missions newsletter. In addition, those who did not think they could consider relocating (e.g. spouse objections) were likely to not complete the survey.

The Findings

Practical concerns were some of the overall most concerning factors for participants (see table 1). Note: the numbers total more than 100% because respondents could and did select multiple concerns.

TABLE 1:
Strong Concerns of Aspiring Missionaries Sorted by Total Sample

	Total	Millennials	Gen Xers	Boomers
Having to raise financial support	42%	35%	53%	38%
If I would have to learn a new language	29%	19%	35%	29%
Objections from my spouse/fiancée/potential spouse	25%	6%	29%	30%
Difficult to find where my talents make a difference	22%	27%	21%	21%

The most endorsed concern across all participants was "Having to Raise Financial Support." Of the overall sample, 42% of respondents endorsed this as a Strong Concern (35% of Millennials, 53% of Generation X, 38% of Baby Boomers). The second most endorsed concern was not quite as prominent with 29% of participants endorsing learning a new language as a strong concern (19% of Millennials, 35% of Generation X, 29% of Baby Boomers). Other top concerns included Objections from My Spouse or Future Spouse (25% overall, 6% of Millennials, 29% of Generation X, 30% of Baby Boomers) and Difficult to Find a Place Where My Talents Make a Difference (22% overall, 27% of Millennials, 21% of Generation X, 21% of Baby Boomers).

In addition to concerns, the positive factors that lead someone to consider missions were also elicited (see table 2). Note: the numbers total more than 100% because respondents could and did select multiple draws.

TABLE 2:
Strong Draws for Aspiring Missionaries Sorted by Total Sample

	Total	Millennials	Gen Xers	Boomers
God's guidance through prayer	87%	85%	79%	94%
God's guidance through Scripture	84%	81%	71%	96%
God's guidance through circumstances	81%	100%	50%	83%
Desire to provide practical service to those in need	81%	73%	85%	81%
Share Christ with a specific unreached group or city or country	66%	85%	68%	54%
Desire to share Christ (but no specific group or city or country)	61%	65%	74%	50%

When considering relocating for the sake of the gospel, respondents clearly rely on God's guidance through various means. God's Guidance through Prayer was the top endorsed draw with 87% of respondents indicating this as a Strong Draw to relocating for the sake of the gospel (85% of Millennials, 79% of Generation X, 94% of Baby Boomers). God's Guidance through Scripture was also a Strong Draw overall for 84% of respondents (81% of Millennials, 71% of Generation X, 96% of Baby Boomers). Finally, God's Guidance through Circumstances was a Strong Draw for 81% of respondents (100% of Millennials, 50% of Generation X, 83% of Baby Boomers). In addition to God's guidance, a Desire to Provide Practical Service to Those in Need was a Strong Draw for 81% of the respondents (73% of Millennials, 85% of Generation X, 81% of Baby Boomers). Interestingly, this was the most endorsed Draw for Generation X respondents, even ranked above God's guidance.

For all generations the top three ways to connect were Short-Term Visit, Personal Interaction with Someone Already Serving There, and E-mail. Web browsing and social media ranked much lower. The strength of e-mail in these findings may be due to the survey invitations sent by email to those already subscribed to an email newsletter.

The website www.launchsurvey.wordpress.com has full PowerPoint reports on the surveys with additional data including which experiences most significantly impacted their willingness to explore full-time (short-term trips, their local church). That website, which

also has the blank surveys not included here, can be a resource for future surveys which could be done every ten years to give recruiters up-to-date recommendations.

Discussion

Although it may be unsurprising, this survey's finding that practical concerns about the obstacles of raising financial support and language learning is a good reminder to missions mobilizers. These are not issues to sidestep when exploring opportunities and callings with potential overseas workers. The experience of mobilizers with many other individuals and families who have faced these challenges and seen God move mightily can provide much needed encouragement for potential missionaries.

When considering generational differences in responses, Generation X showed a higher percentage of concern about support raising than Millennials. It is possible that Generation X may have traditional support raising models in mind while Millennials may think social media fundraising will be easy and work well.

Personal stories of support raising and language learning can bridge the gap and bring hope that the challenges can be overcome. Relationships with missions mobilizers and missionaries who have raised support and learned a new language may buffer these concerns and keep them from becoming hindrances to committing to relocation for the gospel. A key online resource is www.askamissionary.com with over 600 answers to 200 questions including a number of answers specifically about support raising and language learning.

Another significant concern and potential hindrance for respondents was that it might be difficult to find a place where their talents would make a difference. Upon hearing a report on this survey, a veteran mobilizer noted that people respond most often when a missions job posting matches their own gifts and skills. All of this fits with the survey result that 100% of Millennials consider God's Guidance through Circumstances as a strong draw.

As mobilizers talk with potential missionaries, creativity and flexibility will be important characteristics. If an individual or family has gifts and talents that are not a good fit for your staffing priorities, continue to encourage them and help them with the next step in their journey in discerning God's will and connecting somewhere that may be a better fit. While mobilizers are not responsible for every step of every potential missionary's journey, words of encouragement can go a long way to help them find the right fit. Keep in mind that we are all on the same team and reframe your role as a helper along the journey, no matter where people end up.

The respondents clearly indicated that guidance from God through prayer, Scripture, and circumstances are strong draws that would lead people to relocate for the sake of the gospel. Mission mobilizers should emphasize discipleship and encourage aspiring missionaries to continue to build a firm foundation in their intimacy with God as they consider, and potentially prepare for, relocating for the sake of the gospel.

Being part of a typical short-term mission team is not generally effective at drawing people into long-term missions. What does work is a well-designed short-term vision trip so individuals can seek God and His will through that experience. Through such a trip, potential missionaries have the opportunity to see what God is already doing in that place and interact with others who have relocated for the gospel. These interactions can speak to potential concerns, such as support raising and language learning, and provide encouragement. A group from our organization organized a short-term trip that included

medical relief work during the day alongside team training and mentoring during the evenings for participants to consider God's long-term call and discuss practical and theological issues related to missions.

The impact of relationships raises an interesting comparison to the earlier LAUNCH Survey findings and responses from long-term missionaries (Brown & McVay, 2016). The LAUNCH Survey concluded that relationships were perceived as essential to helping long-term missionaries launch into full-time service. Respondents remembered retrospectively that a strong relationship with God and a strong support network of friends, family, mentors, and sending agencies were important for their obedience to God's call. However, in the current survey, respondents placed far less emphasis on social support. In fact, the four lowest endorsed Strong Draws are all relational in nature, ranging from 11 – 28% of the sample. These include relocating to be with someone you know and encouragement from friends, siblings, or parents.

Jay Matenga and Malcolm Gold (2016) detail the importance of relationships in missions mobilization in far more detail in their book *Mission in Motion: Speaking Frankly of Mobilization.* They conclude that interpersonal relationships, particularly relationships in which a "mission-interested individual who comes alongside" a potential missionary, are prominent in themes of those who have gone as missionaries (p. 171). Respondents of the Relocating for the Gospel survey did not endorse a strong felt need for supportive relationships, however, it seems clear from the aforementioned research that relationships are essential for launching individuals and families into long-term ministry. At its core, missions mobilization must remain relational with frequent "high touch" communication. Missionaries who have returned from the field, missions mobilizers, and missions-minded churches would do well to focus on the investment of time and relational resources into the lives of individuals and families exploring God's potential call to full-time ministry. These individuals and families may not fully understand the importance of connecting with missions-minded people as they prepare, but the LAUNCH Survey and Matenga & Gold's (2016) findings indicate that, in hindsight, they will credit those relationships for getting them to the mission field. What people think they need and what they *actually* need are not the same; what people think are obstacles and what are *actually* obstacles are not the same.

It is through relationship that practical barriers such as concern about language learning and concern about raising financial support will be adequately addressed. It is through relationship that discipleship occurs so that people grow in intimacy with God and will be sensitive to His leading and guiding through prayer, Scripture, and circumstances. It is through relationship that people come into relationship with Jesus, and it is through relationship that we will mobilize workers for the harvest. 📖

Megan Brown, PsyD, is a psychologist on faculty of In His Image (IHI) Family Medicine Residency, as well as a member of the In His Image Sending Agency Member Care team. Over 10% of IHI's graduates are currently long-term medical missionaries.

John McVay, MDiv, is COO of the In His Image Family Medicine Residency and Sending Agency based in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He co-founded AskaMissionary.com and The Journey Deepens weekend retreats.

References

Brown, Megan and John McVay. The LAUNCH Survey: Helpful and Hindering Factors for Launching into Long-term Missions. Evangelical Missions Quarterly October 2016.

Matenga, Jay and Malcolm Gold. 2016. *Mission in Motion: Global Voices on Mission Involvement*. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library.

McVay, John, David Stevens, and Don Parrot. 2017. "Launch Survey Full Report: Factors, Hindrances, Mobilizer Effectiveness, Agency Recruitment Methods." Accessed October 5, 2017, from www.launchsurvey.wordpress.com.

Wade, Marti, John McVay and over 100 Missionaries. 1999-2017. "Q&A with Missionaries: Real-life Issues and Challenges." Accessed October 5, 2017, from www.askamissionary.com.

"It Shall be Done!" The Important Role of Prayer in Christian Mission

Sung Bauta

George Janvier began serving in Nigeria in 1985, and as missionary lecturer at the Jos ECWA Theological Seminary (JETS) in 1990. In those 30 years, Janvier trained hundreds of students and church planters in Nigeria and beyond. His students today are leading significant ministries as pastors, missionaries, Bible teachers, and leaders in Christian ministries. The ministry of Janvier with Serving in Mission (SIM) cannot be quantified. However, Janvier's abiding conviction is that prayer is foundational to the success of Christian life and ministry (Janvier 2014).

In this article, I will undergird how central prayer has been to the work of the Evangelical Missionary Society (EMS), an indigenous mission agency in Nigeria founded by SIM. I will conclude with some missional implications for Christian mission today.

EMS of ECWA: A History of Prayer

SIM's first missionaries were burdened for people in the interior of Africa, specifically the colonial area known as Central Sudan. To facilitate evangelistic outreach of African Christians, SIM organized a mission society known as African Missionary Society (AMS) in 1948. Through this body, the burden of missions was passed onto the indigenous Christians. Churches established by the missionaries were organized into an indigenous denomination known as the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) in 1956. The AMS would eventually become the Evangelical Missionary Society (EMS) of ECWA. Since its inception as AMS in 1948, EMS has sent hundreds of African missionaries to preach the Gospel and establish churches among those without a personal relationship with Jesus. God continues to use EMS missionaries towards the expansion of the Kingdom of God in Nigeria, in other parts of Africa, and beyond.

As already noted, the history of EMS began far away from Nigeria with those who were burdened for the vast unreached peoples of the world. The Holy Spirit put a burden on the heart of a Mrs. Gowans in Canada. She spent several years

praying for the salvation of souls in Africa, especially in the Sudan. She believed that unless some missionaries had the courage to take the gospel to West Africa (the "white man's graveyard"), the people there would remain in darkness. It was her prayers, borne out of this deep burden for Africa, that led to the founding of the SIM.

God answered the prayers of Mrs Gowans in an incredible way. Her son, Walter Gowans, answered God's call to go as a missionary to the part of the Sudan now known as Nigeria. Two others, Thomas Kent, an American, and Rowland Bingham, an English Canadian, soon joined Gowans. They faced several obstacles, especially in fund raising. But they were unfazed by their challenges. This was because "in prayer and in faith, they were able to foresee the joy (Ps. 126:5,6)" (Oshatoba 1994, 8). They arrived at Badagry, Lagos, on December 4, 1893 with only about thirty British pounds among the three of them. There was no mission agency at home, only the Lord in whom they relied. They maintained confidence in God throughout their mission. It is no wonder that SIM's motto includes prayer. In fact, their song in those early days was, "Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees, and looks to God alone; Laughs at impossibilities and cries, it shall be done!"

The prospect of death did not deter these young pioneers. In fact, upon landing in Badagry, an older missionary told them, "You will never see the Sudan, your children will never see the Sudan, your grandchildren may." (Bingham 1943) They heard many such statements as well as stories of illnesses and deaths, but they persisted in their quest to take the gospel to the interior of the Sudan. Their compassion for lost people drove them through the "thick, dark and dangerous African tropical forest" (Baba 2009, 23). They were not going to allow anything discourage them from the vision of seeing the Sudan won for Christ. However, less than a year after arriving in Africa, Gowans became sick and died on November 17, 1894. He was buried in the bush at Girku. Soon thereafter, Thomas Kent also became sick and died on December 8, 1894. He was buried near Bida, one of the Muslim cities in the middle belt of Nigeria. Although the accounts of their funerals are not known, it is evident that there were funeral services held for both. They died in a foreign land without seeing the fruit of their labor.

Of the three pioneering missionaries only Rowland Bingham remained. He would escape the clutches of death when he suffered a severe malaria attack, which forced him to return to the USA and Canada. He visited Mrs. Gowans to return the few possessions of her late son. Upon receiving the items, Mrs. Gowans took Bingham's hands and said, "I would rather have had Walter go out to the Sudan, and die there, all alone, than have him home today disobeying the Lord" (Bingham, 25). Such devotion from Mrs. Gowans inspired several generations of SIM missionaries, including Bingham himself. He refused to give up despite the seeming failure of the mission. He continued to appeal to churches "requesting more prayer and more workers" (Baba, 23). God moved the hearts of others to join him on his second attempt to reach the Sudan with the gospel. However, this also ended in failure to penetrate the hearts of the people. Bingham described these earliest attempts as years of death and darkness (Bingham, 9-28).

It was on the third attempt, in 1902, that four missionaries – E.A. Anthony, Charles Robinson, Albert Taylor, and A.W. Banfield – established a mission station in Patigi, hundreds of miles inland from Lagos. However, such progress was short-lived, as two of the missionaries returned home and another died. The first female missionary, Miss Clothier, joined the missionary effort. But she soon died and was buried on African soil. Ian Hay, describing the earliest years of SIM, noted, "In fourteen years SIM had more missionary graves than converts" (*SIM Now*, 1996).

It was not until the fifteenth year that signs of fruitfulness became visible. The first converts were baptized at Patigi in 1908, followed by steady growth. News of this fruit reached Bingham in Canada who cheerfully welcomed the news. By 1910, seven additional stations were opened in Bida, Wushishi, Egbe, Paiko, Kpada, Karu, and Kwoi. Entering Egbe on his visit to witness the positive response to the gospel, Bingham noted:

> As we drew near, we were met, not with the shouts of the heathen, but with the songs of converts. No longer half-naked savages, but clothed Christians, they bade us welcome in the name of the Lord. They wanted to carry us in a kind of triumphant procession. But it was the day of the triumph of the Lamb, and we asked the scores of happy believers to lead us. We are not given to emotion, but all the pent-up longing of years burst out in tears of joy we could not restrain. (Ibid.).

In short, these words indicate that, for Bingham, all the years of struggle, illness, poverty, and death had proven to be worthwhile. New converts possessed evangelistic zeal. Through SIM's basic methods that included literacy, basic Bible teaching, and apprenticeship, new converts were taught to share their faith. By 1920, there were about twenty mission stations. Growth continued until SIM missionaries opened over a thousand stations across Nigeria. (Turaki, 177-184).

Prayer featured in the most pivotal moments of SIM. First, God answered the faithful prayers of Mrs. Gowans by moving her son to accept the challenge to go to the Sudan as a missionary. In his last letter, Walter Gowans, while soliciting support, implored people to pray for the missionary ventures to the Sudan. He noted the challenges of entering the Sudan. When people told him to wait for the time when the Sudan would be more open to the gospel, he responded, "My friends, I cannot but believe that, as in other things, so in this, God's time is now!" (Oshatoba, 1). In fact, Gowans believed that God does not close any door to the gospel. He was convinced that the only way to fail in the mission was to lack faith in God. In this regard, he held that even death was not a failure.

Second, after unloading their baggage and bidding farewell to the boat crew that brought them, Banfield writes, *inter alia*, that as soon as the boat left, they all knelt under a tree and prayed. (*The Sudan Witness*, 1893-1953). They attributed the success of establishing the first mission station to prayer, because they did not only find the mud houses they needed, but were also treated kindly by the king of Patigi. This first harvest was a major turning point in the history of SIM, and, consequently, EMS.

EMS of ECWA: A Heritage of Prayer

EMS has not forgotten this heritage of prayer. Up till today, prayer guides EMS' missionary efforts across the globe. These efforts include several projects in which EMS is currently engaged. First, EMS has approximately 1,813 missionaries on the field worldwide, which includes over 140 cross-border missionaries in 18 countries, requiring US$167,000 support every month.

Second, EMS also provides transportation for its missionaries to their locations, to visit missionaries and supporting churches, and to survey unreached areas. Next, EMS provides medical services to communities, operating four clinics to provide healthcare for those to whom they minister. EMS also manages a "House of Hope" to care for widows and orphans. The women acquire skills to be self-sustaining, while the children receive primary

education to give them a chance at a better life.

In addition, EMS manages about 35 non-profit schools. A major purpose of the schools is to provide both affordable and quality education for the missionaries' children, although it is open to others as well. Moreover, the EMS central office manages the logistics of sending missionaries on both foreign and local fields, supervising the clinics, and ensuring that retired missionaries are cared for. This includes pension remittance of US$333,415.

These projects require both material and human resources. The EMS Director, Simon Yako, states that what makes it possible to influence people to give towards the work of EMS is prayer. Currently, the two major points of prayers for EMS include: (1) To raise financial support, and (2) To raise workers for the most dangerous areas of the world. Yako testifies of how God is raising financial support and people from unlikely places. For instance, Audu Akawu has consistently given to the work of EMS. What is unique about Akawu is that other than his meager income, he has no arms and he is blind; but he donates US$1.39 every month for EMS. He has become a poster-child for EMS' fundraising efforts. While financially well-to-do individuals and organizations support EMS, people at the grassroots are also being used by God to support the work of EMS.

Furthermore, EMS has been trusting God to raise workers for the areas in the Northern part of Nigeria. Northern Nigeria is not only predominantly Muslim, but Northeastern Nigeria is the region where the militant sect, Boko Haram, has wreaked havoc for more than a decade. There is need for workers in states such as Yobe, which has also suffered the Boko Haram onslaught. The stories of missionaries in remote places like these are quite heart wrenching. Yako attributes their resolve to serve amidst the challenges to the important role that prayer plays in the lives of the missionaries.

EMS missionaries are not only involved in reaching out to people with the gospel, they are also involved in emergency relief work. In fact, you cannot do missions without providing relief in Nigeria. Since EMS started sending missionaries, they have always encountered many widows and orphans who needed care. Due to the persistence of violence in some parts of the world, EMS missionaries are prepared to preach the gospel and provide emergency relief for the growing number of widows and orphans who make up most of the thousands of internally displaced peoples (IDPs) in Northern Nigeria. Moreover, because of increased dangers and persistent crisis, in 2011 EMS developed a "crisis desk" on a permanent basis.

Above all, it is the prayers of people that EMS covets most to meet the challenges of its work in the 21st century. In a monthly newsletter, the EMS Director sends to partners across the world, an important line is included: "We at EMS are continually inspired by the dedication and commitment of prayer partners like yourself who answer the call to pray again and again." Yako and his staff devote themselves to individual and collective prayer. This underscores that, for EMS, prayer is essential to fulfilling its mission.

Missional Implications

Prayer enhances an ever-widening vision: The burden that Mrs. Gowans felt that led to her revolutionary prayers, served as a catalyst for worldwide mission today. Little did she know that her prayers would lead to the founding of SIM, and, subsequently, to EMS. But as SIM and EMS missionaries continue her legacy of fervent prayer, they have witnessed an expansive vision today. A fascinating trend in world mission is the fact that one time "mission fields" have now become sending centers. For instance, EMS missionaries are now serving

in America. Moreover, the vision has widened from preaching the gospel to social action.

Prayer provides a holistic lens: While EMS had always engaged in some form of holistic mission, 2011 became a turning point in the ways that EMS missionaries approach ministry. Providing physical and emotional support ceased to be a secondary initiative; but became integral to the proclamation of the gospel. One might say that EMS was forced to adopt such a vision due to persistent violence; however, if EMS were not in tune with God's Spirit, they would not have embraced such a vision.

Prayer highlights God's faithfulness: Yako notes that EMS still exists because God is faithful to his word. He tells of the time when people entertained scrapping EMS due to insufficient support. However, God honored the prayers of his people. Consequently, EMS continues to thrive, expanding across the globe. It is important to note that EMS came into existence before ECWA, the indigenous church that now manages it. Consequently, EMS has not always depended on the resources of ECWA, especially at its nascent stage of existence. This has enabled EMS to maintain more independence from ECWA today than the other departments that ECWA manages.

EMS' devotion to prayer underscores the need for total dependency on the Lord. E.M. Bounds spent years researching and reflecting on prayer. In his book, *The Weapon of Prayer*, he writes, "Nothing is well done without prayer for the simple reason that it leaves God out of the account" (Bounds 1996). EMS is proof that including God in the equation is the key to accomplishing God's mission. 📖

Sung Bauta is a Ph.D. candidate at Asbury Theological Seminary, with women in mission being his focus for research. He is currently an adjunct professor of Bible and Ministry at Central Christian College of the Bible in Moberly, Missouri and a visiting lecturer at the Jos ECWA Theological Seminary in Nigeria, where he will return to teach full time.

Bibliography

Baba, Panya. *A Vision Received, A Vision Passed On: The History of EMS of ECWA, 1948-1998*. Jos, Nigeria: Gajofa, 2009.

Bingham, Rowland. *Seven Sevens of Years and a Jubilee: The Story of the Sudan Interior Mission*. Toronto, Canada: Evangelical Publishers, 1943.

Bounds, E.M. *The Weapon of Prayer*. Virginia Beach, VA: Whitaker, 1996.

Janvier, George. *Growing in the Ministry of Prayer: A Guide for Spiritual Growth*. Bukuru: Africa Christian Textbooks, 2014.

Oshatoba, Seth A. *SIM/ECWA Voices and Statistics*. Jos: Challenge Press, 1994.

SIM Now. Spring 1996.

Sudan Witness, 1893-1953.

Turaki, Yusufu. *A Century of SIM/ECWA History in Nigeria, 1893-1993: Theory and Practice of Christian Missions in Africa* (Jos, Nigeria: ECWA Book Trust, 1999), 177-184.

Rise Up Church—for Children and Youth!

Dave Meyers

Today's headlines read, "Africa becomes the new battleground for ISIS and al-Qaeda as they lose ground in Mideast!" "Al-Shabab in East Africa is now stronger in Africa than al-Qaeda is in the Middle East…"[1] This should cause great concern for the global church especially as evil forces continue to rape, steal, kill, and destroy children and youth across Africa. In some North African villages all the young girls are missing from their communities. Why? ISIS has a strategy that if they cannot *teach* their ideology they will *breed* it across Africa. It is a race for the souls of the youngest and most vulnerable in African society. Heartbreaking!

With the rise of the global children and youth demographic, the church should take notice and develop strategies to reach the "least of these" while the opportunity exists. One African leader has said, "If we do not put together effective strategies to reach and disciple the children and youth of Africa, we will miss the majority of the Great Commission!"

True community transformation begins in the church, and children are the key for the church's impact into families and surrounding communities. Pastors and church planters need to be engaged with children and youth, especially among the 4-14 window[2] globally, and see them as catalysts into families and communities for the Great Commission! Here are seven reasons why children should be our strategic focus when it comes to Great Commission and church planting strategies.

Children are on the heart of God (Matt. 18:2–6, 10)

"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3 NIV). Jesus was not saying that only children can enter into the Kingdom, rather He was saying that children are an example to us of what must be present in order for someone to receive the Gospel in faith. God loves the humility, persistence, curiosity, trust, and transparency of children. Jesus desires these faith qualities in all His followers. Children truly are very special in the eyes of God.

Besides being exhorted to imitate children, Jesus also teaches His followers how we should treat children: to welcome, protect, and evangelize them. He teaches that those involved in mistreating children are to be dealt with in the strongest of terms. He becomes indignant when His disciples, thinking the children will be a distraction, hinder the children from coming to Jesus to be blessed. He is concerned for their souls, that not "any of these little ones should be lost." Clearly, Jesus' message to His followers is that God loves children and holds a special place in His heart for them.

High probability of responding in faith (Matt. 11:25, 26)

As the present-day church seeks to plant new churches in obedience to the Great Commission, there is a global missions movement that truly stands out and deserves our attention. It is called the 4-14 Window Movement whose aim is to "Reach, Rescue, Root and Release young people all over the world." It says this: eighty-three percent of those who make a decision to follow Jesus do so between the ages of four and fourteen. This statistic holds true across cultures; it is likely not to change over time.

According to George Barna, children should be the number one priority of the church. Simple mathematical probability shows us why: a child between the ages of five and thirteen, when encountered with the Gospel, has a thirty-four percent chance of responding positively. For this person, in a few short years, this season opportunity is closed. Between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, the probability of a positive response to the Gospel drops to only four percent. For adults nineteen and older, the number rises slightly to six percent.[3]

As Kingdom builders and ministers of the Gospel, this should give us pause. If for no other reason, thinking purely pragmatically and looking to have maximum impact in terms of soul winning, this is a window of opportunity that deserves our focused energies and resources. Rick Warren says, "The apostle Paul's strategy was to go through open doors and not waste time banging on closed ones. Likewise, we should not focus our efforts on those who aren't ready to listen. There are far more people in the world who are ready to receive Christ than there are believers ready to witness to them."[4]

For Jesus' modern-day disciples, it appears the ripest mission field is among the world's children and youth. As we innovate and strategize for world evangelism, the 4-14 Window needs to inform the way we plant new churches, as well as, how we minister in our existing churches.

Alters the course of a whole life (Prov. 22:6)

Children and youth have, quite literally, an "opportunity of a lifetime" that unbelieving adults will never have. What is it? They have a chance to build their lives, from the very start, upon solid, God-given truths and principles. Jesus said, "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house upon the rock" (Matt 7:24 NIV). If caring Christian adults teach a child how to build his life upon the rock, when he grows up chances are he will not fall away, even when the storms of life come.

Most people in ministry were impacted by someone during their youth whom God used to bring a sensitivity to God's call on their life. "This means that most of the future leaders of the church are the same ones who fill our Sunday Schools and student ministries today."[5] Indeed, eighty percent of our pastors and church leaders trusted Christ by age fifteen. Ninety percent of those serving as full time cross-cultural missionaries trusted Christ by that same age. As we seek to plant healthy churches that will have Kingdom impact, we must begin with a sharp focus on growing our children into disciples of Christ.

Henrietta Mears, wrote, "The winning of a child to Christ is our most important task today. When we save a child, we not only save a soul, but we gain a life. Children have the right to demand your best leaders, your best materials, your best facilities."[6] Do we really believe this? As church planters, we can lead our congregations to rally around our

children and invest wholeheartedly in these ones who have all their years of serving Christ ahead of them.

Leads to healthy churches (Matt. 19:13, 14)

According to Lifeway Research, more than two-thirds of young adults who attend a Protestant church will walk away from the church within two years after graduating high school. Later in life, often once married and with children, about two-thirds do come back to life in the church at some level.[7]

A danger we face as a church is passing along the idea that this is a satisfactory model for the Christian life. Our children are brought up in the church, yet as young adults, are being transformed more by the culture than by the church. They are turning away during the very season God has designed to capture their hearts and begin to use them mightily for His Kingdom. Years later when they do come back, they often do so weighted down by cares of the world and having lost Christ as their first love.

For many church leaders, children's ministry is viewed as the necessary cost of ministering to adults - childcare in order to keep the parents coming. Sadly, children's programs are under-staffed, under-supported, unimaginative and invisible to the rest of the church. The fallout comes quickly once children become young adults and take steps toward independence and autonomy. Ed Stetzer sums it up aptly, "If your student ministry is a four-year holding tank with pizza, don't expect young adults to stick around."[8]

Church planters have an opportunity to change this mindset and model. In the springtime of life, while our children's hearts are shapeable and teachable, what if we put a priority on kid's programs? What would our churches look like in ten or twenty years if we gave children our best? What if children were at the center of church life and discipleship, and not on the sidelines? Would the next generation churches still be full of adults returned from their ten-year hiatus from the Christian life? Maybe, instead, our churches would be full of mature and engaged Christian leaders equipped and ready to multiply healthy churches.

Doing ministry with and for our kids is urgent (Matt. 21:16)

We must strive to build our children up in the faith or see them swept away by post-Christian worldviews they are encountering at every turn. At a young age, children are already working through complex questions: Where did I come from? What happens when I die? Why is there so much death and suffering? The connections and assumptions being formed in these years will soon interpret everything going on around him, and his worldview will be almost decided by age thirteen. Yes, we have only twelve years to shape our children's worldview and make sure it is firmly in place.[9]

In the West, the actual amount of time our churches have with our kids is very small. With the busy, scheduled lives of kids these days, it's only getting smaller. It's been estimated of the 113,880 hours in a child's life between birth and thirteen, the average kid consumes a minimum of 25 hours of media a week, for a total of almost 17,000 hours. In retrospect, even if a kid spends 2 hours a week at church every week, the church still gets less than 1,400 hours.[10]

In the 1940's Henrietta Mears said, "Our children are on the auction block being sold to the highest bidder," and it rings truer than ever today.[11] What are we, as the church,

going to do with those precious few moments to influence the hearts of our youth? As church planters, we have a chance to establish a philosophy of children's ministry that will be central to the church's discipleship strategy. Even before the church is planted, it is imperative to be prayerfully planning, intentional, and relevant that will lead our youth toward knowing, loving, and serving our Lord Jesus Christ.

The model of servant-hood is with children (Matt. 10:42)

When churches invest in children and value souls, no matter what the age, it models the servant heart of Jesus. Ryan Frank, the CEO of KidzMatter said it like this, "When a ministry is gospel-centered, children and youth are valued. Children are not viewed as a nuisance. They aren't put in the back to be taken care of while the adults do the important stuff. Instead they become a priority, starting with the pastor and church leadership, and working its way all the way down."[12]

The world teaches us to cater to the best and the brightest, expecting the benefits to be reciprocated. Jesus, however, warned against preferring the high and mighty, and demonstrated serving the unlovable, people with disabilities, and those who are marginal to the needs of our society. In the disciples' eyes, the children were a distraction as they discussed more "important" issues. Jesus' disapproval of this thinking was clear when he instructed them to, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them." (Matt. 19:14)

When we minister to kids – getting to know who they *really* are, entering into their world, listening to them, and bringing joy to their lives – we model the same posture of our Savior, who came *down* to us, emptied Himself, and in humility took on the form of a servant in order to demonstrate His love in ways we could understand.

Every child can reach the world and now is the time! (Mk 10:13–16)

We live at a time of rapid change that some are calling the "Great Transition." For the first time since the early days, the church is primarily a non-white, non-western and non-wealthy religion.[13] The speed of change is head-spinning, and trends such as migration, urbanization, and globalization all have huge implications for the church as we consider completing the challenge of the Great Commission. Many countries, especially in less-developed parts of the world, are growing very rapidly. By 2050 the overall population of Africa is expected to double. By the start of the next century, 40 in 100 people will be African. Nigeria, currently Africa's most populous country, will be within range of passing China in population.[14]

All this growth means kids, and *lots of them*! Especially in Africa, where by 2050 ages fifteen and younger is expected to swell to over 1 billion.[15] In light of this, we are beginning to understand the key role evangelism and discipleship of children can play in church planting in Africa and beyond. Kids are flocking to hear stories about Jesus, and telling their parents and grandparents the stories they hear. Mission organizations are engaging unreached people groups through children and youth ministry. Awana Kid's Clubs are expanding at the rate of more than 4,000 a year, and are reaching deep into slums, barrios, and difficult-to-reach areas. In many countries where people are young and getting younger, we cannot fulfill the Great Commission without reaching the children.

The battle rages for the souls of men, and children are at the center of the fight. Many are vying for their attention. Evil has already discovered the value of using children. May

God stir the church to be innovative and creative in moving forward with putting a priority on reaching children. The Great Commission can be achieved with no less. 📖

Dave Meyers is President and CEO of ZimZam Global, a ministry that especially focuses on ministry to children, youth and families. As a founding partner with ZimZam Global, Dave is impassioned with casting vision; creating opportunities for leaders; and helping children, especially those with disabilities, come to know, love and serve Jesus. Visit: http://zimzamglobal.org/

Endnotes

1 USA Today, "Africa becomes the new battleground for ISIS and al-Qaeda as they lose ground in Mideast" (www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/10/25/africa-becomes-new-battleground-isis-and-al-qaeda-they-lose-ground-mideast/796148001/)

2 See http://www.4to14window.com

3 Barna, George, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions: Why Children Should Be Your Church's #1 Priority* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003, p. 33)

4 Warren, Rick, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Michigan: Zondervan Books, 2002)

5 DeLilio, Damon, *Give Me Jesus: Gospel-Centered Children's Ministry that Changes Lives.* Ryan Frank, ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2013, p. 39)

6 Mears, Henrietta, unpublished archive source

7 Church Dropouts, *How Many Leave the Church Between Ages 18-22 and Why?* (Lifeway Research, Spring 2007)

8 Stetzer, Ed, *"Dropouts and Disciples: How many students are really leaving the church?"* (The Exchange. Web. May 2014)

9 Barna, George, "Barna Survey Examines Changes in Worldview Among Christians Over the Past 13 Years." (barna.org. Web. 6 March 2009)

10 Lucas, Donna. *Give Me Jesus: Gospel-Centered Children's Ministry that Changes Lives.* Ryan Frank, ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2013, p. 55)

11 Mears, Henrietta, unpublished archive source

12 Frank, Ryan, *Give Me Jesus: Gospel-Centered Children's Ministry that Changes Lives* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2013, p. 27)

13 Borthwick, Paul, *Western Christians in Global Mission: What's the Role of the North American Church*? (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012, p. 36)

14 Fisher, Max, "The Amazing, Surprising, Africa-driven demographic future of the earth, in 9 charts." (washingtonpost.com. Web. 16 July 2013)

15 Unicef Report, Press Release, "Africa will be home to 2 in 5 children by 2050." (unicef.org. Web. 12 August 2104)

Confusion Concerning the Great Commission

David J. Hesselgrave

The church's missionary mandate is rooted in the Great Commission: "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you—and lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age' —(Matt 28:18-20, NASV). One would think there could be no confusion among Christians about that, but there is. In fact, from Reformation times reference to this missionary mandate has raised serious questions.

Generally speaking, the Reformers were of the opinion that the Great Commission applied to the early apostles but not to them.

Luther wrote:

That the apostles entered strange houses and preached was because they had a command and were for this purpose appointed, called and sent, namely that they should preach everywhere, as Christ had said, 'Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.' After that, however, no one again received such a general apostolic command, but every bishop or pastor has his own particular parish.[1]

Luther used the analogy of a stone thrown in a pond. just as the ripples move outward until they reach the water's edge, so the church should grow outward until it reaches the ends of the earth. John Calvin held to a similar view. The text of his commentary on I Cor. 12:28 is as follows:

...for the Lord created the apostles, that they might spread the Gospel throughout the whole world, and he did not assign to each of them certain limits or parishes, but would have them, wherever they want, to discharge the office of ambassadors among all nations and languages. In this respect there is a difference between them and pastors, who are, in a manse, tied to their particular churches. For the pastor has not a commission to preach the

Gospel over the whole world, but to take care of the Church that has been committed to his charge.[2]

Since for Calvin the apostles were temporary officers in the church while pastors were permanent officers, it was clear that the Great Commission, as such, had limited aplicability.

There may be some who question whether the Great Commission applies to the church today, but I cannot remember meeting any. I have met many, however, who disagree about how it applies. These differences must be resolved scripturally or the mission of the church will suffer.

Authority of the Great Commission

One of the most significant missionary gatherings of all time was the Edinburgh Conference of 1910. At that time some 1,200 church and mission representatives met under the leadership of John R. Mott and others, in order to discuss ways and means of cooperation in fulfilling the Great Commission. With a view to making the conference as inclusive as possible, the planning committee decided to exclude questions of doctrine and polity from the agenda. That was a far-reaching decision. In effect, it meant that conferees believed cooperation in mission to be possible without consensus as to the nature of the mission. All cooperating churches and missioners remained free to maintain their own doctrine and understanding of mission.

James Scherer says that this approach is at the very heart of the ecumenical movement.[3] No consensus is necessary beyond a "common acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as God and Savior."[4] The missionary mandate of ecumenical groups is, therefore, an intrinsic mandate- "each member church interprets and applies this joint mandate in terms of its own doctrinal principles and ecclesiological self- understanding."[5] Were this not the case— were the mandate to be understood as extrinsic to the churches and to be interpreted on its own terms– the ecumenical base would become altogether too narrow and ecumenical action much too restricted.

I do not question the sincerity of those who took this approach at Edinburgh, but I do question their wisdom, because of susequent history and contemporary events. In 1932 the Laymen's Inquiry report edited by William Hocking called for a re-thinking of mission, which all but dispensed with the idea of conversion. In the middle 1960s the planning committee for the Uppsala meeting of the World Council of Churches was ready to "let the world set the agenda." A more recent consultation on the future of the missionary enterprise had as its theme: "Liberation, Development, Evangelization—Must We Choose in Mission?" The most prominent speakers had little to say about evangelization, somewhat more to say about development, and considerable to say about liberation—primarily in terms of the overthrow of capitalism and reinforcing revolutionaries.[6] In line with this, the WCC granted $85,000 to black guerrilla forces fighting a biracial government in Rhodesia that promised majority rule.[7]

The issue here is one of authority. If the mandate is intrinsic to the churches and missions, all duly authorized interpretations and actions are thereby legitimized. If, on the other hand, ultimate authority resides in the word of God, every understanding must be subjected to scrutiny in the light of that Word. Dialogue concerning, and cooperation in, Christian mission have but limited benefits—and, indeed, are fraught with very real

risks—as long as the issue of authority remains undefined or unresolved!

The Debate Concerning Proper Exegesis of the Great Commission

Of course, a high view of Scripture in and of itself does not settle everything. Though their assumptions are different, evangelicals, like ecumenists, are inclined to arrive at the meaning of the Great Commission by reading meanings into the text rather than allowing the text to speak for itself. Distortions and confusion inevitably result.

Consider two illustrations of eisogetical misinterpretations of the last verses of the Gospel of Matthew—one simplistic, the other sophisticated.

A simplistic misinterpretation, heard in hundreds of missionary meetings and conferences, goes something like this: The most important requirement of the Great Commission is that we be willing to go to the ends of the earth—or, if that is not possible, that we send someone in our place. Those who do go are to "evangelize" with the result that some people will make decisions for Christ, thus becoming "converts" or "disciples." Finally, these disciples should be baptized and instructed in Christian truth by the one who won them to Christ, or by someone designated to "follow them up."

It has been repeatedly pointed out by careful exegetes that this simplistic interpretation will not hold up.[8] The single imperative in Matthew's statement of the Great Commission is "make disciples." "Going," "baptizing" and "teaching" are participles which take their force from the main verb. All are essential to the central task of discipling. Properly understood, the command corrects such common mischiefs in mission as: (1) sending almost anyone who is "willing to go," regardless of his or her preparedness for carrying out the larger task; and (2) choosing to carry out a particular aspect of the larger task (termed "our calling," "our work" etc.) with little regard to the whole.

A sophisticated misinterpretation, expounded in various books on church growth, goes something like this—When our Lord commanded us to disciple the ethne, he meant that we should go to the tribes, the castes, the families of mankind and approach them as units. When the gospel is presented to these groups properly, groups of people can become Christian together and without the wrenching apart that accompanies one-by-one conversion.[9]

It has been shown that careful exegesis will not support this socioanthropological understanding of our Lord's words.[10] If he had had this meaning in mind, there were other readily understood and more appropriate words, such as genos, phule, laos, and glossa, which he could have used. Most serious exegetes agree that, in context, ethne means Gentiles, i.e., those individuals who do not belong to the chosen people. Missionary approaches based on such concepts as homogeneous units and people movements have a certain validity (until they are pressed too far), but they cannot be based upon the Great Commission as such.

We are not engaged in nit-picking here. Granted the English construction of Matthew 28:19 (which seems to put primary emphasis on going into all the world), it is understandable that church and mission leaders make foremost the appeals for volunteers who will go and funds with which to send them. And granted the openness of the missionaries (who have responded by going) to new strategies for winning men to Christ in greater numbers, it is understandable that they are impressed by interpretations of Scripture which are based on the social sciences and which hold promise of breakthroughs in missionary work. Nevertheless, the Word of God should not be made to serve evangelical ends

any more than it should serve ecumenical ends. When we force it to do so, evangelical theology is discredited and Missionary practice is misdirected into side eddies.

The Question of Priority Among the Statements of the Great Commission

As is well known, there are several forms of the Great Commission—those of the four Gospels and that of Acts chapter one. Bypassing for now the textual problem in the longer ending of Mark's gospel, it is safe to say that the various forms complement one another and support the view of mission most generally held among evangelicals—namely, that the mission is primarily one of proclaiming the Christian gospel and bringing people to repentance, faith and fellowship, and conformance to Christ in his church.

Recently, however, it has been argued that the traditional understanding of the Great Commission is faulty.[11] According to this line of reasoning the "crucial form" of the Great Commission is the Johannine: "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). In this statement, it is maintained, Jesus made his own mission a model of ours ("as the Father hath sent me, so send I you"). This does not mean that we become saviors. But it does mean that we become servants. Just as Christ "fed hungry mouths and washed dirty feet,...healed the sick, comforted the sad and even restored the dead to life" so our mission is to be one of service.[12] The mission encompasses all that the church is sent into the world to do, including humanitarian service and the quest for better social structures. In short, according to this view, social and political activities are partners of evangelism and church growth in the Christian mission.

Sensitive evangelicals will applaud this concern for the material, physical and social, as well as the spiritual, needs of people. In fact, in spite of a generally bad contemporary press, missions have often (usually?) combined social and spiritual ministries while carrying out their mission. This is as it should be. The Great Commandment makes it clear that Christians—all Christians are to love their neighbors (Luke 10:27). The story of the Good Samaritan makes it clear that our neighbors are those who are in need. Moreover, our Lord insisted that his followers were to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Matt. 22:21). Clearly, Great Commission mission requires that these injunctions be lived out and taught as a necessary part of discipling the world's peoples (Matt. 28:20). This can be seen in the life and ministry of Paul—the missionary par-excellence, He supported a charitable effort on behalf of "the poor among the saints in Jerusalem" (Rom. 15:26). He admonished believers to "do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). In life and teaching he reinforces Christ's words regarding the responsibilities vis-a-vis human government (Rom. 13:7).

But the argument that the Johannine statement of the Great Commission is primary, and that it demands socio-political action, is suspect on at least three grounds.

First, it is questionable on exegetical grounds. The particular verb for send (apostello) and its form (the perfect) in John 20:21 do make it clear that our mission is an extension of the mission which the Father enjoined upon the Son. But the phrase "as (kathos) the Father sent me" does not indicate something beyond that fact; and the translation "I also send you" is to be preferred to "so send I you." There is no warrant for reading activities into the Johannine form of the Great Commission that are not found in the parallel statements in the Synoptics.

Second, the argument raises serious theological problems. From John 20:21 we are taken

to Luke 4:18,19 and 7:22 where we have a description of the ministry of Christ (releasing the oppressed, giving sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, raising of the dead, etc), which then becomes the model for our mission. But it is clear that these activities involved miracles. Is it impossible to obey the Great Commission without performing such miracles today? Most interpreters will reply in the negative. In that case, do such things as social legislation and medical ministration measure up to the model? Careful interpreters will not be quick to answer in the affirmative. The theological dilemma this problem poses admits of no easy solution.

Furthermore, this emphasis on socio-political action does not grow out of the record of the ministries of missionaries in the New Testament. Barnabas and Saul delivered a contribution from the Antioch church for the relief of the brethren in Judea before they were set apart for the work to which the Lord had called them (Acts 11:29, 30; 12:25; 13:1-3). And, as already mentioned, Paul communicated the same concern to the new churches he established. But in spite of the presence of Luke the physician and in the context of obvious needs of every sort in the societies where they ministered, the evidence is overwhelming that, primarily, the early missionaries gave themselves to preaching the Word of Christ and establishing the church of Christ in new areas.

Third, the argument requires a careful appraisal on practical grounds. In the first place, experienced missionary practitioners know that even when social enterprises are understood to be "secondary ministries" they possess a perennial potential for usurping the attention, time, talents and energy that the "primary ministry" desperately needs. In the second place, it is often extremely difficult to determine what social and, especially, political actions can and should be undertaken in the foreign contexts where expatriate missionaries usually live and work. In the third place, the primary means of effecting social betterment in any society is to increase the number of those who—as Christian laymen, evangelists and pastors—will give allegiance to Jesus Christ and become the salt and light of that society.

Conclusion

As evangelicals, we agree that the Great Commission applies to us today. We also agree that the Great Commission constitutes an authoritative command and is not to be interpreted according to the vagaries of the contemporary agendas of either the world or the churches. But if we do not exercise care, confusion growing out of unwarranted exegesis and prioritizing will first distract and then deter us from fulfillment of the Great Commission. Of course, we should not throw out the baby with the bathwater. Often immobilized by inertia and creature comforts, Christians need to be challenged to "go with the gospel." Often confined to the ruts of past methodology, missionaries can profit from the searchlights social scientists have trained on new methodological trails. Often lulled into quiescence by spiritual exercises and numbed by overwhelming world-wide physical, social and political needs, all Christians need to respond in obedience to the Great Commandment to love God and neighbor. But, united in our commitment to Great Commission mission, it is imperative that we examine our marching orders carefully and respond to them obediently. In that examination and obedience we must not be inordinately influenced by Madison Avenue salesmen, university researchers or social engineers who, as the Pled Pipers of our secular cities, persistently prod us to march to their tantalizing tunes. 📖

Endnotes

1 D. Martin Luthers Werke (kritische Gesammtausgabe, Weimar, 1897, Vol. 31) pp. 210-11; quoted in Harry R. Boer, Pentecost and Missions (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1961), p. 19.

2 Ibid.

3 James A. Scherer, "Ecumenical Mandates for Mission" in Norman A. Horner, ed., Protestant Crosscurrents in Mission: The Ecumenical-Conservative Encounter (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), pp. 28-30.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 David J. Hesselgrave, "Views and Vibes at Ventnor," Christianity Today (June 2, 1978), pp. 42-44.

7 "Rising Furor Over Role of U.S. Churches Abroad." U. S. News and World Report (Sept. 4. 1978), pp. 25-26.

8 See, for example, Robert D. Culver, "What is the Church's Commission?", Bibliotheca Sacra (July, 1968), pp. 239-253.

9 Cf. Donald McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), p. 310.

10 Walter L. Liefeld, "Theology of Church Growth" in David J. Hesselgrave, ed., Theology and Mission: Papers Given at Trinity Consultation No. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), p. 175.

11 John R. W. Stott, Christian Mission in the Modern World: What the Church Should Be Doing Now (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1975), pp. 22-28.

12 Ibid.

Christian Barriers to Jesus: Conversations and Questions from the Indian Context

J. Paul Pennington

J. Paul Pennington's Book, *Christians Barriers to Jesus,* is a helpful summary of issues regarding Christian mission work amongst Hindus. There is much to be learned from Pennington's analysis of the issues.

If "Hinduism is not a religion or philosophy" but rather "a culture, or way of life, that evolved over time in India" (p. xvii), then Christians are confronted with a critical question. How much of a Hindu's culture may one keep and say with integrity that Christ is lord of their life? Pennington seeks to answer that question in his book.

Pennington's main concern is that faith in Jesus has become fatally linked to western culture and identity in a way that both violates biblical ideas and prevents Hindus from turning to Christ. Much of what Pennington says here is absolutely true.

In his first chapter Pennington deals with the "Barrier of Cultural Separatism" noting how many common "Christian" practices in India are neither biblical nor acceptable to upper caste Hindus. In chapter two, Pennington deals with the core of his argument. The very words Christian and Christianity are not significant in the Bible and should not be the necessary name for following Jesus or joining his band of followers. He argues forcefully here for abandoning a "Christian" identity and becoming a Hindu follower of Jesus. This chapter is the crux of the issue, and though I disagree deeply with Pennington, the arguments are well made and must be considered at length.

Two other chapters are key in understanding the book. In "The Barrier of Conversion" Pennington points out the anger that is stirred up in India at the conversion process. One further chapter deserves special mention for it is worth the price of the book. Pennington focuses on "The Barrier of Financial Dependency" which shows how all India is convinced that Hindus convert to Christianity primarily for the purpose of being patronized financially.

There are two questions that I bring to Pennington's study. First, is Christian insensitivity and harshness towards Hinduism the primary cause of Hindu resistance to the Gospel? The implication seems to be that if we call ourselves *Yesu bhaktas* (Christ devotees) and adopt elements of Hindu culture we will see a great harvest. However, Jesus is exclusive; that is clear throughout the New

Testament. This is a deadly sin in Hinduism. It violates the only principle that all Hindus agree to, universalism. Second, and the key question that I bring to the book is, how does one maintain a distinct identity as a Christ follower within this integrally syncretistic tradition? We who have worked in the sub-continent have all seen pictures and even statues of Jesus on Hindu altars.

That being said, Pennington does expose many of the issues that have kept the Church from growing in India. His reflections on Hindu concepts of sin, how the Gospel is presented, false aspects of the conversion experience such as renaming converts, and rejecting neutral Hindu practices are all points worthy of deep consideration.

For Further Reading:

Richard, H. L. (ed). 2011. *Rethinking Hindu Ministry: Papers from the Rethinking Forum.* William Carey Library.

Deurksen, Darren Todd, 2015. *Ecclesial Identities in a Multi-Faith Context: Jesus Truth-Gatherings (Yeshu Satsangs) among Hindus and Sikhs in Northwest India.* American Society of Missiology Monograph.

Contemporary Mission Theology

Robert Gallagher and Paul Hertig, Editors

The editors of this book provide many valuable contributions to missiology at large as well as capturing the essence of one of the most influential voices to teach on the subject in our lifetime. The book reflects Charles Van Engen's influence in its structure, subject matter, diversity and vision. Just as obvious is the relational influence he has had on the editors and authors. I am left envious for not having the opportunity to study under this missiologist, but none the less, have benefited from his influence on the authors presented in this book.

The book is divided into eight logically organized parts, each containing three contributions. This will simplify its use in classes which require readings from appropriate sections that support the course. The divisions follow Van Engen's ideology expressed in his classic work *Mission on the Way.* There he states, "Theology of mission, then, must eventually emanate in biblically informed and contextually appropriate missional action." The book follows this as it flows from Parts 1-2: Mission Theology and the Bible, and Mission Theology and Church Beliefs into Parts 3-7: Mission Theology and Context, Mission Theology and the Church, Mission Theology and Church History, Missional Theology and Religious Pluralism, and Modernity and Postmodernity in Missional Theology. The final part focuses on action – Mission Theology and Ministry Formation. Van Engen wrote the conclusion to the book where he offers a brief history of Mission Theology through five paradigms going from the early Protestant mission efforts of William Carey up until our present times. In conclusion Van Engen challenges the reader to "draw from past paradigms of MT and seek to live into new ones." Though very brief, Van Engen's contrasts in the conclusion between "Then" and "Now" was useful. He contrasts sources, agents, methodologies and topics of mission theology. This could have been a section all of its own.

The editors of this text have assembled a globally diverse variety of contributors that not only reflect missiology from different geographical and theological perspectives but different gender perspectives as well. They deserve recognition for the effort to include brothers *and sisters* from the Global South. The collection of contributors here reflects a global church's thoughts on contemporary mission theology. This book would not only provide contemporary information on the subject of Mission Theology for students, but it demonstrates a globalization of our approach to study. It would be a good required text alongside Tennent's *Theology in the Context of World Christianity.* 📖

Eastern Voices: Volume 1: Insight, Perspective, and Vision from Kingdom Leaders in Asia in Their Own Words

Compiled by Asian Access

Can you hear the voices? This question being asked of the global Christian community regarding those who are church leaders from Asia is similar to a popular US-based cellular phone company that was once noted for its "Can you hear me now?" advertising campaign. Both questions presuppose that the ones seeking to speak face difficulty in being heard and understood.

*Eastern Voices: Volume 1*is the first volume in what is to be a series of compilations from Asian church leaders speaking to the global church, leaders who struggled to be heard in a church dominated by Western voices and the English language. The vision of *Eastern Voices Volume 1* is to provide a platform for these Asian leaders to share their insights, experiences, challenges, and unique perspectives that have been around for a long time, but for too long have not been heard. In the "Introduction" by Noel Becchetti of Asian Access, he asserts, "It's time to hear the voices (3)."

In *Eastern Voices Volume One,* fifteen different leaders write on a variety of topics from a uniquely Asian perspective. The opening article "Losing My Face to Save My Soul" by Wesley Kyaw Thura in which he outlines his journey from ministry-as-a-career toward ministry-as-a-calling through the lens of 'face' sets the stage for the following fourteen articles on such topics as business as ministry, urban church planting in a country where Christians are a minority and constantly facing opposition, women in pastoral leadership, rethinking worship, counter-cultural leadership, challenging racial and ethnic discrimination, ministry to migrants, and how to respond to those who are one's oppressors.

The issues addressed are not unique in and of themselves. What makes these issues unique is the Asian perspective of the contributors. It is refreshing to read different perspectives on a number of similar issues faced by church leaders around the globe. Further, each of these contributors, lives, works, serves, and leads in contexts and environments where Christians are a minority, surrounded by Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist majorities.

With the reality that the growth of the body of Christ in the Global South and East is far surpassing the growth of the church in the West, it is imperative that the global church is afforded the opportunity to clearly hear the voices of our Asian brothers and sisters. When one finishes reading this compilation, this

reviewer is convinced that the reader will be able to answer the question, "Can you hear us now?" with a resounding, "Loud and clear!!" 📖

For Further Reading:

Kim, Sebastian C.H. 2008. *Christian Theology in Asia.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pak, Su Yon and Jung Ha Kim. 2017. *Leading Wisdom: Asian and Asian-North American Women Leaders.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press

Faith-Based Development: How Christian Organizations Can Make a Difference

Bob Mitchell

Reviewed by Jerry M. Ireland, Director of Compassionate Missions for the Africa Region of Assemblies of God World Missions (USA) and Vice Provost of Pan Africa Theological Seminary (Lomé, Togo).

The work of cross-cultural missionaries frequently intersects with that of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) engaged in humanitarian service. For this reason, Bible colleges and seminaries are adding development tracks to their curriculum. Bob Mitchell's book *Faith-Based Development*, provides a helpful apologetic for the unique value of FBOs in the NGO marketplace.

Based on "internally produced research reports" from World Vision Australia and representing nine countries mostly from the Balkans and Africa, along with Lebanon from the Middle East, Mitchell draws out the benefits and challenges associated with FBOs. In particular, his focus is to accentuate "faith" itself as an indispensable development resource.

Mitchell, an Anglican priest and CEO of Anglican Overseas Aid, provides a resource that will especially benefit two groups—those wishing to start or join an FBO, and those desiring to better understand FBOs to foster more effective cooperation. Especially valuable to both groups will be Mitchell's discussion of some of the complexities and unique qualities that define FBOs over against their NGO counterparts. One example is Mitchell's discussion of how devotional practices shape the community life and ethos of FBOs (chapter 8). Specifically, he argues that devotional practices have the power to shape and maintain organizational values by locating those values externally, for example, in the life of Christ (77).

If a critical word is to be said about this work, it would be that it tends to use broad generalizations, and as such does not offer much groundbreaking material. For example, in chapter 12, "A Special Relationship with the Church," Mitchell does a very good job of identifying the challenges that each side will likely face when churches partner with FBOs, including issues related to the need for theological training at the church level and problems related to funding. His ensuing proposal (112) that biblical training might be part of the work of FBOs seems unlikely given that most FBOs lack the capacity to do this (as Mitchell acknowledges). Thus, the issue of funding and church relationships represents one the the thorniest areas of partnership and thoughtful readers are likely to be left wanting more in the way of concrete solutions. This holds true for much of the application side of the text and is somewhat surprising given the book's

subtitle. In Mitchell's defense, though, he recognizes that generalizations are inherent to his methodology and therefore expects the reader to contextualize his findings (xix).

These minor criticisms, though, bring me back to the book's overall value and the need to recognize that Mitchell has provided a great service to the church. He has effectively captured the unique value that FBOs bring to the development table and argued cogently that they constitute a vital and healthy dimension of development around the world as the church serves the poor and needy. I hope that Mitchell's excellent contribution inspires others to take up the task of exploring the role and interface between FBOs and local churches, as there exists a need for more research and reflection on this topic. 📖

For Further Reading:

Myers, Bryant L. 2014. *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Ireland, Jerry M. 2017. *For the Love of God: Principles and Practice of Compassion in Missions*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.

Corbett, Steve, and Brian Fikkert. 2012. *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor … and Yourself*. Chicago, IL: Moody.

Muslim Insider Christ Followers: Their Theological and Missional Frames

Jan Hendrik Prenger

Muslim Insider is a response to the Lausanne call to evaluate insider movements (IM) to address ignorance of "the theological and/or missional frames of IM leaders and their communal theologizing process" (5). Based on field research of twenty-six insider views and five alongsiders (expatriates working closely with insiders), it gives "voice to … the Muslim insider Christ followers who are leaders of insider movements" (xix).

Comprised of six chapters, the first two expertly summarize debates over IM and its contextualization practices. Chapter 4 introduces the "M-framework". Also, each chapter is accompanied by an analysis of the interviewees' comments such as "[If]Jesus cannot do anything after death [,] He is not Lord anymore". "We do not read that in the Bible…that Isa is Allah".

Jan Hendrik Prenger's M-framework comprises four paradigms: fundamental (Crucicentric), ecumenical (ecclesiocentric), integral (Christocentric) and global (Creation-centric). The first sees the gospel as restoring one's personal relationship with God upon believing in Christ, centered on the cross and resurrection; which Prenger links with high Calvinism/Reformed theology. The second includes the first but embraces "modernist theology and Arminianism". Paradigm three merges gospel proclamation and demonstration in terms of holistic transformation of societies. Paradigm four concerns establishing God's kingdom on earth through sacrificial love, bringing all creation to Christ.

The range of insider views on theology proper, Scripture and God's mission in Prenger's M-framework are wide. There is no simple correlation between more biblically conservative insiders (paradigms 1-2) versus the more "global" insiders (paradigms 3-4) in their understanding of the Trinity, Christ as the son of God or contextualization. Some IMers hold to a high Christology (e.g., Isa is God) while others don't. The term "Trinity" is never used by IMers as questioning God's nature "is irreverent" because they are uncomfortable describing God's essence which they "consider a mystery [not] ontological statements" (237).

The book is invaluable for emically understanding a broad cross-section of insiders while trying to persuade readers that IMers share the same theological paradigms (i.e., paradigms one and two) as their critics (310). By analyzing the IMers' formal religious background and their relationship to various

alongsiders (230-232) we understand that the near/far proximity of these alongsiders to the IMers correlates to the degree of theological influence. The book also has over one hundred data plots and tables, painting a big picture schematic of each insiders' views. However, data from just twenty-six IMers means caution must be applied towards any broad generalization.

There are two serious shortcomings of the book. One is the absence of female IMers. On this, readers should access Kathryn Kraft's work (see below-although it is more sociological than theological). We also don't fully know many alongsiders' theological backgrounds, begging the question of the theological (not merely geographical) influence they had upon IMers

This book may not end all debates between proponents of insider movements versus their critics. However it is a ground-breaking work that will leave all readers with a fuller understanding of how IMers genuinely understand the Bible, God, Jesus and his mission.

For Further Reading:

Kraft, Kathryn Ann. 2012. *Searching for Heaven in the Real World: A Sociological Discussion of Conversion in the Arab Wworld*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.

Little, Don. 2015. *Effective Discipling in Muslim Communities: Scripture, History and Seasoned Practices.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

Book Review

Restored to Freedom from Fear, Guilt, and Shame

Paul H. DeNeul, ed.

In the 1950s Eugene Nida and Ruth Benedict led the way in bringing awareness to the dissimilar roles of fear, shame, and guilt across cultures. This, along with the rise of cultural competence in missiology, has led to awareness of important realities. First, the significant amount of Western cultural baggage attached to Christianity in cross-cultural work, and second, the presence of cultural bridges and common grace in cultural contexts previously not exposed to the gospel.

It is these two realities that largely frame this installment of the SEANET (a network for Christian workers in South, East, Southeast and North Asia) series. This work draws "from the expressions and insights found from within the context of the Buddhist world" related to fear, guilt, and shame (xii). The goal is to equip more guilt-oriented Christian workers for future encounters with differing worldviews.

The book divides its 11 chapters into three sections, Understanding Fear, Guilt, and Shame Cultures; Communicating in Fear, Guilt, and Shame Cultures; and Restoring to Freedom from Fear, Guilt, and Shame. This framework provides a logical progression in working through issues related to fear, guilt, and shame and mission work. This along with the diversity of contributors' voices ranging from North America, Europe, and various parts of Asia are the strengths of the book.

As with any edited work, there will be chapters and perspectives that will be more valuable than others, but each offers a helpful contribution to equipping Western practitioners in Asian contexts. One theme that should be appreciated is the recognition that every culture maintains elements of guilt, shame, and fear, although one may be more prevalent than the others.

Additional helpful elements of the book are Timothy Hwang Taeyun's chapter on "How to Communicate the Gospel in a Shame Culture", and the insightful charts by Alex Smith, and Christian Gabre breaking down how guilt, shame, and fear play out in a cultural context and how Christ comes to restore each in his life, death, and resurrection.

The book is not without controversy. The appropriate method of contextualization remains a controversial topic within the evangelical community, particularly in the insider movement. Addressing the specifics of the insider

movement is beyond the scope of this book, but each author is naturally working from his or her own framework of contextualization.

David Lim's suggestion that those who witness *"Christus victor"* in a power encounter over deities and spirits can convert to Christianity and be baptized and need not be exposed to the atonement aspect of Jesus's work immediately is one of the more provocative statements in the book and one of the more theologically problematic (118).

Regardless of one's opinion on the various examples of contextualization that are offered throughout the book, each author stresses the centrality of Jesus as the solution to our fear, guilt, and shame. Jesus, in his life, death and resurrection, is the one that restores these back to power, innocence, and honor. This is something that all Christians can agree on. 📖

For Further Reading:

Benedict, Ruth, 2006. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword.* New York: Mariner Books.

Georges, Jayson, and Baker, Mark D. 2016. *Ministering in Hono-Shame Cultures: Biblical Foundations and Practical Essentials.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

The Last Christians: Stories of Persecution, Flight, and Resilience in the Middle East

Andreas Knapp

On August 22, 1939, the eve of the invasion of Poland, Adolf Hitler gave a speech to a group of German military leaders. He spoke forcefully of his plans of wanton death and destruction, justifying it with the chilling statement, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" (157). The Ottoman Empire's devastation of the Anatolia's Christian population had, for Hitler, served as a signal that similar actions would likewise be largely ignored.

In *The Last Christians*, Andreas Knapp takes us through a painful journey into a modern replay of the devastation of a hundred years ago. This time, the carnage is taking place mainly in Syria and Iraq, as entire ancient Christian communities, many in existence since before the advent of Islam, have been wiped out or sent fleeing into exile. Knapp, a Roman Catholic priest and member of the Little Brothers of the Gospel, takes us with him on encounters with suffering Christians in Kurdistan in northwest Iraq as well as among refugees in his native Germany. He gives voice to these Christians to tell their stories and those of their families, mainly from people whose primary languages are Aramaic as well as Armenian and Arabic.

The stories which he records are vivid and in places brutal. All of those he encounters, including small children, have seen the horrors of war, and have lost family members to the genocidal slaughter of the marauding soldiers of ISIS. Stories of torture, rape and death of Christians abound in this painful volume, but it is the resilience as well as the suffering which stand out in this account. One of the most important elements of this book involves the parallel drawn between the attacks on Christians as part of a campaign of ethnic cleansing which have been taking place over the past several years in Iraq and Syria with earlier massacres, especially the aforementioned events in Anatolia in 1915 in the waning days of the Ottoman Empire. In this latter narrative, one of the surprises encountered is the complicity which the German government had at the time with the events in Turkey. In both cases, though Knapp presents several modern accounts in which Muslim people stood with their suffering Christian neighbors, there are many other situations described in which even friends ignored or were complicit with ISIS in the horrors visited upon Christians.

The author notes in his introduction that the views expressed in some of

these stories "may not be entirely politically correct, but they are correct in the sense that they are authentic: they bear the indisputable stamp of 'victim authority'" (ix). This caveat provides the reader with an important bit of context, in that this is not meant to provide a definitive understanding of *Islam*, but of a perspective of those who have suffered under violence inspired by Islamic extremism. This enables us to encounter the views of these suffering members of our family in Christ with the empathy which includes a listening ear.

For Further Reading:

Balakian, Peter. 2003. *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*: New York: HarperCollins.

Belz, Mindy. 2017. *They Say We Are Infidels: On the Run from ISIS with Persecuted Christians in the Middle East*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum.

Voice of the Martyrs. 2016. *I Am N: Inspiring Stories of Christians Facing Islamic Extremists*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook.

Training Missionaries: Principles and Possibilities

Evelyn Hibbert and Richard Hibbert

Reviewed by Cameron D. Armstrong, International Mission Board, Bucharest, Romania; PhD Intercultural Education student, Biola University.

Research has proven time and again that effective training keeps effective missionaries on the field. In *Training missionaries,* the wife-husband team of Evelyn and Richard Hibbert draws from their extensive experience as field missionaries, mission agency trainers, and academics. The product is a thorough guide for future missionary trainers, specifically church planters, that explores both missiology and educational theory and culminates in an in-depth plan for practical application.

Hibbert and Hibbert divide their analysis into ten chapters. Chapter one sets foundations, beginning with the need for missionary training designed specifically for cross-cultural ministry. The authors outline how the Bible sets forth particular character qualities for elders (and, by extension, missionaries). Training that is primarily character-based is best taught through mentoring and modeling in what Hibbert and Hibbert term a "learning community." Learning communities are led by experienced practitioners who pair their teaching with ongoing cross-cultural ministry, thereby giving trainees on-the-job experience and modeling how learning is a lifelong reality.

Chapters two through seven develop character profiles for effective missionaries, such as cultivating one's relationship with God and relating to people in other cultures. Chapters eight through ten detail how Hibbert and Hibbert distilled their learning into a robust training program called Journey, used by WEC International in the multicultural city of Sydney, Australia. The book concludes with a series of appendices with helpful training materials other organizations could use to implement this form of "learning community" training.

Training missionaries is a welcome addition to missionary equipping literature with its multiple strengths. Besides being well-researched, Hibbert and Hibbert rightly call for character development that trainees see lived out daily by trainers. Personal holiness is far greater than extensive knowledge. One other area that made quite an impression on this reviewer is the authors' emphasis on partnering with local churches to select the right missionary candidates. Continual conversation between the local sending church, mission agency, and trainee are integral to each step of the training process.

One weakness is the lack of personal illustrations alongside the book's many

recommendations. Even though chapter nine is a case study of the Journey training program, readers are often left to wonder what some of the trainees' responses were at each stage. The content is thorough and believable, yet the absence of real-life examples could lessen persuasive power.

All told, *Training missionaries* is an important work that should be read by mission leaders, future trainers, and church leaders considering how best to direct future missionaries in their congregations. Hibbert and Hibbert call the mission community to first reconsider why missionaries are trained, thereby reworking the question of how. Effective training for cross-cultural ministry needs such an approach. 📖