
MAJORITY
WORLD
PERSPECTIVES
ON
CHRISTIAN
MISSION

EDITORS
EUGENE BARON &
NICO A BOTHA

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Dedicated to
the Majority Christian World.

Majority World Perspectives on Christian Mission

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Majority World
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CHRISTIAN MISSION

EDITORS

Nico A Botha & Eugene Baron





Let us return now to the rediscovery of mission
as the essential task of
the church.

Nico A. Botha



EDITORIAL

It affords us real pleasure to present this editorial on behalf of the *Majority World Christian Leaders Conversation* (MWCLC). The MWCLC started slowly, but surely since 2016, following a groundbreaking conversation among eleven mission practitioners from the Majority World who met in the United Kingdom somewhere between London and Oxford. At the meeting, several themes emerged under the banner of *missionary questions and impulses of the Majority World, from the perspective of the reign of God*. These themes and more find reflection in the book. However, before proceeding to the content of the anthology, a note on the concept “Majority World” seems necessary. The time where terms like “Third World” gained strong currency, is long since gone. The term “Majority World” is a new kid on the block and requires some clarification. The use of the term is a strategy of avoiding concepts like “Developing” or “Third World” or even “Global South” which are pejorative in a real sense. To speak of the Majority World is geographically accurate in that Africa, Asia and Latin America are included.

When the concept Majority World is connected to an initiative started by mission practitioners from that part of the world, new avenues of meaning and interpretation might be opened. For example, if the concept is used from the perspective of mission, the connection of such with the notion of the shifting in the centre of gravity of Christianity from the North to the South, makes for exciting reading. It is precisely this issue that triggered something in that meeting in the United Kingdom in 2016. The unspoken resolution seems to have been that if indeed the centre of gravity has shifted it will boil down to a *contradictio in terminis* if there is no decisive response from those Christian Leaders in the Majority World. In talking about a response, an important disclaimer is required, namely that it should neither be a reversion into an ecclesiocentric understanding of mission, nor an approach to mission as something we have to undertake. An ironic blessing bestowed on Christians in the Majority World, who have for long been regarded as objects of mission, is that they know – perhaps better than others – that the mission is not ours, but God’s. Therefore, any response can only be prompted by the Holy Spirit who is the missionary movement. It is the Spirit that has birthed the MWCLC. Another important disclaimer is that the MWCLC is not in opposition to anybody. The movement is not identified, or defined as anti-Western, but is an attempt at finding our own voice and speaking for ourselves. We believe that in itself, this is a major step towards the decolonization of mission, but not by creating a new centre or by avoiding cooperation or partnership with agencies across the world who purport to be into the *missio Dei*. Since the meeting in the UK at the Royal Standard, a facility named after Lord Charles Somerset, the movement has progressed in leaps and bounds seeing another major conference in Kuala Lumpur in 2017 and has now been structured and organised in different chapters in Africa, Asia and Latin America. A major gathering of approximately 700 participants was planned by the Asian chapter for November 2020 but had to be postponed until 2021 in the light of COVID-19 and all the lockdown restrictions. In 2022 there will be an assembly

organised by the African chapter, or more particularly, by the Africa Facilitation Team followed by a worldwide event in 2023.

The anthology contains a rich diversity of perspectives on mission. In that respect, the title of the anthology requires a bit of clarification. **Majority World Christian Leaders** are not a monolithic block when it comes to the understanding of mission. Of course, basically, there is agreement on the theological interpretation of mission as God sending the Son, sending the Holy Spirit, sending the Church. We declare that fundamentally mission emanates from the loving heart of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is a movement of the Triune God and we are called to participate in the movement which finds identification in the somewhat technical term *missio Dei*. Readers of the book will notice that the plural *perspectives* is used as a manner of indicating the diversity of interpretations.

The book can start on no better note than with the contribution of **Peter Tarantal**, who currently takes leadership in the MWCLC and performing a sterling job. He writes on leadership from an African perspective. A rather refreshing aspect of his piece is the courage to self-criticism. He shows the deficits in African Christian and missionary or missional leadership, as well as the dimensions of good Christian leadership. **Nico Botha** flies some kites by showing some unavoidable issues in defining the Church-mission relationship. The main thrust of his argument is that cultural, social, political and economic realities are not to be dichotomized from an understanding of Church and mission. **Moses Parmar** brings Christian mission and Hinduism or as he suggests “Hindu Traditions” into conversation with one another. He lines up a number of key issues hindering the penetration of the Gospel. He proposes a contextual presentation of the Gospel that avoids the trappings of an aggressive, confrontational missionary and evangelistic approach. **Patrick Fung** introduces the issue of partnerships in mission in a polycentric world. If understood correctly his main argument seems to be that partnerships in mission in our day and age can no longer be defined from an Americocentric or Eurocentric perspective, but from the point of view that there are multiple centres. **MLH and GF** discuss Islam’s many faces in a changing context, important influences in Africa and in the Middle East and the growing Arab Christian presence in the contemporary world. They suggest valuable guidelines about how to reach out more effectively in Grace and Truth. **Gideon Para-Mallam** revisits the unfinished or ongoing agenda of nation-building from an African perspective. A very refreshing aspect is his connection between discipling and the involvement of Christians in the development and building up of their respective countries. **Rupen Das** writes a creative piece in which he argues convincingly for the location of humani-tarianism in Missional theology. He offers a very helpful perspective of humani-tarianism in its historical context before going on to show why the matter should be part and parcel of Christian mission. **Hwa Yung’s** contribution to the book, firstly engages the shift in the centre of gravity of Christianity in general and mission in particular. He identifies a number of issues and challenges relating to the shift in a presentation made as president of the *International Federation of Evangelical Students*. He secondly discussed evangelical theology of nation-building. He identifies a few basic elements of such a

nation- building theology. Realizing that the notion of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has become a buzz word in post-apartheid South Africa, **Eugene Baron** engages it critically from a missiological perspective, with an emphasis on transformation and encounter. **David Ruiz** revisits the issue of discipleship which he defines as a call to make the Gospel available to everyone and everywhere. He offers a fresh exegetical approach to what has become known as the Great Commission with reference to Matthew 28. **Krishnasamy Rajendran** has mustered the courage to write on the re-evangelisation of the West. He traces the history of missions as a movement from the West to the rest with huge numbers of Western missionaries flocking to the Majority World. He engages notions like “unreached people” critically and proposes a mission in reverse, i.e. from the Majority World to the West. **Ben Abraham** engages the challenges posed to Christianity and Islam in the encounter between the two in the Middle East. In developing an Asian perspective on the matter he highlights the reality that Muslims in their numbers turn to Christianity. He suggests that the image in which Christians should appear before Muslims is servanthood.¹

The book shows in an infallible fashion that the MWCLC is far from being a monolithic block. The ideas expressed and thoughts developed are quite diverse. In this context, the editors do not take responsibility for the views expressed in the book by the different authors.

Nico A Botha and Eugene Baron
SOUTH AFRICA
November 10, 2020

¹ The contributors to the book have been allowed some freedom by the editors by not pinning them down on a particular reference technique. This is not a hard core academic book and for that reason leeway was granted to use their own referencing. A serious consideration has also been that mission practitioners are quite often discouraged to write and publish if the technical requirements are too rigid.

Our confession that He is both God and fully human,
is one that reformed Christians hold on to
as foundational to their understanding
of Jesus incarnated.

Eugene Baron

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GLOBAL SOUTH CHRISTIAN LEADERS: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

PETER TARANTAL

INTRODUCTION

In a presentation to the Lausanne Younger Leaders' gathering in Indonesia during August 2016 on the state of the church, Jason Mandryk, of Operation World, asserted that by the year 2020, 80% of the world's Christians would come from what is known as the Global South (Africa, Asia and Latin America). In the year 1900, there were reportedly around 9 million Christians on the African Continent.² Todd Johnson asserts that in 2010, Africa was home to close to 500 million Christians,³ while Philip Jenkins estimates that by 2025, Africa will be home to 1.031 billion Christian believers!⁴

The spectacular growth of the church in the Global South, and especially Africa, has major implications for the global church. Having simply adopted Western models, I believe that we need to have a fresh look at how we do theology, missions and church in the Global South.

For me, a particularly critical aspect that we need to pay particular attention to is the issue of leadership. If it is true, as John Maxwell asserts, that everything rises and falls on leadership,⁵ then it is crucial that the church in the Global South will have the kind of leaders that will help it play a significant role in leading the global church. I have a belief that the global church will only impact the world meaningfully as the Global South church begins to take the lead in global matters. For that to happen, it is imperative that we have strong, competent leaders. In this paper, I want to consider the role that African leaders, in particular, can make, with the assumption that there will be similar applications for its colleagues in Asia and Latin America.

² Todd Johnson, "Religious Demography and Global Christian Education" (presentation to the board of trustees, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Il., February, 2012)

³ Todd Johnson, "Religious Demography and Global Christian Education" (presentation to the board of trustees, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill., February 10, 2012)

⁴ Philip Jenkins, "The next Christendom: the coming of global Christianity", third ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 3.

⁵ John Maxwell, *The 21 indisputable qualities of a leader* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 1999), p. X1

I want to focus on:

1. Our self-critique of African leadership
2. The kind of leader we yearn for
3. A critique of the lens we use to determine leadership competency
4. Competencies needed to lead well in a global space/arena
5. Playing nicely with others

1. Our self-critique of African Leadership

I find it distressing that on a Continent where the church is growing in unprecedented numbers as described above, we are still beset by issues such as the HIV/Aids pandemic, poverty, corruption, political violence and violence against women and children. I assess that this is a failure of leadership. In fact, more than 30 years ago, the acclaimed Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe said:

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which are the hallmarks of true leadership ... We have lost the twentieth century; are we bent on seeing that our children also lose the twenty-first? God forbid!⁶

Many analysts would agree that these words, addressed to Africa's most populous nation, apply equally well to the rest of the continent. Martin Meredith, in his extensive analysis of the last fifty years of African history, contrasts the optimistic view and expectations of leadership during the "honeymoon of African independence" in the middle of the last century, with an utterly pessimistic view of leadership prevailing today. Then,

African leaders, riding the crest of popularity, stepped forward with energy and enthusiasm to tackle the tasks of development and nation-building; ambitious plans were launched; bright young men went quickly to the top.⁷

Now, fifty years later, political leaders

... are no longer instruments capable of serving the public good. Indeed, far from being able to provide aid and protection to their citizens, African governments

⁶ Achebe, C. The trouble with Nigeria, Heineman. (1984), p. 1,3

⁷ Meredith, M. (2005). The Fate of Africa: A history of Fifty years of independence. Cambridge, Perseus Book group.

and the vampire-like politicians who run them, are regarded by the populations they rule as yet another burden to bear in the struggle for survival.⁸

For a long time, the misfortunes of the African continent were blamed on the outside world and the Western world in particular. Starting with the period of exploration and the slave trade through colonialism right up to the involvement of Africa in the Cold War and recent so-called neo-colonialism, Africa has been the victim of all types of exploitation and abuse. Though there is a lot of truth to the impact of colonialism, I believe that we short change ourselves when we simply put the blame on others without taking any responsibility. We find in Robert Mugabe, president of Zimbabwe, a very obvious and embarrassing example of this approach. His relentless attacks on Western nations and Britain, in particular, can no longer disguise the corruption and abuse of the ruling party and its president. It has taken some time for people to realize that problems do not disappear when you simply put the blame on others, as Ghanaian economist George Ayittey observed (Stewart 2004:236):

The average intelligent person looks both ways before crossing a street or risks being hit by a truck. Africa is in bandages because its leaders looked only one way for the source of the crisis – externally.

Even when it comes to doing business in Africa, Elliot, Hartmut, and Ekpott warn that the challenges of governance, conflict, security, bureaucracy and corruption will greatly impede economic growth and business success.⁹

Unfortunately, the global phenomena of the idolatries of power, success and greed that the Cape Town Commitment speaks of, is so evident in many leaders across the Continent. One of the greatest scourges to hit the church in Africa is that many have adopted the prosperity Gospel that has greatly impeded the impact of the church and has laid bare the inadequacy of leadership in many.¹⁰

One of the greatest challenges for the church and organizations in the Global South is that of building capacity to accomplish all that they are called to do. So often we have weak infrastructure and are limited when it comes to organizational leadership. I have seen so many ministries across the Continent not reach their full potential despite sincere and gifted leaders in the area of vision but lacking in the ability to put structures in place for the vision to be realized.

⁸ (Ibid 688)

⁹ Lauri E.Elliot, Hatmut Sieper, Nissi Ekpott, Redefining Business in the New Africa (Charlotte, North Carolina, Conceptualee, Inc., 2011), p. 171,172,173

¹⁰ The Lausanne Movement, The Cape Town Commitment (Bodmin, UK: Printbridge 2011), p. 62,63

In his book, *Heart to Heart – Letters to Leaders*, K. Rajendran from India, makes the following observation:

When we discuss capacity building, many different ones have a different viewpoint of capacity building such as the following: Bureaucrats for administration, leaders for organizational development, leaders for management development.¹¹

My friend, Prof. Piet Meiring, relayed to me that some years ago he was attending a conference with Archbishop Desmond Tutu from South Africa. While driving from the Jomo Kenyatta airport in Nairobi, Kenya, the driver of the vehicle was complaining of some of the desperate challenges that the nation faced. Prof. Meiring told me that Tutu leaned forward, put his face in his hands and a lament exclaimed, “Oh Africa, Africa, where are your leaders!?”

While we lament some of Africa’s leadership failures, there is also much to celebrate! In the political realm, some great leaders have emerged. Nelson Mandela of South Africa (president 1994-1999), Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia (president 1964-1991), Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana (president 1951-1966) and Haile Selassie of Ethiopia (president 1930-1974) are just some of the leaders who have made their mark, not only on the Continent also globally. The current president of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, is listed among the top 100 women leaders in the world by Forbes Magazine.¹²

Two of the last five General-Secretaries of the United Nations are from Africa in the persons of Butros Butros-Ghali from Egypt and Kofi Annan from Ghana. These two men have both left a global footprint.

On the church front, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu of South Africa, not only won the Nobel Peace Prize but he is also acclaimed for his work when it comes to the issue of racial reconciliation. It is now a known fact that Africans comprise the largest group within the global Anglican community (50.40 million out of 85.97 million, according to Todd Johnson).¹³ The Africans have traditionally held conservative views on some contentious issues within the Anglican Church and have, on numerous occasions, influenced the church not to take the liberal route. Bishop Ivan Abrahams from South Africa currently serves as the General Secretary of the World Methodist Council. While the current Catholic Pope, Pope Francis from Argentina, is not from Africa, it is important to note that someone who has influenced the world significantly in the past five years is from the Global South.

¹¹ K.Rajendran, *Heart to heart-Letters to leaders* (Vision City, India: IMA Publications 2010), p.190

¹² Forbes Magazine, 08.19.09

¹³ Todd Johnson, World Christian database

A business example is Chinedu Echeruo from Nigeria, who is a Tech entrepreneur and founder of HopStop.com, which he reportedly sold to Apple in the "billion" dollar range. HopStop.com is a mobile and online application that provides mass transit directions door-to-door mass transit, taxi, walking, biking and hourly car rental directions in major metropolitan markets throughout the U.S., Canada, U.K., France, Australia, New Zealand and Russia. In 2001, HopStop was named one of the 100 fastest-growing companies in the US by Inc. magazine. Chinedu also founded Tripology.com. An interactive travel referral service focused on connecting travellers with travel specialists which were later acquired by USA Today Travel Media Group. Echeruo obtained an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School and a B.S. from Syracuse University.¹⁴ There are many young entrepreneurs from Africa taking the world by storm.

On the entertainment front, Trevor Noah from South Africa has successfully taken over the hosting of the Tonight show for Comedy Central in the US. One can go on to talk of the remarkable feat of African Athletes (and those whose roots are from Africa), who have radically transformed the face of Track and Field Athletics in the last decade. When last has someone with a white face won an Olympic gold medal in the shorter, medium and longer distances?

2. The kind of leader we yearn for

2.1 Leaders who take Responsibility

In 1994, George Kinoti published a booklet entitled "Hope for Africa – and what the Christian can do". The remarkable thing about this book is not that a professor of Zoology chooses to speak out on issues of politics, the economy, leadership and values. It is that he challenges the church in Kenya and Africa to take action and make a difference. And one area that he wants the church to make its presence felt, is that of developing competent leaders (1994:31):

Africa desperately needs a new type of leader. The experience of the last two or three years shows that changing from one political party to another or from the military into civilian clothes does not change the nature or motives of African leaders. What we need is a different kind of leader, namely men and women of integrity, ability, and education who have a genuine concern for and commitment to the wellbeing of all their fellow citizens. Such leaders do not arise spontaneously. They must be created through careful character formation and training of young people. I believe that the African churches have the potential to make contributions to the creation of the leadership we so desperately need.¹⁵

¹⁴ Forbes Magazine, January 2014.

¹⁵ George Kinoti, Hope for Africa-And what the Christian can do (Africa, IBS 1994), p. 31

The same point is emphasized by Delanyo Adadevoh in his book, *Leading transformation in Africa* (2006:85) when he reflects on the challenges facing Africa:

My conclusion was that Africa needs to wake up to the responsibility of encouraging her sons and daughters to take responsibility for the challenges facing the continent. It will take the willingness of these sons and daughters to sacrifice some of their dreams in the interest of causes greater than themselves; causes that will bring hope to others.¹⁶

When I walked into the Kenya College of Communications Technology Convention Centre, Nairobi, Kenya, in August 2006 to attend the Mani (Movement for African National Initiatives) Consultation, I was struck by the excitement and energy of the 520 leaders from across Africa. We had come together to take up the baton of providing leadership for the Church's mission endeavours on the Continent. I had a sense that there was a group of leaders who were answering Adadevoh's call for the church to take responsibility for the challenges on our Continent. I have been working with this group for the past 11 years, and encouragingly, I have seen more and more leaders take up the responsibility for the challenges facing this Continent. Especially heartening is the formation of the Mani Younger Leaders group.

2.2 Leaders who provide Principle-centered leadership

In Africa, as in many other areas, the scourge of the personality cult type of leader has taken root. What we actually need are leaders who are men and women of integrity, deep conviction and principle. In his best-selling book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey makes the point,

In most one-shot or short-lived human interactions, you can use the Personality Ethic to get by and to make favourable impressions through charm and skill and to be interested in other people's hobbies. You can pick up quick, easy techniques that may work in short-term situations. But secondary traits alone have no permanent worth in long-term relationships. Eventually, if there isn't deep integrity and fundamental character strength, the challenges of life will cause true motives to surface, and human relationship failure will replace short-term success.¹⁷

We so often choose expediency and political correctness above principle. A case in point is how the former South African president Thabo Mbeki dealt with the Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe who was oppressing his opponents and, many believe, stole

¹⁶ Adadevoh, Delanyo, "Leading transformation in Africa". (Florida 2006), p. 85

¹⁷ Stephen R. Covey, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective people*, (New York, New York; Fireside 1989), p. 22.

the 2002 and 2005 elections. President Mbeki chose the route of quiet diplomacy instead of taking a principled stand.¹⁸

On the other hand, I can think of leaders like Reuben Ezemadu from Nigeria, the current Mani Continental Coordinator and founder of Christian Missionary Foundation Inc. They have lived lives of impeccable integrity, often at significant personal cost.

2.3 Leaders who provide Prophetic Leadership

One of the modern-day prophets in and from the African Continent I believe was Dr. Tekonboh Adeyemo from Nigeria, who led the Association of Evangelicals in Africa for many years. He was a deep thinker and excellent scholar. He was the editor and one of 70 contributors to the African Bible Commentary, one the best commentaries that I have encountered. In his book, *Africa's Enigma and Leadership Solutions*, he writes:

African Christianity needs more than numbers. You have heard it said that the church in Africa is one mile long but one inch deep. It is a credulous church, wide open to any appealing new teaching, which can quote a biblical verse or promise miraculous healing. Such a church cannot impact society or change its destiny for good. We need prophets.¹⁹

We need leaders who see beyond the horizon and who have a glimpse of what a preferred future could look like. Such leaders do not succumb to playing to the gallery but are quite prepared to speak truth to power, even at the prospect of personal loss or sacrifice. One such leader is Dr. Uzodinma Obed from Ibadan, Nigeria, who leads the Apostolic Discipleship Movement on the African Continent. Dr. Obed has seen the need for discipleship on the Continent and has gone to great lengths to mobilize other African leaders to join in this endeavour of seeing a new generation of African disciples transform the African Continent.

2.4 Leaders who have a strong sense of Identity

In his book, "How Africa shaped the Christian mind", Thomas C. Oden, professor at Yale University in the United States, encourages Christians in Africa to overcome the identity crisis that so often paralyses us.²⁰ He has done extensive research with regards to the contribution that Africa made to the formative years of Christianity. This is a critical piece of research as it debunks the notion that Christianity is a Western Religion and therefore, a strange import to the Continent. It gives Africans a sense of ownership of the Gospel.

¹⁸ Martin Meredith, *The fate of Africa* (New York, New York: Perseus Book group 2005), p.672, 673

¹⁹ Tekunboh Adeyemo, *Africa's Enigma and Leadership Solutions* (Nairobi, Kenya: WordAlive Publishers 2009), p. 70, 72

²⁰ Oden, Thomas C. "How Africa shaped the Christian mind" (Madison, WI: Intervarsity Press, 2007), p.155

Steve Bantu Biko, the founder of the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa, was a strong proponent for Black people to embrace their identity by constantly reminding them that “Black is beautiful!” He said that what was needed was a massive effort to reverse the negative image that Blacks held of themselves and to replace it with a more positive identity. Black oppression was first and foremost, a psychological problem. It could be countered by promoting Black awareness, Black pride, Black capabilities and Black achievement.²¹ Steve Biko and other leaders like him, helped Africans to be proud of their African heritage.

On 8 May 1996, Thabo Mbeki, on behalf of the ANC (African National Congress) in Cape Town, South Africa, made an amazing speech in Parliament on the occasion of the passing of the new Constitution of South Africa. At the time Mbeki was the vice president of South Africa under the presidency of Nelson Mandela.

I am an African. I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land.

My body has frozen in our frosts and our latter-day snows. It has thawed in the warmth of our sunshine and melted in the heat of the midday sun. The crack and the rumble of the summer thunders, lashed by startling lightening, have been a cause both of trembling and of hope.

I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape – they who fell victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever seen, they who were the first to lose their lives in the struggle to defend our freedom and dependence and they who, as a people, perished in the result.

It felt good to be an African listening to Mbeki’s speech. From Kwame Nkrumah, founding Prime Minister of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta, founding President of Kenya to Nelson Mandela and Mbeki, all had a strong sense of identity.

It is important that Christian leaders understand and appreciate not only their national culture but also their Biblical identity, that they are the people of God (1 Peter 2:10). What matters most is what God says about us!

2.5 Leaders who have a high level of self-awareness

In my leadership journey, I have come to appreciate that leaders who do not have a good sense of self-awareness or high EQ (Emotional Intelligence) will tend to be very

²¹ Martin Meredith, *The fate of Africa* (New York, New York: Perseus Book group 2005), p.418

insecure. In his book on emotional intelligence, Daniel Coleman suggests that we can place these into five main domains: knowing one's emotions, managing your emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others and handling relationships.²² I think the ability to know oneself and manage oneself is critical when it comes to leading well.

2.6 Leaders who have sound Cultural Intelligence

As we live in such a flat, globalized world, leaders from Africa will need to have a high level of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as they operate not only locally but also globally. Cultural Intelligence, or CQ, is your "ability to function effectively across national, ethnic, and organizational cultures". It is critical that one has a keen grasp of one's own culture and that of others and how they intersect.²³

As David Livermore says,

We can't possibly learn the individual preferences of all the people we encounter in our work. But learning the cultural norms of different groups of people help us behave more effectively and respectfully. That's why cultural intelligence is so important to me. It's an essential competency for me as a leader to treat my fellow humanity with dignity and respect. And it allows me to adapt my behaviour to accomplish my objectives. The most common problems in leadership across different cultural contexts are not technical or administrative. The biggest challenges lie in miscommunication, misunderstanding, personality conflicts, poor leadership and bad team-work.²⁴

Whether we live in a rural village or a megacity, it is imperative that we learn well how to interact with people of other cultures. The Golden Rule states that we should treat others as **we** want to be treated, whereas there is a Platinum Rule suggesting that we treat others as **they** want to be treated! There is such a great richness in getting to know people who are so diverse culturally from us, what their traditions are, their worldview and beliefs.

3. The lens through which we determine leadership competency

We often determine leadership competency by using models that are strange and foreign to an African. Many African Bible schools and other institutions of higher learning follow curricula and use textbooks that have originated in totally different (primarily

²² Daniel Coleman, "Emotional Intelligence" (Great Britain: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1995), p. 43

²³ Soon Ang and Linn van Dyne, "Conceptualization of cultural intelligence" (Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe 2008), p.3

²⁴ David Livermore, "Leading with Cultural Intelligence" (USA: David Livermore 2010), p. 157

Western) contexts. We may take another example, that of leadership seminars. We find that these seminars also generally follow a pattern and/or use a material that has been developed in the West. The basic assumption seems to be that in leadership formation, there is a model that applies to all. For example, the assessment tools that we use to help determine a person's competency is almost exclusively developed in the West with its strong bias for individualism while Africans come from a more collectivistic worldview. Nelson Mandela said that his notions of leadership were profoundly influenced by how tribal meetings were led by the Chief. National issues such as drought, the culling of cattle or new laws decreed by the Apartheid government were discussed in these tribal meetings. Everyone was welcome to attend, and everyone had a voice.

The Chief was surrounded by a group of councillors who were wise men who retained the knowledge of tribal history and custom in their heads and whose opinions carried great weight. As said before, everyone had an opportunity to speak and even to disagree with the Chief. The meeting would continue until some kind of consensus was reached. Majority rule was a strange concept. A minority was not to be crushed by the majority.

Mandela says that he always followed that example of giving people an opportunity to speak before venturing with his own opinion. He always remembered the Chief's axiom:

... a leader is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go on ahead, after which the others follow, not realizing that all along they were being directed from behind.²⁵

I think it is safe to say that Nelson Mandela was a true global icon as a political leader. Yet his leadership style described above may not meet the criteria of many Western leadership training manuals. Is a "Western" strong managerial bent the only criteria for successful and effective leadership? I have a friend who does not fit the traditional management criteria of leadership, yet people follow him because of what he represents. He is the empowering kind of leader, leading from behind rather than from the front, persuading people to follow.

Africans highly value the concept of Ubuntu as humanness.

The basis of this humanness is captured in the slogan,

"umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu", meaning,
"I am a person through other human beings".²⁶

²⁵ Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, "Long walk to freedom" (Park Avenue, NY, NY:Back Bay books/ Little, Brown and Company Hachette book group 1994, 1995), p.

This concept has deeply influenced the leadership style of Africans whereby they value the communal rather than only the individual wellbeing. I have seen how when non-Westerners are together, they feed off the perspective of the other, sometimes to the frustration of some Westerners who deem it an inability to think independently.

Broodryk²⁷ gives a helpful (albeit simplistic) table summarizing the differences between traditional Western and African management styles:

WESTERN	AFRICAN
Individualistic	Collectivity
Punctuality	Tolerance
Time is money	Time is time
Self-actualization	Family prioritization
Competitive	Cooperative
Exploitative	Sharing
Risky	Stability
Societal	Communal
Relational	Emotional
Top-down	Bottom-up
Management resolutions	Group consensus
Exclusive	Inclusive
Self-reliant	Team-reliant
Greed	Open-handedness
Wealth	Community wellbeing
Production minded	People-minded
Rewards	Recognition
Autocratic	Democratic
Cold relations	Warm openness

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) Research Program was conceived in 1991 by Robert J. House of the Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania.

In 2004, its first comprehensive volume on *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies* was published, based on results from about 17,300 middle managers from 951 organizations in the food processing, financial services, and telecommunications services industries. A second major volume, *Culture and Leadership across the World: The GLOBE Book of In-Depth Studies of 25 Societies* became available

²⁶ Johan Broodryk, "Ubuntu Management Philosophy" (Randburg, South Africa: Knowres Publishing 2005), p.1

²⁷ Ibid, pp 208, 209

in early 2007. It complements the findings from the first volume with in-country leadership literature analyses, interview data, focus group discussions, and formal analyses of printed media to provide in-depth descriptions of leadership theory and leader behaviour in those 25 cultures. GLOBE'S major premise (and finding) is that leader effectiveness is contextual; that is, it is embedded in the societal and organizational norms, values, and beliefs of the people being led.²⁸

In his report on the research, Michael H. Hoppe goes on to say,

Across all 61 countries in the GLOBE leadership study, people want their leaders to be trustworthy, just, honest, decisive, and so forth. However, how these traits are expressed and enacted may still noticeably differ from society to society. For example, for a leader to be described as decisive in the U.S., he or she is expected to make quick and approximate decisions. In contrast, in France or Germany, being decisive tends to mean a more deliberate and precise approach to decision-making. The same caution applies to the universally undesirable leader traits. Culturally contingent leader characteristics, such as ambitious, enthusiastic, formal, logical, or risk-taker are valued differently around the world.²⁹

The above comprehensive study underscores the fact that we need to be flexible when it comes to the lenses we use to determine leadership competency.

4. Competencies needed to lead well in a global arena

One of South Africa's foremost businesswomen, Wendy Luhabe, writes,

"For South Africa's workplace to be meaningfully transformed, we still need to re-examine more systematically how interaction and motivation might be unconsciously used to maintain discriminatory patterns in organizations. The fact that in many situations, black people have to work twice as hard to prove their worth is simply not constructive."³⁰

This is a sentiment often expressed not only by Black people in South Africa but also by non-Westerners working in a global context, the sense that one has to go the extra length to prove that one is as equally qualified as the Western counterpart.

For me, one of the competencies that non-Westerners and Africans, in particular need, is the ability to grasp how the organization and the world works. Things like who makes the decisions, who has the power, how one navigates through the unwritten organizational values, are critical competencies.

²⁸ Michael H. Hoppe, "The Globe Research Program Report" (9.18.2007)

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Wendy Luhabe, "Defining Moments" (Scottsville, South Africa: University of Natal Press 2002), p. 2, 120

Africans who want to leave a global imprint need to think globally. Ways to do this would be to get to know people of other cultures, travel outside of your context, read widely, especially authors who think differently.

I have been in meetings where the blame for leadership inadequacy and failure is placed squarely on the shoulders of former colonial and current Western powers. Playing the victim card, while it may elicit sympathy from some, I believe it is a sign of immaturity. My view is that my personhood or growth is not determined by others. I need to take responsibility for myself. There was a time in my life when I laid the blame for some of my leadership failures at the door of the previous Apartheid government in South Africa until I learnt the liberating truth that I am ultimately responsible for my wellbeing and actions.

Africans value relationship. I, therefore, believe that they grasp the importance of building authentic relationships with leaders from a different context. I believe this is a strength that Africans can bring to the global table.

In his book, *Good to great*, Jim Collins states that his research has shown that companies that went from being good companies to great companies had two qualities viz. “fierce resolve and humility”.³¹ It will take resolve to work well in a global context, not to walk away when things get tough, to stand your ground against discriminatory practices and in situations when power is misused. It will take humility to have a strong sense of your worth, walk with your head held high and at the same time, be able to admit failures and mistakes.

Operating in a global space requires courage and a willingness to take risks. Too many Africans have bought into the belief perpetuated by some from outside the Continent that we are second class and in need of outside “saviours”. It takes courage to stand up to those in control of the resources. That’s why I also have a firm conviction that we in Africa need to do much more to develop our resources, to level the playing field and to give us a greater sense of pride.

Working globally and cross-culturally can be a risky business where we will often be taken out of our comfort zone. We need leaders who will be willing to risk even their reputation for the cause of the greater good. We need to be willing to put ourselves out there.

³¹ Jim Collins, “Good to great: Why some companies make the leap and others don’t” (New York, NY: Harper Collins 2001), p. 36

I believe that to lead well in a global context. We need to learn the skill of operating outside of our cultural preferences. This will require us to be secure in who we are and have a willingness to get to know the “other,” how they view the world and how they practice leadership. Many Africans, in particular, are deferential and indirect communicators. In a global setting, we need to learn how to communicate more confidently and directly, saying clearly what we mean without beating around the bush, hoping that the other party will get what we are trying to say. In our context, saying something “politely” will be heard, and when we communicate in this manner with our Western counterparts we don’t understand why they don’t “hear” us. We need to not only be more direct but also more assertive.

We also need to understand how power works: who has power and what are the power dynamics at play in a given situation. I think we often tend to be too naïve when we are confronted with difficult situations. Sometimes there are power plays or hidden motives at play that we are unaware of when it is obvious that there are power plays at work.

In a globalized world where many boundaries have come down, another quality that many Africans and GS leaders bring to the table is their high tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty. Many cultures struggle in this area, and if the Africans can grow even more in this area, their contribution to global leadership will be even more valuable.

5. Playing nicely with others

There needs to be a fresh realization that there has been a major shift in all spheres of society. Kishore Mahbubani, in his book, *The great convergence: Asia, the West, and the logic of one world*, argues that the Rest is not taken seriously by the West. He says,

The West only provides 12 per cent of the world’s population. The “Rest” provides 88%. If we were striving for a just, legitimate, and democratic global order, we would strive to ensure that the voices and interests of each human being are represented equally well in key global institutions. This is what all Western societies try to achieve domestically. Yet in the global order, the Western Societies are doing the exact opposite. They insist on having a larger voice and a larger share of global power than their share of the global population would merit.³²

He cites as examples the make-up of the UN Security Council, the IMF and the World Bank. Is the above true in the ecclesiastical world where we know, as stated above, that the vast majority of Christians now live in the Global South?

³² Kishore Mahbubani, “The great convergence: Asia, the West, and the logic of one world” (USA: Perseus Books 2013), p.119

President Obama recognised that a new day had arrived in terms of relations between the West and Non-Western countries. On a trip to Ghana in July 2009, he stated that the US needed to be a partner to Africa and not a patron.³³

If we are going to work well together with our counterparts in the Western world, we all need to recognize this “new” day. My good friend, Paul Borthwick, in his excellent book, *Western Christians in Global Mission*, states that the word “partnership” is such an overused buzzword because it means different things to different folk.³⁴ He suggests that for effective North American-Global partnerships to exist, we need to revise our paradigms or the way we look at things. He mentions:

1. We are revising our relational view of partnership. True global partnership means being willing to re-define our roles. In a relational view of partnerships, I don’t need to have all the answers, all the money or all the ideas.
2. Revising our economic view of partnerships. What is the best way to utilize our financial resources? Managing the relational imbalances created by economic inequality is extremely complex.
3. Revising our longevity view of partnerships.
4. Revising our spiritual view of partnerships. At the core of this issue is the question of servanthood. Are we willing to enter partnerships as servants?³⁵

Borthwick also calls on all of us to “listen” well; to take time to truly hear the perspectives of those in other cultures.³⁶ I think we too often resort to making quick judgments, without taking time to really listen. As my wife often reminds me, “you’re not really listening to what I am saying!”

Ruth Padilla DeBorst, who currently serves as Director of Christian Formation and Leadership Development with World Vision International and who is a well-recognised Latin American theologian, writes:

The church of Jesus Christ is called today to embody God’s mission by being the community of the Servant King, even in current centers of power. Valuable as are a global partnership and Northern contributions in the South, Christians in places of privilege need to scrutinize their churches and explore to what extent they are living as prophetically alternative communities amid the pulls of autonomy, individualism, racism, competition, activism, and consumerism, which so

³³ Lauri E. Elliot, Hatmut Sieper, Nissi Ekpott, *Redifining Business in the New Africa* (Charlotte, North Carolina, Conceptualee, Inc., 2011), p. 33

³⁴ Paul Borthwick, “Western Christians in Global Mission – What’s the role of the North American Church?” (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 2012), p.149

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-155

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 158

characterize their society. Understandably, for a church that for over a century has seen itself as the “sender,” the source of teaching and giving, recognizing a need to learn does not come easily. A willingness to enter into God’s mission of radical hospitality, however, in which the hosts are hosted by the strangers in their midst and learn what walking the way of Jesus means from people devoid of power, can open the door for refreshing and utterly unexpected Good News.³⁷

She is right that one of the ways in which we work well together is through mutual hospitality.

Global South Christians working in a global context must be able to work well with Westerners, not in a subservient way, but as equals. It is a thing of beauty when God’s people live together in unity (Psalm 133:1). It is possible for Global North and Global South Christians to work together in mutual respect and in a posture of truly preferring the other (Phil 2:3, 4).

CONCLUSION

The shift in Global Christianity and the health of the Global Church demands that Global South leaders step up and lead well. I have a firm conviction that the Global Church will be poorer and have less of a Kingdom impact on the world without competent, courageous leaders, and what we bring, from the Global South. Leaders from the Global South need to deeply know that what we bring to the Global Table is important, valuable and necessary.

³⁷ Evangelical Review of Theology; Jan 2009, Vol. 33 Issue 1, p. 62

CHURCH AND MISSION: UNAVOIDABLE ISSUES IN DEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP³⁸

NICO A BOTHA

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is less academic and more a matter of flying little kites and to see how long they remain in the air. The kite metaphor is called into service to draw attention to a number of unavoidable issues in attempting to define for ourselves the relationship between church and mission. A disclaimer right from the onset is that what is shown here is only a selection of little kites and not an exhaustive array. There will be some bright and colourful ones, not on display. What passes the revue here is meant to start the conversation and to stimulate proper research on the issues.

At the WEC Consultation in 2019, very creative ideas emerged in the small discussion group on Church and Mission or A theology of the Church. For example: on the issue of the church the need was felt to investigate how grassroots people, members in the pews and particular people from other faiths, perceive the church. This is unfortunately outstanding since it requires extensive ethnographic research which I hope to undertake as a project.

A further issue in our discussion was the need to relocate from a colonial church to a postcolonial or decolonized church. To what extent are our churches in the Global South, the historical or so-called mainline churches as well as the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, mere replicas of Western churches? Are the Independent churches not the only ones who can rightfully claim to be indigenous and in-culturated churches? Conversely, this in itself is a massive research question necessitating a full-blown research project. The issues looked at in this chapter are as follows:

1. The New Testament as missionary document
2. Is it missionary or missional?
3. A rediscovery of the essential missionary nature of the church
4. Rediscovery in a rediscovery: Revolutionary mission and church

³⁸ Presented at the Meeting of Leaders of the Global South, 3-5 October 2017 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

5. A rediscovery of the kingdom/reign of God motif
 6. Mission with the poor; church of the poor
 7. Mission and children
 8. Mission, church, children
 9. Mission in the age of empire
 10. Mission as church with others
 11. Re-evangelisation of the Global South
- Conclusion

1. The New Testament as missionary document

Is there an underlying assumption in the construction *Church and Mission* which suggests that Church goes before Mission? Put differently, is it not true that both in theory and practice we operate with the notion that mission is by definition the mission of the church? Is there a need to change the construct around by consciously, deliberately, and consistently speak of *Mission and Church* rather than *Church and Mission*? Or does it really matter? I want to suggest that it does. The issue at stake here is much more serious than the speculation on what came first, the chicken or the egg? The question that comes to the fore is whether the New Testament is to be identified as a missionary or a church document.

Part of the answer is that much as it speaks profusely about the church the New Testament is by its very nature a missionary text. The very first chapter in Bosh's (1991: 15-55) life work, *Transforming Mission*, is on the New Testament as a missionary document. According to him the missionary character of the New Testament has not always been appreciated. In following Hengel (1983:53) he identifies the New Testament as "mission history" and "mission theology". More and more contemporary New Testament scholars seem to be concurring with and affirming Kähler's (1908) notion of mission being the mother of theology (as translated by Bosch). A further important matter to note as far as the New Testament authors are concerned is that they differed from one another. No uniform view emerges, but a variety of what can be seen as "mission theologies" (asserts Bosch, 1991:16). Bosch goes on perhaps to speculate that "perhaps the New Testament authors were less interested in definitions than in the missionary existence of their readers". This, contends Bosch, explains in a way the use of metaphors like "the salt of the earth", "the light of the world", "a city on a hill".

A valid question is whether the Old Testament is entirely beyond the scope. Some proponents of excluding the Old Testament from our understanding of mission feed strongly into the traditional notion of mission as the sending of missionaries to distant

places. The ensuing argument is then that there is no evidence in the Old Testament of agents being sent across frontiers to win others to faith in Yahweh (Bosch 1991:17). However, based on the following few issues a strong case could be made out that the Old Testament should form part of our understanding of mission. Firstly, there is the difference between the faith of Israel and the religions of the surrounding nations. Secondly, there is the conviction that God has saved the ancestors from their Egyptian captivity and settled them in Canaan. Thirdly, God is the God of promise. In emerging as the God who acts in history and is identified as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – and equally of Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel, He has done great things in the past and will do so in future. Fourthly, as a sovereign God He has elected Israel not as the “blue-eyed boy”, but for SERVICE. Israel is called upon to serve the orphan, the widow, the poor, and the stranger. This constitutes a profound prophetic mission. Fifthly, not to forget God’s compassion for all people in such a radical fashion that Israel is being sent to the very nations who are their political enemies.

2. What’s in a name: is it missionary or missional?

It is abundantly clear by now that the concept “missional” is an American export product or from the perspective of the Global South an imported article. This is to be interpreted not as a negative statement suggesting that everything that comes from that part of the world is bad. It is indeed a very powerful concept which expresses the “sentness” of the church and the critical engagement with American culture. To be honest, the *Gospel and Our Culture Network* that came into existence around Missiologists like Hunsberger et al. (inspired of course by Bosch and Newbigin) and the systematic development of a *missional-theological perspective* by people like Guder and a host of others are in some respects going much further than how we engage our own cultures in the Global South.

What needs to be mentioned also is the manner in which Biblical scholars and theologians like Gottwald, Brueggemann, Carter, Deyoung, Roegger and in particular Horsley engage in critical discourse with their society from a counter imperializing perspective.³⁹ There is a lesson to be learned here. Is not the weakness of African Christianity which has grown the past few decades exponentially particularly in its Pentecostal and Charismatic modes that we do not engage prophetically with our societies where state corruption and undemocratic practices are rife? Not to forget the mammoth challenges thrown up by war, the plight of refugees, poverty, and disease.

Let us return, however, to the question if it matters whether we say “missionary” or “missional”. As far as the *Suid-Afrikaanse Genootskap vir Gestuurde Kerke (South African*

³⁹ cf. Horsley, RA. 2008. *In the Shadow of Empire: Reclaiming the Bible as a History of Faithful Resistance*.

Alliance of Sent Churches) is concerned it does and therefore they have opted for the term “missional” as an expression of the “calledness” and “sentness” of the church.

A rather powerful dimension of the movement is the strong notion of “dwelling in the Word” with an emphasis on Luke 10 as a kind of *locus classicus* for an understanding of mission. This “dwelling in the Word” seems to transcend all manner of exegetical pre-supposition and allows for different perspectives from amongst participants to emerge. Van Niekerk⁴⁰ shows how the term “missional” refers to the involvement of the local church with the community whereas with “missionary” there still is the ring of sending someone somewhere.

In trying to get clarity on the two terms Saayman (2010:5-16), argues that there is no clear etymological difference between the two terms since they derive from the root word “mission”. He argues that the difference might consequently be in “contextual factors” which are distinctly different between the North Atlantic and the continent of Africa, for example. Saayman suggests that much as the concept “missional” is indeed grounded in the *missio Dei*, avoiding the pitfall of degenerating into “a grasping of mere straws” and by so doing feeding into a “salvation by works alone”. His biggest criticism against the concept “missional” seems to be that it speaks exclusively to the issues of the North Atlantic in its configuration as postmodern Western culture and not to the demands and conditions in the rest of the world (read Global South). His very simple argument seems to be: well, even in terms of our contextual priorities (to use a term coined at the 1973 mission conference in Bangkok, Thailand), the concept “missionary” has served us well.

3. A rediscovery of the church as missionary by its very nature

In referring to the rediscovery of the church as missionary by its very nature a number of issues need to be clarified. Firstly, the strong emergence of mission societies in the 18th and 19th centuries informed by an “abounding optimism” which found reflection in the Edinburgh 1910 mission conference – giving rise to the notion of “evangelising the world in our generation” – has resulted in a separation between church and mission. It would be fair to suggest that the *International Missionary Council* under whose auspices the mission conferences between 1910 and 1958 happened, was a body representing mission societies rather than churches. The separation between mission and church had been perfected. It was, however, from 1910 to 1958 that a significant paradigm shift occurred. Whereas the Edinburgh 1910 and Jerusalem 1928 conferences were still very much informed by the separation between mission and church, Tambaram (India) 1938

⁴⁰ In HTS Theological Studies, volume 70 no. 1, 2014.

saw a remarkable shift constituted by a remarrying of mission and church. In essence, it has been a relocation from an ecclesiocentric to a theological understanding of mission.

Before further exploring the rediscovery spoken of some speculation on why the unity of mission and church might be understood more easily in the Global South than in the Global North may open up new avenues of interpretation. In Africa, for example, life has always been lived as a unity. Human existence is experienced as non-dichotomous. The impositions of the Enlightenment paradigm and Western culture with its divisions, disunity and fragmentations have seriously harmed the African understanding of life in community. The divisions between churches in the West have been exported to and imposed on Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Yet, despite “things falling apart” (Achebe), in all these areas there still exists an understanding of reality as one and of human life as a unity.

We love the mission of God. We are committed to world mission, because it is central to our understanding of God, the Bible, the Church, human history, and the ultimate future. The whole Bible reveals the mission of God to bring all things in heaven and earth into unity under Christ, reconciling them through the blood of his cross. In fulfilling his mission, God will transform the creation broken by sin and evil into the new creation in which there is no more sin or curse. God will fulfil his promise to Abraham to bless all nations on the earth, through the gospel of Jesus, the Messiah, the seed of Abraham. God will transform the fractured world of nations that are scattered under the judgment of God into the new humanity that will be redeemed by the blood of Christ from every tribe, nation, people, and language, and will be gathered to worship our God and Saviour. God will destroy the reign of death, corruption, and violence when Christ returns to establish his eternal reign of life, justice, and peace. Then God, Immanuel, will dwell with us, and the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign for ever and ever.

The integrity of our mission. The source of all our mission is what God has done in Christ for the redemption of the whole world, as revealed in the Bible. Our evangelistic task is to make that good news known to all nations. The context of all our mission is the world in which we live, the world of sin, suffering, injustice, and creational disorder, into which God sends us to love and serve for Christ’s sake. All our mission must therefore reflect the integration of evangelism and committed engagement in the world, both being ordered and driven by the whole biblical revelation of the gospel of God.

(Cape Town Commitment)

This explains in a sense why in their diverse theologies people from the Global South have tended towards integration between theory and practice arriving at the technical epistemological term *praxis*. In the Global South, there should be no difficulty in understanding and accepting the fundamental unity between mission and church.

However, we should be wary of the prevalence of internal dichotomies emanating from a low mission or missionary consciousness. The most obvious example is the existence of a small mission commission in the church where hobbyists can enjoy themselves. Such mission commission operates then as an appendix which could be cut off whimsically. In most instances, the mission commission might not even have a budget.

Let us return now to the rediscovery of mission as the essential task of the church. Firstly, the rediscovery is premised on the rediscovery of mission as God's mission not ours. The groundwork for such discovery has been done in the nineteen thirties by the likes of Barth and Hartenstein culminating in the remarriage between mission and church at Tambaram and the theological-missiological understanding at the Willingen 1952 conference that mission emanates from the heart of a loving Trinitarian God (my paraphrase).

Put differently, mission is the activity of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And much as the technical term for mission, namely *missio Dei* did not feature at Willingen, its coining was clearly informed by the conference.

Secondly, apart from the ground-breaking work of Blauw (1962) on the missionary nature of the church in which he shows convincingly from the Old and New Testament that God is the author of mission and God's church is therefore a missionary church, Hoekendijk has also contributed substantially. Much as there needs to be wariness of Hoekendijk's radical relativizing of the church, his lasting legacy in missiological terms might be the radical change in structure from church>mission>church to the following scheme: kingdom>gospel>apostolate>world. In developing his theology of the apostolate Hoekendijk accentuates the meaning of *apostolic* as "sent into the world". According to him there is a need for rediscovering the true meaning of the concept of *mission* which in his interpretation can only be understood properly in the context of Jesus, Messiah whom he sees as God's emissary.

A further issue is that this mission takes place in the world and in history. Also, that mission has as its goal God's *shalom* which Hoekendijk interprets as a *social happening, as an event in inter-human relationships, a venture of co-humanity*.

Context becomes crucially important since the *shalom* can only be worked out in concrete situations. In all of this the church is a function of the apostolate, allowing itself

to be used in God's mission. But can the church really only be defined in functional categories?

4. Rediscovery in a rediscovery: Revolutionary mission and church

The rediscovery in a rediscovery refers to a rereading of portions of Bosch's (1991:41-48) *Transforming Mission*, rediscovering some radical interpretations on mission and the church in the New Testament. Much as insights into mission and church in early Christianity have not been worked out consistently by Bosch in terms of his understanding of mission and church in apartheid-South Africa then or in the context of the global capitalist empire, they remain quite astonishing.

For example, he describes early Christian mission as political and indeed revolutionary. He even goes on to cite Ernst Bloch in his statement that "it is difficult to stage a revolution without the Bible" to which the German theologian Moltmann (1975:6) responded by saying that "it is even more difficult NOT to bring about a revolution with the Bible". Attention is drawn to the subversive nature of the early Christian faith and documents. For Bosch, the most revolutionary demonstration imaginable in the Roman Empire was the Christian confession of Jesus as Lord of all lords.

Way back in 1947 at the Whitby conference of the *International Missionary Council*, the renowned theologian and missionary, Neill (1948:62-84) offered similar thoughts on mission and church. Neil perceived of an *ecclesia* at the forefront of radical transformation, stating: "From the beginning and in its essential nature, the Church has been revolutionary. Christ sent it out as an explosive, corrosive, destructive force'. He located the revolutionary church in the context of the Roman Empire.

5. A rediscovery of the kingdom or reign of God in mission

I owe it to a Doctoral candidate under my supervision who was writing a thesis in which he addresses himself to what he sees as the *missing link of the gospel*, namely the virtual absence of the reign of God in missionary thinking. He argues that even a location of mission in the Easter event is a reductionism since it is clear that from the onset the kingdom of God or the reign of God was central to His proclamation and work.

Paul as missionary par excellence initially accentuated the cross, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ only to focus on the kingdom or reign of God when he finds himself in the belly of the beast towards the end of his letter to the Romans. What should be up for serious interrogation is whether in the Global South we are not still feeding into a spiritualized, individualized, and depoliticized understanding of mission

and church which is geared towards preparing people for *a pie in the sky by and by when they die* instead of equipping them for the here and now. Part of the problem seems to be to construe mission and church as an escape route rather than as located in the reality of *empire*. This we shall return to later.

For now it is important to say that the reference to a *missing link* cannot suggest that in missionary circles and in Missiology there has not been some serious reflection on the kingdom or reign of God. Senior and Stuhlmacher (1983:144) suggest, for example that God's reign is the "starting point and context for mission".

In reflecting on the nature of Jesus' self-understanding and ministry, Bosch (1991:32-35) draws attention to two dimensions in Jesus' proclamation of the reign of God.

Both have serious implications for our understanding of mission and church. Firstly, in His preaching on the kingdom or reign of God Jesus makes clear that He is not merely pointing to a future reality, but to a reality that is already present. As Bosch asserts:

"We today can hardly grasp the truly revolutionary dimension in Jesus' announcement that the reign of God has drawn near and is, in fact 'upon' his listeners, 'in their very midst'. It is an announcement that 'something new' is happening: the irruption of a new era, of a new order of life. The hope of deliverance is not a distant song about a far away future. The future has invaded the present".

Secondly, Jesus proclaims a kingdom that "launches an all-out attack on evil in all its manifestations". Mission is about God's reign arriving "when Jesus overcomes the power of evil".

During the time and ministry of Jesus on earth He was confronted by evil in diverse modes like pain, sickness, death, demon-possession, personal sin and immorality, the loveless self-righteousness of those who claim to know God, the maintaining of class privileges, the broken human relationships. One can add evil as it manifested in the Roman Empire, injustice and poverty.

In this context, Bosch states, "Jesus is, however, saying: 'If human distress takes many forms, the power of God does likewise'."

Years before Bosch the German theologian, Pannenberg, has developed profound ideas on the relationship between the kingdom of God and mission and the church for that matter. In brief, snippets of Pannenberg's thoughts as reflected in the *thesis in preparation* of the Doctoral candidate alluded to, are shown.

According to the German theologian, Wolfhart Pannenberg, the main point of reference for understanding the Church, must be the Kingdom of God.” [1] He states, in this way the church *and the mission of the church* are related to the coming kingdom of God: “... the kingdom of God is not the church; it is the future of the church, as it is the future of all mankind. But the church is the community of those who already wait for the kingdom of God for Jesus’ sake and live from this expectation”, also through its mission. [2] The eschatological realisation of the Kingdom influences *the Church’s mission in contemporary society*, with critical reflection before concluding with an assessment of the viability of *this theological perspective regarding mission*.

“Since every conception of the Church that disregards its relatedness to the world remains one-sided, and since only the vocation of the Church for the Kingdom of God explains theologically the essential character of her relatedness to the world; therefore, the whole of the ecclesiological thematic can be brought into perspective only from the viewpoint of the Kingdom of God.”

Pannenberg states, “The expectation of the Kingdom of God implies that only when God rules and no man possesses dominating political power any more, then the domination of people by other people and the injustice invariably connected with it will come to an end.”

6. A contextual-relational reading strategy in mission

There is a highly neglected aspect pertaining to the rediscovery of mission and church from the perspective of the kingdom or reign of God. It is only in recent times that research by Biblical scholars have revealed that the blatant political notion of “kingdom” as it features in the Bible could only be interpreted properly if a contextual-relational reading strategy is applied. The father of such reading strategy is the New Testament scholar, Horsley (2003; 2008 amongst others).

Horsley’s contextual relational reading of the New Testament – such reading is undertaken on the Old Testament by scholars like Gottwald (2008) and Brueggemann (2008) – entails a transcendence of any depoliticised, individualised reading which creates a dichotomy between religion and social reality. His basic thesis is that kingdom of God or gospel or Bible for that matter can only be read within the matrix of *empire*. The mission of Jesus therefore as a mission from the perspective of the kingdom in its

proclamation of good news to the poor and the healing of the sick, was directed towards the most debilitating effects of *empire*.

7. Mission with the poor, church of the poor

If the poor are neglected by mission and church in the Global North, this is a “luxury” that Christianity in the Global South can ill afford. In the Bible the word for “poor” or “poverty” features 2000 times. Surely, even in terms of a *reading in front of the text* (West 2003) and even in the absence of knowledge about *rhetoric and discourse analysis*, this should mean something. Throughout the Word of God the poor are identified as a category finding a very soft spot in the heart of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Even in contexts in the Global South where the poor might not go to church anymore rendering the notion of a *church of the poor* virtually impossible, mission and church should by definition still be mission and church *with* the poor. Successive world mission conferences or assemblies cannot be blamed for not focusing on the poor and indeed drafting some of the most eloquent statements on the poor. Two examples must suffice:

Firstly, the 1980 Melbourne conference of the Council on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches deliberated extensively on the poor from the perspective of the kingdom of God. Raymond Fung, A Korean theologian and missionary, speaking from the perspective of working class people amongst whom he was working at the time, even suggested a worldwide movement of the poor on the march. Fung is known for having coined the term of the “double sinned against”, they are poor as well as not being evangelised.

Secondly, thirty years after Melbourne in Cape Town Lausanne III came up with the most profound statements and utterances relating to the poor and the oppressed of the world. Instead of paraphrasing let us look at the text itself:

We love the world’s poor and suffering. The Bible tells us that the Lord is loving toward all he has made, upholds the cause of the oppressed, loves the foreigner, feeds the hungry, sustains the fatherless and widow. [27] The Bible also shows that God will to do these things through human beings committed to such action. God holds responsible especially those who are appointed to political or judicial leadership in society, [28] but all God’s people are commanded – by the law and prophets, Psalms and Wisdom, Jesus and Paul, James and John – to reflect the love and justice of God in practical love and justice for the needy.[29] Such love for the poor demands that we not only love mercy and deeds of compassion, but also that we do justice through exposing and opposing all that oppresses and exploits the poor. ‘We must not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist.’[30] We confess with shame that on this matter we fail to share God’s

passion, fail to embody God's love, fail to reflect God's character and fail to do God's will. We give ourselves afresh to the promotion of justice, including solidarity and advocacy on behalf of the marginalized and oppressed. We recognize such struggle against evil as a dimension of spiritual warfare that can only be waged through the victory of the cross and resurrection, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and with constant prayer.

A participant (from the Global North) in Cape Town 2010 in his reflection on the conference states as follows on the response to increasing global poverty and injustice:

Will the church awaken and respond to the 2.4 billion who live on less than \$2 a day or the 1 billion on the threshold of starvation or the 27 million living in slavery or the 50 million orphans in Africa? As a citizen of one of the wealthiest nations in the world, I was humbled by these facts and the faces they represent, and I was gripped by statements like, "Doesn't the gospel make demands on your wealth?" and "How can the gospel you preach have power to change the world when you are not generous with your resources?" Despite the call of the newer evangelicalism to minister in both word and deed (in Redeemer City to City).

We embrace the witness of the whole Bible, as it shows us God's desire both for systemic economic justice and for personal compassion, respect, and generosity towards the poor and needy. We rejoice that this extensive biblical teaching has become more integrated into our mission strategy and practice, as it was for the early Church and the Apostle Paul.

8. Mission, church, children

The past decade or so has seen the strong emergence of movements and attempts aimed at correcting the scandalous omission of children from our mission, theology and the church. Much as there is no space here to elaborate, it is safe to suggest that children are forcing on us a new way of knowing and doing in mission and the church. Indeed, children are giving rise to a new epistemological break in our knowing in mission and church. Theologically or Biblically the rationale for the break is the manner in which Jesus himself locates the child in the center of his circle of disciples. And much as there has been all manner of speculation on why the child is center staged by Jesus with reference to common characteristics of children like their innocence and humility, this does not seem to be a consideration with Jesus. He places the child in the center simply because the child is a child. A further issue is that he does what he does in the context of his own disciples being concerned about positions of power. With the emergence of the 4/14 window (analogous to the 10/20 window) under the leadership of figures like Bush and Brewster and the inspiration of the *Child Theology Movement (CTM)* from the United Kingdom, a decisive shift towards identifying and respecting children as serious

agents of mission is observed. The centenary of the famous Edinburgh 1910 mission conference was celebrated in Edinburgh, Scotland, from 2 to 6 June 2010. At the Edinburgh 2010 conference, the corrective on the negligence of children and their virtual absence from mission and missiology took on different forms. In theme or Commission 5 at Edinburgh 2010 on Forms of Missionary Engagement, for example, the issue of the mission of children was introduced. The formulation in itself hinted a significant shift from viewing children as objects of mission to seeing them as people in mission themselves (Kim & Anderson 2011:156). There was enthusiasm about the issue of children in mission, but also concern about the care of children, their potential for exploitation, and a right recognition of childhood.

The theological-missiological rationale for children in mission seemed to have been that Jesus placed a child among his disciples and also the key roles in mission played by several children in the Bible. In the report of the Listening Group at Edinburgh, there is talk of “a new and refreshing concern” relating to “the role of children as a new energy for twenty first century mission” (Kim & Anderson 2011:315). In brief, therefore, Edinburgh 2010 hinted quite strongly, albeit it still in snippets and in a fragmentary fashion, that children were forcing a new mission hermeneutic upon us.⁴¹

All children are at risk. There are about two billion children in our world, and half of them are at risk from poverty. Millions are at risk from prosperity. Children of the wealthy and secure have everything to live with, but nothing to live for.

Children and young people are the Church of today, not merely of tomorrow. Young people have great potential as active agents in God’s mission. They represent an enormous under-used pool of influencers with sensitivity to the voice of God and a willingness to respond to him. We rejoice in the excellent ministries that serve among and with children, and long for such work to be multiplied since the need is so great. As we see in the Bible, God can and does use children and young people – their prayers, their insights, their words, their initiatives – in changing hearts. They represent ‘new energy’ to transform the world. Let us listen and not stifle their childlike spirituality with our adult rationalistic approaches.

We commit ourselves to: Take children seriously, through fresh biblical and theological enquiry that reflects on God’s love and purpose for them and through them, and by rediscovering the profound significance for theology and mission of Jesus’ provocative action in placing a child in the midst. (Cape Town Commitment)

⁴¹ Botha 2016, *HTS*, volume 72 no 1.

9. Mission in the age of empire

In our day and age any mission or any church not addressing itself to the reality of *empire* would at best be reductionist. Of course, there has been an evolvement in the understanding of empire from the identification of specific geographical areas and countries to a new definition that has emerged at the 30th anniversary of the South African *Kairos Document (1985)* in August 2015 in the city of Johannesburg:

We have reached a new moment of truth, a new Kairos. We recognize how the coming of Jesus and his teaching about a new kingdom and a new reign against the Roman empire of his day has completely passed us by. We lament that, by and large, the church of today has become distracted from this mission of preparing the way for God's reign.

In our time, we find that various sites of pain and struggle are joined in a Global Kairos, a shared quest for justice. In our discussions, we named our shared struggle against the scourge of this global empire of our times. Empire is an all-encompassing global reality seeking to consolidate all forms of power while exploiting both Creation and Humanity. The empire we face is not restricted by geography, tribe, language or economy. Empire is an ideology of domination and subjugation, fueled by violence, fed by fear and deception. It manifests itself especially in racial, economic, cultural, patriarchal, sexual, and ecological oppression. Empire deceptively informs dominant, white supremacist, capitalist paradigms controlling global systems and structures. Global empire is sustained by weapons and military bases (hardware) along with ideologies and theologies (software) (disseminated by kairos-southern-africa)

The *new kairos* as it was named at the celebrations in Johannesburg poses a serious challenge to mission and church in the Global South which has always been at the receiving end of *empire*. As a sign though that the gathering has not succumbed to the paralysis of analysis the statement emanating from there also speaks to the rejoicing:

We rejoice that resistance against empire is manifested in a plurality of struggles throughout the world. Struggles against ecological injustice, gender injustice and patriarchy, landlessness, abuse of people buried. In the move, refugee vulnerability, political and religious persecution, social exclusion, denial of indigenous rights, neglecting children's rights, harm to LGBTI persons, access for the differently abled, and racial supremacism represent only a portion of the struggles against empire.

As a follow up to our consultation in Malaysia we need to analyze carefully the specific forms of empire in our different locations and start developing mission strategies of *faithful resistance* against *empire*. The great advantage we have now is that the

dichotomy between evangelisation and social action has been overcome most decisively. The false dilemma has been buried. There is a new understanding that mission and church from the perspective of the kingdom is all-encompassing. There may, however, be contextual priorities.

10. Mission as the church with others

A decisive shift from wanting to be a church *for others* to being a church *with others*. Such a break would indeed constitute a break with the imperialistic and colonial tendency to patronize and to impose. To accept that the church should be orientated radically towards the world is analogous to the rediscovery of church and mission belonging inextricably together. The church in mission in relation to the world is primarily *the local church*. A further issue is that the *local church* is therefore completely and therefore no other church can stand in a position of authority over against the *local church*. For mission and church in the Global South it is of paramount importance to continuously scrutinize the following situation: whether the churches in the Global South are not continuously being looked down upon as immature and dependent on churches of the Global North.

In a freshly developed module on *Dynamics of mission* colleagues at the University of South Africa (UNISA) argues *oikos is* where justice is to prevail and where all cares for the earth. There is nothing in the *whole inhabited world, human and non-human* that falls outside the scope of God's mission in Christ and the Holy Spirit and the local church bears responsibility for the *oikos* first and foremost.

In a context of pluralism where multiple cultures and religions have co-existed, the local congregation has a major role to play in promoting intercultural and interreligious relationships. Strategies are to be developed to transcend the somewhat sterile notion of dialogue which happens most of the time between high profile adherents to specific cultures and religions to a greater measure of conviviality. Conviviality entails a genuine encounter where mutual learning, caring and sharing take place.

11. Re-evangelisation of the Global South

Another responsibility in mission of the local church in the Global South is the re-evangelisation of Christians there. Taking a cue from the situation in the continent of Africa in general and a country like South Africa in particular the process of decolonization is extremely complex and difficult. A major part of the problem seems to be the struggle of people formerly colonized and oppressed to own up to the devastation created in the form of internalized oppression and racism and to work towards healing.

A Doctoral candidate from one of the Charismatic churches in Johannesburg has triggered a new interest in me in the works of Fanon (*Black Skin White Masks; Wretched of the Earth*) as an important source alongside the Word of God to assist in coming to grips with what Fanon calls a *psychopathology*.

In her summary and analysis of Fanon's book *Black Skin, White Masks* Rachele Dini makes the observation that for Fanon racism has psychopathological effects, fostering mentally disturbed behaviour. One of her key points refers to the process of cultural assimilation, a process that occurs when the native culture of a colonized people is replaced by the culture of the colonial power. A seriously compounding factor in the case of South is that unlike other colonized people in other countries it has a history of colonization by a Dutch regime, a British empire and on top of that it was subjected to colonialism of a special type. The damage to colonized people to which Fanon refers would in certain respects be more severe in South Africa than elsewhere particularly when the period of three hundred and thirty years is taken into account.

Fanon tells us that the damage is felt both collectively and individually and manifests in a diversity of ways. Firstly, colonialism prevents the colonized from developing an independent sense of identity. In South Africa, however, it would be fair to say that black consciousness as far as it was effective has gone some way in instilling in people who were racially oppressed and economically exploited a sense of self-affirmation. Secondly, Fanon addresses himself to the equation of whiteness with goodness and blackness with evil quite often captured in expressions that "white is right", "white is bright", "white is pure" and contrary to that "as black as the night", "black market", "riding black" when someone boards a train without a valid ticket. The examples are numerous.

In South Africa the question remains whether blacks themselves have not internalized these, resulting in a situation where black people would constantly be striving to be white. It is on this basis that Fanon introduces his understanding of alienation emanating from serious psychological repercussions. Thirdly, perhaps the real depth what Fanon presents is his very sharp analysis of the real essence of colonial racism which is the socio-economic issue.

A major task of the local church in dealing with the pathology described here is to undo the appropriation of a Western interpretation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and substitute such with a context-based approach.

A more contextual approach might help Christians in the Global South to understand better who they are in Christ in their own cultural, social, political, and economic realities.

CONCLUSION

The paper is nothing more than *work in progress*. It speaks to a minimalist agenda of issues that cannot be avoided in the ongoing conversation on the meaning of the shift in the center of gravity of Christianity from the Global North to the Global South. There will be many more issues. I am wary though of Stephen Neill's statement that *if everything is mission nothing is mission*. I concede that the priorities in and for mission will differ from context to context. In my own reflection on mission and church in the Global South I see no way forward unless we deal decisively with the dichotomies between mission and church, church and world, kingdom, mission and church on a basic theological-missiological level. The issues of the poor, children, empire, church with others and re-evangelisation are identified as priorities where acts of faithfulness (to speak with San Antonio 1989) and workable strategies are to be developed.

MISSIOLOGICAL CHALLENGES FOR HINDUISM

MOSES PARMAR

INTRODUCTION

Though not organised in a traditional way of a “Religion” Hinduism has successfully withstood numerous attempts of conversions, including one thousand years of Muslim and two-hundred years of Christian rule. In spite of lacking a unifying God, scripture, or philosophical thought, it has survived considerably long. On the other hand it is not as monolithic in faith as imagined by many people from the outside, so much so, it is often suggested that it is better to use the word “Hindu Traditions” instead of Hinduism. Buddhism on the other hand does have a solid make up, though in the nations where it spread, it is impacted by many local religious and philosophical thoughts and produced a special flavour in each nation. In this paper we look at some major challenges in reaching the followers of these two major Asian faiths.

1. Areas where these two faiths still hold significant sway

Globally there are over 1.15 billion Hindus (15-16% of world population) while there are from 488 to 535 million Buddhists (9-10% of world population). Nations with largest Hindu and Buddhist Populations as of 2010:

HINDU POPULATION	
Nation	Population
India	973,750,000
Nepal	24,170,000
Bangladesh	12,680,000
Indonesia	4,050,000
Pakistan	3,330,000
Sri Lanka	2,830,000
United States	1,790,000
Malaysia	1,720,000
United Kingdom	890,000
Myanmar	820,000
Mauritius	48.5%
Fiji	40%

As seen in the chart, most of these nations with majority Hindu and Buddhist populations are in South and East Asia. Even though large number of Hindus are found around the world, they hold sway only in India, Nepal, and small nations of Mauritius and Fiji, while, for example in many other nations like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, they have been persecuted along with other minorities. Similarly, though the largest Buddhist populations are found in China, they are also very severely persecuted along with other religious groups.

2. Key Issues preventing the gospel from penetrating these places

Missionaries have been active in most of the nations mentioned above. Some locations they have been successful, while in most places, communities are still resistant to the gospel. I will underline some of the key issues that prevent the Gospel penetrating these areas.

2.1 Political

Contrary to philosophers around the world who predicted the end of religion in our world, faith is growing stronger. All religions are registering strong growth including Hinduism and Buddhism. Both are also becoming strongly fundamental in certain nations.

Starting as an obscure fringe group in 1925 CE, Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (known as RSS, or Sangh Parivar) now has become the major force in India. Their international wing Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) is present in many nations with Indian populations. Their political wing Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) rules the nation with absolute majority. Slow infection of fundamentalist ideals have taken decades to show up, but have been extremely successful in impacting businesses, media, political parties, police, judiciary and even the Indian army. "India for Hindus" slogan did not excite many people 8 decades ago, but now significantly gathers support from variety of peoples. From soft, tolerant Hinduism, now they insist on talking of hard Hindutva ideals. In the last ten years they have been extremely successful in destroying rival political groups and prominent opposition personalities. It is challenging to bring together faiths of Indian origin (namely Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and numerous smaller other traditions) while fomenting a severe hatred for faiths of foreign origin, namely Islam and Christianity. However, establishing a degree of religious tolerance among the faiths of Indian origin faiths is still challenging, because some groups have political agendas. Recently one section of an influential caste group called Lingayats in Karnataka have revolted against Hinduism and claimed for a status of separate religion. However, it seems Hinduism can survive comfortably as long as it remains loosely connected, tolerant, difficult to define, way of life. But when it tries to become a strongly led

religion, it would break down within. Patels (backward caste) of Gujarat agitated severely in 2015-16, while Gurjars of North West India have been agitating for several years. As education and economy spreads further, more and more groups realise that even though Hinduism is considered one family, it is only 15% of high castes get most of the benefits of being a Hindu, while 85% of the Hindu population that serves them, hardly benefit from the developments in the nation and the world. Such disturbances, riots and violent protests do become barriers for the gospel on one hand, but on the other hand, it often opens new doors closed so far.

Now, having political majority would also mean passing more and more strong laws to control the minorities in India. Recent law prohibiting the sell of cattle for slaughter would directly destroy hundreds of thousands of jobs, particularly targeting Muslims in India. Similarly, more and more states are passing anti-conversion laws, smartly worded as “Freedom of Religion” laws, prohibiting conversion to Islam or Christianity, but allowing re-conversion back to Hinduism. Nepal is now following India’s example in introducing similar legislation. They continue to influence and guide their national and international networks to follow their extreme views wherever they are. Dr. Ponraj points out how politicians are so creative in finding new ways to rack up religious feelings of people and create an issue. The latest in the line is “cow worship”. From being a community that once enjoyed cow meat now has turned into extreme veneration of cows. Some see this as a desperate attempt to find ways to revive Hindutva.

Systematic Sanskritization of the nation is another political move to force Sanskrit and Hindi language on the population. Sanskrit has been dead for a thousand years and no one uses it today in daily interactions. This includes changing history lessons in the education system, to present other faiths wrongly or negatively in educational literature and thus attempt to change the mindset and attitude of the general public towards other faiths. There is opposition to this from those among them, so it is still to be seen how far this would go.

The major desire is to make India a “Hindu” nation, instead of a secular one. Their neighbours have moved in that direction with majority religions there, so why not India? Though the majority is comfortable to be a pluralistic nation, small fringe group is definitely very vocal and pushing for this. One of them did announce that by 2030, Christianity and Islam will be wiped out of India.

2.2 Cultural and Linguistic barriers

Though fast becoming very modern, India still remains a nation deeply rooted in culture. A 2014 survey found still 95% young people went for arranged marriage from within

their own caste community. Only 5% Indians dared to marry outside the caste. While LGBTIQA issues continue to trouble churches in the West, in Hindu nations, the church does not need to worry about that yet, as Hindu culture would stand against it before the church has to. As culture involves thousands of unwritten rules, cross cultural workers trying to adjust and contextualise continues to struggle for being identified as local.

In India itself, there are 4635 distinct people groups according to the Archaeological Survey of India. In a book *Caste, a nation within a nation*, the author argues that each caste and subcaste is closely knit group forming a nation within a nation. So often such a nation (within a nation) they are identified by a particular language. However, many groups that speak the same language also form their own subcultures. This makes cross-cultural evangelism extremely challenging. An Indian Christian missionary reaching others within the nation may feel like working in a foreign nation. Similar is the caste in Nepal and other nations. As the nation continues to develop, the gap between haves and have-nots continue to grow; we see tensions on the line of languages also. There have been attacks in Mumbai on Hindi speaking workers from UP and Bihar, while many Nepalese Bihari have been attacked in Assam, West Bengal, Manipur and other states in the North East. This sparks counter attacks on those language groups in the respective states. This makes missions sending cross-cultural workers to other regions more difficult, as they are attacked for speaking different languages, as well as bringing a new religion!

While India has eighteen major state languages (written on the currency notes), there are numerous local languages. This is quite challenging for missionaries who learn the state language, which still may not be the heart language of the people they are trying to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

According to Dr. Ponraj, a wrong mindset among missionaries also is a barrier in reaching Hindus. People generally take it for granted that Hindus are very difficult to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. But, they are just like us with challenges and needs, seeking help in the areas their faith is unable to help. Often we imagine all of them to be orthodox Hindus, with high philosophical arguments. This is not true. The majority of them follow folk, popular religion often with much interest and eagerness to hear about Jesus. So, there is no “one method” to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Each tradition in Hinduism will require a different approach.

2.3 Philosophical

For most people, defining Hinduism itself is a major challenge. Unlike many other religions,

Hinduism does not have a founder, unique creed, scripture, centralised authority of a single leader. This makes Hinduism very difficult to define. Therefore the Indian Supreme court in its 1995 judgment described Hinduism as a 'Way of Life' instead of a religion. It is a mixture of many religious thoughts/streams existing in India prior to the coming of Islam and Christian rulers. So, one can be a monotheist, monistic, pantheistic, polytheist, humanist, atheist, or agnostic and still be a Hindu. So an evangelist trained only in the Bible, would find it difficult to grasp the variety of thoughts people follow. While the majority of the population follows the popular form of Hindu faith, it helps to be aware of various philosophical thoughts prevalent in Hindu and Buddhist faiths.

Most Hindus continue to follow rituals without knowing the purpose behind them, but many love to talk about those. Most people see the Christian faith vastly different from their own, more so when the Christian faith is presented in the western decoration. Very small numbers of missionaries are able to present the gospel in a contextualised form and so continue to see a small amount of people converting to Christ. So far only missions to Dalits and Tribal groups have seen a major turning to Christ.

2.4 Spiritual barriers

However, both Hinduism and Buddhism are not just cultural communities. They are strongly religious in nature. An average Hindu is deeply religious and fears many gods and Spirits. There are village gods, community gods and family gods. People spend an enormous amount of their time, energies and wealth pleasing those gods. Two years ago, the Maha Kumbh Mela in Allahabad UP attracted over 100 million people from around the world in two months' period, making it the largest religious gathering in the world.

There are spiritual strongholds that bind the people, making outreach to them extremely difficult. So, many large portions of North India, Nepal, China (including Tibet), and other nations become extremely difficult to see a breakthrough.

3. Missiological challenges

3.1 Appropriate apologetics

In the light of the above challenges, it will be important for us to consider developing appropriate an apologetics to answer their questions and objections. Developing simple frequently asked questions (FAQs) for each group, would be very helpful to the genuine seekers among them. There are common questions people in various other groups ask. Why should I become a Christian since all religions lead to God? Why can't I accept Christ along with our family gods? If God wanted me to become Christian, why did He allow that I be born into a Hindu family? Is it right to hurt my family and community by

following a different religion? The right answers will help not only the seekers, but also the evangelists trying to reach them. The wrong answers not only can turn people away from faith, but can become dangerous for the evangelists witnessing in a wrong political environment.

Along with this, Christian missionaries would also need material to explain the Christian faith to both those opposing the gospel and those asking questions out of genuine curiosity. People brought up in special revelation may take it for granted that everyone believes what they believe. But often the basic ideas of God, man, sin, salvation, heaven, hell and fellowship are so different, even to sincerely share the good news can be totally misunderstood.

Because our calling is also not for the exclusive purpose to baptise people, but to make disciples, it is important to develop material to help people grow in the Christian faith. An experience of new birth for new converts is not only an event, but also a very tedious process, moving from spiritual darkness into His marvellous light. Therefore, in each step they are bound to have lots of questions. Even though they have believed in Jesus, they haven't thought through lots of issues. Their relatives and friends would bombard them with many objections in their daily life. Good apologetic material will help them to take a right stand and remain firm in faith.

3.2 A contextual presentation of the Gospel

Contextualisation is a very old idea now in seminaries that taught mission. Yet it is sad how many of the modern missions still continue to minister in good old western ways tried out hundred years ago. No doubt these ways were effective then reaching the people, but now the world has moved on, and mission leaders surely need to help their missions' approaches and strategies to be adapted.

Unfortunately, many don't want to change, as traditional means still seem to deliver some desirable outcomes. But this continues to create more barriers for the believers to reach their own families and creates more persecution for new churches. Many missionaries, born and brought up in Christian families, know very little about other faiths and some even don't believe that it is necessary to study other cultures and contextualise to help them receive the good news more easily. Many find unlearning now very difficult after serving many years in the mission field. The older they become, the more difficult this change is. It is of paramount importance that to reach these groups with the gospel of Jesus Christ missionaries need to consider seriously what is spiritual in their eyes. We may be very spiritual in our own eyes, but when we try to reach them, it is important to ask what they imagine is spiritual. Both in Hinduism and Buddhism, the following Christian qualities are greatly admired: Compassion to the

suffering, moral purity, simplicity, humility, sacrifice of power, position and wealth, and giving. There is no doubt these qualities in our lives will make a big impact.

Contrary to some, most people are still eager to hear to the gospel and there are huge doors open for the loving reaching out. There are many communities who would love to embrace the gospel if someone presented it in a palatable format.

To some extent we will need a new breed of missionaries to reach the groups who are known to be resistant to the gospel. We need those who are willing to think differently, to think out of box, those who are open to see God working among the communities and join in it, even though they may not understand it completely. Someone has described the work of God as a flowing river. Some jump in it because they believe God is in it. Others stand at the shore trying to figure out what God is doing there. The third group not only remains outside the streams of God, but in the history, has opposed the genuine work of God. As our Lord said, "My Father is at Work." He is always at work in our society. Our job is to find out what He is doing and find the ways to join Him.

However, the cross cultural workers are required to commence the new work. But to bring masses to Christ, we will surely need local missionaries. Since culture involves thousands of unwritten rules, to some extent, cross cultural workers will never ever learn it completely. We need people brought up in those cultures, able to read the Bible with their own cultural glasses, identify what their people need, and to reach out to them. Christian missionaries need to find ways to train, support, and empower those people.

Contextualisation also means being open to learn from the people we are trying to reach with the gospel of Jesus Christ. All cultures and languages carry some truth of God. There is so much for us to learn from them. Each of them has some beautiful practice, tradition, belief that can help and encourage us greatly. Also, no one knows how to reach the unreached like the unreached themselves. So, if some of them will help us, we can do a great work among them. This is illustrated interestingly in the book of Judges when the tribe of Judah was trying to break in a city and they could not. They then found a man from that city, and asked him to show them the way. He did and they could easily conquer a city. It is amazing that the people of God with priests, Urim and Thummim, Ephod, Ark of the Covenant, and prophets, needed an outsider tell them how to get a victory over a city. Moses asking the help of his brother-in-law to stand alongside him on the journey to the promise land is another example of this truth. If we are humble to learn from others, there is a great opportunity for us to introduce many others to the

love of God through Jesus Christ. God often purposely does this to keep us humble and open to learn.

3.3 Social Justice

Being salt and light in society means that our presence does make a difference in this world, even if all of them are not converted to our faith. Many live comfortably in this world by easily divorcing their devotional life from the world around them. There is oppression, injustice and darkness prevailing, but as long as they are not committing it, they feel they are not responsible for it. It is time, like the prophets of the Old Testament that we intercede for the sins of our world and cry out to God for justice. This has a very powerful impact for the gospel, making Jesus extremely attractive to others. There are numerous examples in India like William Carey, Mother Teresa and many others.

While we are looking at the issue of contextualisation, we also need to consider Mass (or people) movements (migration) taking place in the modern world. In fact, the history of Indian Christianity stands on the people movements of the 20th century. Also, it will not be possible to reach each individually in the sea of people we are considering, with a complex language, religion. The individual, anyway, can't make a decision of such importance on his own. In case of Islam, Garrison writes in his book "A Wind in the house of Islam" that there are recorded 62 people movements operating in the Muslim world, which is a great 21st century phenomenon. Trousdale mentions in his book "Church Planting Movements," that a similar phenomenon is taking place in Muslim and other communities around the world.

This again takes us back to the days of the "Acts of the Apostles". Missions need to study this, encourage, empower and strengthen the migration of people groups to Jesus. This way, in the hostile world, the support system will be better for new believing communities and the chances of them remaining faithful are much higher than individual conversions.

Contextualisation also requires that we give freedom to those who come to Christ to make important decisions relating to their family, community and culture. Often they would make mistakes like all of us have. But it is much better than we trying to impose something from the outside. Missions have struggled enormously in this area in the past, but more and more are learning to correct this.

3.4 Signs and wonders

Many denominations in the West have not seen miracles in their churches for many years, thus often conclude the cessation of gifts after the departure of the apostles. But

for the church in the Global South, the times of the “Book of Acts” are present today. Nonetheless, in most cases they are very much needed. Many sincere people ask the right questions. However, unfortunately they do not move from inquiry to venture out in faith easily. Even after all questions are answered, they still find difficulty to make a decision. They need a push, a kick spiritually, to be shaken out of their old belief system and try the new. And God has been so gracious in pouring out His Spirit upon His church in many areas, bringing a huge harvest to His fold.

3.5 Prayer

Most people in the Global South would not refuse if you offer to pray for them, even if they may not be sympathetic to the Christian faith. Prayer is one of the first steps in the way of providing space to the Spirit of God to minister to a person. It is not only to wake a person from sleep; it is a matter of life and death. So, a person really needs to experience the power of God in his/her life. Most sects in the Hindu and Buddhist fold greatly admire the power of God in real life. Most times this happens in case of sickness. However, when prayer is offered, the sky is the limit.

When we present our great God, the requests of faith are equally big and often strange: “Pray for my buffalo to get pregnant, Pray for my goat to give milk, Pray for the court case by the powerful landlord for our ancestral land” “My son/daughter is kidnapped” (for prostitution or slavery), “please ask Jesus to bring him/her back”. “Pray that Jesus will change my father who does not work, drinks everyday and beats my mother”. Demon possession is a common problem in most groups involved in heavy idol worship. Jesus’ power over the unseen world makes Him greatly admired by them.

Dr. Ponraj points out that often we follow a wrong approach in reaching them. We start with “Truth Encounter” first, then go to “Faith encounter” and finally end with “Power Encounter.” However, the most common Hindu wants to experience the power of God – His miracle. Then only they would be interested to look at the Truth of the Gospel and consider faith.

4. The demonstration of the Gospel

It is a very encouraging sign that missions around the world are now moving towards holistic work with their target peoples. This was not the case in the 20th century when people often actively opposed the works of service. So this has taken a long time finding acceptance in the evangelical world. Bishop J W Pickett of the Methodist Church in India wrote “The Confirmation of the Gospel” almost seventy five years ago. He realised that his gospel preaching in early days hardly produced any fruit, even though he had many hearers. Later only he realised that bare preaching is unable to help people make a major decision in life. The truth needs to be confirmed in our lives. He felt that the gospel

to live up to its meaning – good news – had to be good news for today, not just for the afterlife. So, both loving words and loving deeds were required for mutual confirmation. The gospel needs to be seen in our fellowship, love, forgiveness and Christian service. He started reaching out to the suffering people during natural or man-made disasters, without any obligation for them, and soon witnessed the masses turning to Christ. Often most people don't put their faith in Christ, because they have never seen Him. And no man can see God with their eyes of flesh and live. But it is possible for them to see God through our lives. And the world is desperate to see the truth of God lived out in real situations.

People often hear about love, sacrifice, going the extra mile, but need to observe this being embodied by ordinary human beings. In most unreached areas, it is best to identify the suffering group and start serving them unconditionally. Once this group responds, and produces a tangible change in their lives visible to others, more responses are bound to happen. We have seen in several cases, people inviting evangelists to "come and help" because they saw other groups changing significantly for the better.

5. The "Trickle up" theory

In India, earliest missionaries tried reaching the rich and famous, believing that the gospel will trickle down. Most of them realised that the gospel does not trickle down easily, but it does have power to trickle up. Jesus Christ in his ministry called unschooled, untrained "sinners" of this world and created a major revolution in the world, so much so, that in four hundred years Christianity took over the Roman empire. Both Bishop Pickett (Christian Mass Movements in India: 1933) and Bishop Azariah (Christ of the Indian Villages: 1930) give us numerous examples of the gospel going up the caste and class ladder, as the lowest and most suffering class is rightly reached, empowered and transformed by loving outreach.

6. Women and children

Special attention should be given to women and children in our strategy. This is a significantly suffering group in most cultures facing wars, discrimination, disasters, political upheavals or/and religious oppression. As someone has said, "When you reached women, you've reached two generations"!

7. Indigenous support

Even though we often believe vision and people are more important than resources, many great visions die for the lack of funds. If we can't communicate the vision, challenge people to follow it, and excite donors to support it, it will die an untimely death. While our Lord commanded us to pray for more labourers, it is a fact that lots of

labourers are unable to go simply for the lack of support. Financial support is a very crucial need that needs to be met, as the Scripture teaches us that no soldier fights the battle with his own money.

For long the Christian world was divided into sending or supporting nations and receiving nations. As the world mission scenario changes as mission from everywhere to everywhere, and particularly in case of resistant nations in the Global South, the time has come to look for ways to resource the work with local funding. This is more so for the Hindu and Buddhist majority nations. People in those religions are charitable and the amounts are unimaginable. This should be the case when they join the church also.

It is true that a huge number of people that are accepting Christ are the poor of this world. But even they could be helped to stand on their feet economically and support their own pastor and local missions. Lots of work needs to be done in this area.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have pointed out some of the challenges of doing mission in those that are practicing Hinduism in the twenty-first century. There are some barriers, along with a great wide open door to reach them. Through implementing the appropriate strategy, a humble learning attitude and working together with like-minded people would rightly meet this great challenge.

MISSION PARTNERSHIP IN A POLYCENTRIC WORLD

PATRICK FUNG

INTRODUCTION

We have seen enormous changes in the landscape of mission over the past hundred years, and especially since the Edinburgh 1910 Conference.⁴² Paul Woods, a missiologist from the Oxford Centre of Mission Studies (OCMS), commented on today's new mission dynamic, "We can see a *rainbow* around the table- whether the table actually is round is another matter." Today we can rub shoulders with brothers and sisters from many different continents in a polycentric world, different backgrounds, North and South, East and West. Rather than passing the mission baton from the Western world to the majority world Church, God is adding "more hands" to it.

One of the best definitions I have seen so far in defining polycentrism in the context of world mission is by Kirk Franklin,

The concept of polycentrism is an outcome of globalization and glocalization and it provides a deliberate movement away from established centers of power, so that leadership takes place among and within a community that learns together. Polycentrism assumes self-regulating centers of influence within a given structure. This occurs when there are many centers of power or importance within a political, cultural, or socio-economic system. The multiple centers may be of leadership, power, authority, ideology, or importance within a larger 'political boundary'.⁴³

Andrew Walls insightfully highlighted the concept of polycentrism in global mission, and then defines it as the riches of a hundred places learning from each other. He believes that there is no one single centre of Christianity or one single centre of missionary activity. He argues, "One necessitates the other."⁴⁴ Each center enriches the others and there is a need for one another. However, despite this inspiring concept, we do face a challenge. While the numeric center of gravity in terms of Christian growth has shifted to

⁴² The 1,215 official delegates were predominantly British and American, with a small minority coming from the non-Western churches – nine Indians (including one Eurasian Methodist woman from Madras), four Japanese, three Chinese, one Korean, one Burmese, one Anatolian, and a Europeanized black African.

⁴³ Kirk Franklin, HTS Theological Studies, *Polycentrism in the Missio Dei*, AOSIS.

⁴⁴ *Christianity Today*, February 2007.

the global South, the fiscal center of gravity remains in the global North, though this might be changing. The concept and the practice of the “powerful” bringing the good news to the “powerless” is rightly being challenged. Samuel Escobar passionately argued that “missionary and theological tasks have a global dimension wherein neither imperialism nor provincialism has a place.”⁴⁵

1. Dancing together: The model of the Trinity in Partnership

Based on the Gospel of John in Chapters 14 to 17, the concept of ‘perichoresis’- literally means *dancing around*, to the understanding of the members of the Trinity, a phrase first coined by Jürgen Moltmann. ‘Perichoresis’ describes a “community without uniformity, personality without individualism and [difference without division]”. He states,

In this dynamic view of the Trinity, the dance results in the provision of space, each person for the other two. Hence, difference (but not division) is ensured, and separate identities preserved. The love of each member allows him to “stand out” for and be drawn to the others, and thus perichoresis leads to kenosis – space making is associated with self-emptying (Philippians 2:6).⁴⁶

The model of *perichoresis* in the trinity is to cascade down from God to the believers as Jesus prayed for the disciples “May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (John 17:21). Unity thus cascades down from God to the believers, one form of unity derivative of another.⁴⁷

Thus partnership reflects that unity with one another and unity with God. It is breathtaking to know that we can enjoy partnership with God. Michael Griffiths puts it this way, “Perhaps it would revolutionize the spiritual experience of some of us if we grasped this concept. He states, “we have been given the esteemed privilege of being junior partners with the Holy Trinity.”⁴⁸ In 1 Corinthians 3 verse 9, Paul speaks about “God’s fellow-workers you are; God’s agricultural and building projects you are!”

This partnership between God and us is made possible because of the cross, the powerful demonstration of *kenosis*, which is foolishness to the world (1 Corinthians 1:20-25).

⁴⁵ Samuel Escobar, “A Movement Divided: Three approaches to world evangelisation stand in tension with one another” in *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 1991 8:7.

⁴⁶ Paul Woods, “Perichoresis and Koinonia: Implications of our Fellowship with God for the Changing Missionary Endeavor”, *Mission Round Table*, Singapore: OMF, Vol 10, No 1 January 2015.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.6.

⁴⁸ Unpublished article by Michael Griffiths.

Kenosis involves emptying the “self”, letting go of our own space, preferences, and agenda. It is not the model that the world advocates, a win-win situation. Rather, biblical partnership is a sacrificial partnership.

The New Testament’s usage of the word “*koinonia*” carries a rich multi-dimensional meaning including the meaning of partnership.⁴⁹ The concept of partnership (*koinonia*), often based on Philippians 1:5, has most often been used in mission discourse. *Koinonia* here signifies a purpose with a shared commitment to Christ, the vertical dimension, and a shared commitment to the same task and goal in the proclamation of the gospel, the horizontal dimension. Paul not only appreciates the Philippian church in sending aids to him when he was in need (4:16) but the church also shared in his troubles (4:14). Partnership involves sharing in multiple aspects far beyond resources sharing. It is sharing of pain and joy, victory in Christ and suffering for Christ.

2. Partnership: A multi-directional sharing

Whether we refer to *Koinonia* as “partnership”, “sharing”, “fellowship”, “participation”, or “communion”; the problem is that we do not find practicing *Koinonia* easy and naturally in the global church and mission context with our cultural prejudices and historical baggage. The early church in Jerusalem faced that problem when leaders rebuked Peter when he went to the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them (Acts 11:2). Sharing was not meant to be. Surprisingly it was the new emerging church in Antioch, the seemingly peripheral group, who collected the offering and contributed towards the needs of the Jerusalem church when they heard about the need in Jerusalem (Acts 11:28-29). I wonder what the response of the established organised Jerusalem church was when they received the gift from the Gentile young Antioch Church? It requires humility, respect and acceptance, accepting the “weaker” partner, as equals as well as accepting one’s own inadequacy.

In Romans 15, Paul exhorted those who are strong to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. But who are the weak here referred to by Paul? Most likely the weak were, for the most part, *Jewish Christians*, who had a strong spiritual heritage. Paul exhorted the younger Gentile believers to accept the “weaker” Jewish Christians. With the significant growth of the Global South Church and the decline of the Church in the West, what should be our attitude towards the Church of the Global North?

The Antioch Church shared its resources with the Jerusalem Church. But God’s resources

⁴⁹ A detailed theological treatment on the understanding of *Koinonia* can be found in 2015 Issue Vol 10, No1 of *Mission Round Table*.

are not only about money and certainly not about the exercise of power which money often brings. In the Antioch Church model, it was the “powerless” which brought resources to the “powerful.” In our global family, some will bring quite different gifts. Some will model faithfulness in the face of suffering and persecution and show us a vital element of authentic gospel living. Some will bring years of experience of commending the Lord Jesus Christ in the context of another world faith. Some will show how to live with shining trust in God despite poverty or injustice. Others will bring deep traditions of believing prayers. The Body of Christ needs all of these, and much more and in true partnership we shall each bring what we have, not what we don’t have, to bless the world church in its mission. And we will respect and rejoice in diversity, rather than impose one way of doing mission on others.

The 1910 Edinburgh conference had a triumphalistic tone with the watchword “Evangelisation of the world in this generation”. It was a noble vision. However, Andrew Walls argues that “The Edinburgh conference did not expect the non-Western leaders to make any significant contributions.”⁵⁰ With the majority of those from the West, the idea of world evangelisation was from the West to the Rest. Western dominance in mission in the past hundred years is a fact. With the significant church growth in the majority world as well as vast changes in the global economic order,⁵¹ one would have expected that the churches of the Global South would shape and bring a significant impact on the global church and mission movements with self-confidence. In some areas, this has been true. However, most of the time, it is not the case. Note the critique by Hwa Yung, a key leader in Asia and the Lausanne Movement,

The fact is that despite the fundamental shift of the center of gravity of Christianity from the west to the Global South, for the moment the centers of power remain largely in the North: denominational and organizational structures, institutions and established mission agencies, publishing houses, academically trained personnel, and above all, money. This imbalance can grossly distort of our perceptions of the global church realities, and consequently the way we work. Consequently, we remain blinded to changing global realities and locked into outmoded courses of action. And few – too few – Global South leaders have the self-confidence in Christ to think and act in a way that is not domesticated by the perceived superiority of western culture and traditions! ... in many other areas, the churches of the Global South remain under western tutelage.⁵²

Sometimes, those from the Global South may resist change out of loyalty to models of theology and missiology which they inherit from the West. The challenge by Samuel

⁵⁰ Andrew Walls.

⁵¹ *The Economist* (Oct 3rd-9th, 2015).

⁵² Hwa Yung, Unpublished Paper on Church of the Global South.

Escobar on “managerial missiology”,⁵³ whether you agree with the label or not, was a timely wake-up call to the global church.

Christ crucified has brought into being nothing less than a new, united human race, united in itself and united to its creator. Christianity is not international; it is supranational.⁵⁴ God’s new community will always transcend the racial, lingual, national barriers as it reflects the nature of the kingdom of Christ. While we rejoice in the growth of the Asian Missionary Movement, I still have a nagging restlessness. There is a rumour that is circulated among Chinese Christians that the 21st-century mission, or the next century mission, belongs to the Asians, or the Chinese. Sometimes, even the Westerners boost the confidence of our Asian brothers and sisters by promoting this concept, which unfortunately is to our harm.

We do not deny the wealth and the tremendous resources with which God has blessed many of the Asian countries including China. However, we may be at the risk of Asian brothers and sisters repeating the same mistake that our Western brethren might have committed in the past, that is, to equate economic and political power with advances in the spreading of the gospel. We continue to reinforce the notion that the spreading of the gospel is always from the powerful to the powerless, the haves to the have-nots. There is a sense of Asian triumphalism which makes me nervous. We also need to remember that mission partnership is not just between North and South, but also South and South and much beyond. For as Andrew Walls said, “mission today is from anywhere to anywhere”.⁵⁵ Partnership is multi-directional, dynamic and multi-centered led.

3. Redefining the “we” for global mission

Luke, in the book of Acts, has used several key words which have significant missiological implications. The first is the word “We”. Luke was almost hidden in the missionary service, but he was not passive as indicated in Acts 16:10.⁵⁶

⁵³ William Taylor ed., *Global Missiology for the 21st Century*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic), 109

⁵⁴ Michal Green, *30 Years that changed the World*, (Leicester: IVP, 2002) 154

⁵⁵ The term “Mission from anywhere to anywhere” has been used by Andrew Walls in the Chapter “Christian Mission in a Five-hundred-year Context” in the book *“Mission in the 21st Century- Exploring the 5 Marks of Global Mission.”* He said, “In the multi-centric Christian church there can be no automatic assumption of Western leadership; indeed, if suffering and endurance are the badges of authenticity, we can expect the most powerful Christian leadership to come from elsewhere.” P. 203-204

⁵⁶ “After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, *concluding* that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.” (Acts 16:10). That word “concluded” in verse 10 means ‘to knit together’, ‘bring together’, ‘to put together in one’s mind’. So clearly Paul related the vision he had received to the others, – and they discussed it, they weighed up all that had happened to them – the plans, the closed doors, the vision and their current location, and together they came to one mind – Macedonia – and their response was immediate, purposeful, and united.

There was sensitivity to the work of the Holy Spirit, spontaneity with a sense of urgency. The second is the Greek word *Homothumadon*, translated as “with one accord” in the NIV which occurred ten times in the book of Acts out of twelve in the New Testament. The “inclusive” nature of God’s community, embracing both Jews and Gentiles, was evident throughout the book of Acts.

In today’s changing landscape of mission, we are challenged to redefine the “we”.⁵⁷ Eldon Porter in his paper, “Partnering with the Majority World in the Global Paradigm” wrote,

In light of the vast diversity of expressions of missions, the intrinsic value of flexibility is essential if one is to become globally friendly. Traditional agencies that were developed in a paradigm where almost all their missionaries came from fairly similar contexts (education, a common trade language, and standard of living,) are faced with a vastly diverse and constantly changing global context. A partnership friendly agency is almost always one that is focused on the essentials and flexible with secondary issues. Every [mission] agency is different, but when membership is tied to structures, policies, and systems, it will be more difficult to truly partner with the majority world and treat their missionaries as equal.

Before we can embark on strategies for partnership and cooperation for global mission, we should take a step back in trying to understand the context we are operating in today. There are several key factors that influence the way we consider partnership. First, it is worth noting that those leading the vibrant and rapidly growing majority world church and mission movements are not wrestling with issues that traditional mission agencies are wrestling with. Their structures tend to be simple, working in partnerships is the norm, and their systems tend to be more flexible. To a great extent, they are leading the way in how missions should happen in the global paradigm.⁵⁸

The second macro issue is the desire and ability of a local body of believers to get directly involved in missions. In the past, a local church could not do missions without working through the agency. Today we see churches of all sizes from around the world involved directly in cross cultural ministries. From the perspective of the local church, partnering

⁵⁷ One agency which has gone through the process of redefining the “We” is the Wycliffe Global Alliance (formally Wycliffe Bible Translators International). One of the purposes of the “redefinition” is to give a greater voice to various partners in the Global South, balancing the voice of the more experienced and influential northern organisations, improved missiological reflection and the training of leaders for the Bible translation task. Franklin, “A Paradigm for Global Mission Leadership,” 65.

⁵⁸ Eldon Porter, Unpublished Paper, “Partnering with the Majority World in the Global Paradigm”, 2016

with a mission agency is just one of many options for how they engage.⁵⁹

Third, in today's "flattened" world where technology allows us to be much more interconnected, people are able to communicate freely with virtually anyone, in almost any location globally. This ability to connect leads in turn to the creation of ministry partnerships. This affects our sense of belonging. Old structural paradigms of "homes" and "fields" defined in the past by geographical distance and colonial relationships are undergoing reform and in many cases, need to be replaced by new structures⁶⁰ which reflect new realities and changed relationships. The global diaspora movement phenomenon including the refugees' situation further make the home and field model unsustainable as often the "homes" become the mission fields.

Fourth, the disparity of economic power between the Global North and Global South has remained. The World Bank published the figure of thirty-one countries belong to the low-income nations bracket and thirty-two countries in the high-income nations bracket. When we examine the details, those from the low-income nations are mainly from the majority world, the Global South, while those from the high income nations are from the Global North.⁶¹ One main exception is China. As a share of world GDP, America and China (including Hong Kong) are at 16% and 17% respectively, measured at purchasing-power parity.⁶²

With this understanding, what are some of the possible partnership models in the context of the polycentric world?

4. Global Partnership: rethink tentmaking ministry

It is interesting to note that there is no preserved biblical record of Antioch, as Paul's sending church, sending financial support to Paul and Barnabas and no "thank-you" letter from Paul to the sending church like the letter to the Philippian church. In Philippians 4:5, Paul asserted that "not one church shared with me ... except you." Michael Griffiths made the following comments on the biblical model of self-supporting missionaries:

There is no place for us to act as freelance mavericks and claim, "The Lord has led me..." We need to consult with our sending church leaders, to seek their advice,

⁵⁹ See Eldon Porter's paper for more details

⁶⁰ Eddie Arthur and Eldon Porter are making the point that tweaking and reforming is inadequate and that something more substantial and radical will need to happen.

⁶¹ Country Income Groups (World Bank Classification), Country and Lending Groups, 2011, The World Bank Group, viewed 30th August, 2011

⁶² *The Economist* (Oct 3rd-9th, 2015)

guidance, and support. We are not to act as though we are not members of the local [sending] church. However, it is evident in 1 Corinthians 9 that from the earliest days some missionaries were church supported and yet others, notably Paul and Barnabas and probably Dr Luke, were self-supporting. There were sound practical reasons for this: some had portable trades, and some didn't.⁶³

As an increasing number of missionary workers from the majority world are called into global mission, we may reconsider the model of the earliest Protestant missionaries – the Moravians. They were inevitably all self-supporting.⁶⁴

In Acts 20:34 Paul states, “These hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the *needs of my companions*.” Here is a practical partnership between Paul and his colleagues: some earned money and supported others who did not or possibly could not. In what way can this principle be applied to our context today particularly for those from the majority world?

With the greater proportion of the world becoming creative access regions,⁶⁵ tentmaking is not only a mission strategy based on financial needs but a response to the current political climate. Some may argue that the future of mission is very much a tent-making future even in open access places. Tentmaking not only provides a potential stream of income and a clear identity in the community but also demonstrates whole-life discipleship.

The structures of traditional mission agencies need to change in order to fully facilitate this way of mission and allow for the inevitable partnerships that come from tentmaking. Today's workers face many challenges. When they come into a community with no visible means of support, even if they do not call themselves missionaries, they can be the target of suspicion. Thus would it be possible that the workers are not only self-supporting but also mutually supporting in joint business ventures? Those from the North and the South and beyond can join hands together for Kingdom venture through business means. Some may be able to bring financial resources, some technical skills,

⁶³ An interview with Michael Griffiths, *Mission Round Table*, Vol 10, No.1 January, OMF International.

⁶⁴ On Christmas Eve 1792, a Dutch tailor, a German cobbler, and a German cutler arrived at Bavienskloof to begin a mission to the southern part of Africa. The mission station they started was a self-supporting farming community, working to support each other. Another record of self-supporting missionaries. On 30 March 1756, Solomon Schumann wrote from Surinam in South America: Brother Kamm is picking coffee; Brother Wenzel is mending shoes; Brother Schmidt is making a dress for a customer; Brother Doerfer is digging the garden; Brther Brambly is working on the canal.” They were mutually self-supporting team. For details, see *Mission Round Table*, Vol 10, No. 1 January 2015, OMF International.

⁶⁵ PEW Research Center 2013 indicated that 96% of the world population lives in Creative Access or Semi-Restricted Areas. Some other research shows a lower figure but a consistent increasing trend.

and yet others the strength of networking. There is much we can learn from the corporate world.

5. Global Partnership: Developing Christ-like leaders

Power and control remain some of the key barriers in developing meaningful partnership for global mission. Effective and God-honouring partnership requires godly Christ-like leaders who can model the way. The Lausanne III Congress held in Cape Town, 2010, addressed the need for Christ-like leaders:

The rapid growth of the Church in so many places remains shallow and vulnerable, partly because of the lack of disciplined leaders, and partly because so many use their positions for worldly power, arrogant status or personal enrichment. As a result, God's people suffer, Christ is dishonored, and gospel mission is undermined. 'Leadership training' is the commonly-proposed priority solution. Indeed, leadership training programs of all kinds have multiplied, but the problem remains, some leadership training programs focus on packaged knowledge, techniques and skills to the neglect of godly character. By contrast, authentic Christian leaders must be like Christ in having a servant heart, humility, integrity, purity, lack of greed, prayerfulness, dependence on God's Spirit, and a deep love for people.

In developing Christ-like leaders, it would be important to explore some deeper issues that may impede effective partnership. Some of the questions may include:

Will western agencies and missionaries recognize emerging leaders from the majority world as equal partners and allow them to take on leadership responsibilities?

Will western agencies be willing to adjust and reorganize their basic structures to be relevant to contemporary majority world context and to facilitate the changing roles?

Can Christian leaders from the majority world overcome their inferiority complex and avoid a reactionary attitude and pride?

Will those leaders and missionaries from the majority world be willing to humbly acknowledge with gratitude the contribution from Western missionaries?

Can leaders from the majority world prove themselves to be accountable if funds and resources are entrusted to them?

Is there a trend moving towards inter-dependence rather than independence or dependence?

What are some of the models of Christ-like leaders in the Global North and Global South Context? How is that expressed differently?

What has hurt us deeply from leaders of another cultural context? What might be some of cultural misunderstandings? Have we been able to talk openly about those issues?

Are we able not only to “eat at the same table” but allow others to decide the “menu” beyond our comfort zone?

We are on a pilgrimage together as we help one another, whether from the North, South, East or West, to be and to nurture Christ-like leaders.

6. Global Partnership: A new World Order and Opportunity

Patrick Johnstone in his book, *The Future of the Global Church*, highlighted the significant decrease in the Christian population in Europe in the past century between 1900 and 2010 with currently more than 25% labeled as “evangelised non-Christians”.⁶⁶ On the other hand, the total unevangelised population in Africa and Asia fell dramatically over the course of the century – and that the resulting growth of the Church in Africa, Latin America and Asia has been a largely evangelical phenomenon. The concept of “Evangelisation or Re-evangelisation of Europe” is increasingly becoming a popular notion. If we truly believe that the West needs “re-evangelising,” the key question would be who will be taking up this baton in this “new” evangelisation opportunity? When we think of evangelisation, often we begin with strategies. However, it would be good to recall the wise words of Michael Green as he described the early church movements, “Growth of the early church movement was not initiated by master plans, not charismatic leaders, not fantastic strategies, but by nameless, committed, fearless disciples.”⁶⁷ God is on the move. With the ongoing refugee situation in Europe as well as the significant diaspora community of scholars and students from different parts of the world converging in Europe, Europe potentially becomes a significant place where people will hear the gospel for the first time. What an excellent opportunity for the Church in Europe to reach out to these people through both the proclamation and the demonstration of the gospel, in words and deeds. The impact and transformation which we expect to see will not cease in Europe. As we disciple these new believers, many may return to where they come from and the spiritual impact will multiply.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the Church of the West to world evangelisation today would be discipling followers of Christ, wherever they come from and will be returning to. Churches from Asia, Africa, and Latin America can strengthen the hands of brothers and sisters in Europe by sending workers in step with the Spirit’s leading. Using Michael Griffith’s words, “what an esteemed privilege to be junior partners with the Holy Spirit” as God unfolds His plan of salvation, far beyond our plans and strategies. Indeed, this mission movement phenomena will not only be from the West to the Rest in the

⁶⁶ See Patrick Johnstone, *The Future of the Global Church*.

⁶⁷ Michal Green, *30 Years that changed the World*, (Leicester: IVP, 2002) 142.

past, from the Rest to the West today but more importantly from “everywhere to everywhere” with the gospel of Jesus Christ”.⁶⁸ Discipling others to be faithful followers of Christ, the church of the West will be a blessing to the global church of Jesus Christ. The world will not be the same.

7. Rediscovering the supernatural dimension

Many from the majority world are coming to Christ because of the experience of divine healing and power encounters with demonic forces. However, basically those from the West have by and large ignored the spirit world. This has affected the way we carry out our ministries. Robert Solomon from Singapore made the following comments,

This has implications for the way we do pastoral care and counselling. For some decades now, professional counsellors and care givers have been trained in the theories and practices of counselling and psychology, many of which ignore the spirit world in their understanding of human problems and in finding therapeutic strategies. There is a need for a change in this.

Philosophical rationalism has been sitting on the throne ruling over ideologies and hermeneutics. In this process, the spirit world as understood by traditional societies and non-western communities has been dismissed. Human problems have been understood in terms of modern science. Even theology has bowed down to modern science and had discarded and thrown away some old hermeneutic tools in understanding the world we live in and our human experiences in it.⁶⁹

This is just one aspect of theological reflections that Christian scholars from both the West and the majority world can learn from and enrich one another as “iron sharpens iron”. We are beginning to see this trend happening with intentionality. One fine example is the Langham Foundation, though based in the West, commits to serving the Global Church. Not only does it help to nurture and develop theologians and scholars from the majority world, it has also published theological compendiums written by

⁶⁸ One personal testimony I would like to give was when I was preaching in Marburg, Germany in 2015. I was preaching in one of the oldest churches in town. I was told that Martin Luther preached in that church before! What excited me was not Martin Luther but rather what happened after the church service. Nine university graduates came up to shake my hand. They were all from China and came to study about four years ago. All of them became Christians within those four years as they received the gospel through the ministries of German brothers and sisters. One graduate who came from Shanghai shared with me, “Four years ago, brothers and sisters here in Germany shared with me the gospel. I was saved. Today God has challenged me to share the gospel with the refugees here in Germany!” Mission today indeed is from everywhere to everywhere.

⁶⁹ Annual Lecture, “Aspects of Trinitarian Mission – The Holy Spirit and Spirit World of Asia – Travelling the Supernatural Highways in Asia: The Spirit World in Pastoral Care” delivered by Dr Robert Solomon at Trinity Theological Seminary, Singapore 2010.

scholars from the majority world. One such publication is the *African Bible Commentary* written solely by African scholars. It interprets and applies the Bible in the light of African culture and realities but also brings relevant insights into the biblical text which transcends the African context which is relevant for readers worldwide. Paul Hiebert challenged us with these words,

Missionaries and transnational church leaders from around the world are called on to be mediators in doing global theologizing. They must help theologians from different cultures understand one another deeply and become more self-aware of their own cultural perspectives. They are also called to mediate between formal theologies and the lives of ordinary Christians in the churches.⁷⁰

What we want to see is not non-Western but *more-than-Western* theology. In this way, the global body of Christ learns from all its parts and strengthens its witness to the gospel.

CONCLUSION

In 1992, Bosch delivered a lecture in Paris, in which he dealt specifically with the challenge which modern, Western culture posed to the gospel. He began with this statement:

We have truly entered into an epoch fundamentally at variance with anything we have experienced to date ... The dominant characteristics of the contemporary world are its thoroughgoing secular nature and its radical anthropocentricity.⁷¹

However, the challenge we face is not only a challenge of the western world but rather the Global World. The Global Church needs to be united in proclaiming the gospel faithfully and relevantly. It demands not only our confidence in the Bible but also our reading of the Bible *together*. When this happens,

previously marginal voices are heard, bringing fresh light on the transformative nature of the biblical texts, the whole church may discover a new language with which to articulate the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ ... with “deep listening” to the Bible, taking its original contexts seriously, and undertaking the demanding task of building hermeneutical bridges between then and now, a theology and practice of mission based, not on selective use of favoured texts, but upon the entire scriptural revelation, can provide our testimony to a suffering and

⁷⁰ Craig Ott & Harold Netland Ed, “The Missionary as Mediator of Global Theologising” in *Globalising Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 307.

⁷¹ David J. Bosch, *Believing in the Future: Toward a Missiology of Western Culture*, (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995), 1-2. Italics added by David Smith.

tear-stained world with the authenticity, sympathy and winsomeness it often lacked in the imperial mode.⁷²

We must become an international hermeneutical community,⁷³ partnering together in which leaders from different parts of the global church help one another to understand the Bible from various cultural contexts and check one another's cultural biases. We are committed to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in all its fullness with the world. For God's intent is that, through his Church, the global community of God's people, in unity and diversity, the manifold (colourful) wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 3:10). For biblical partnership not only brings an earthly impact but a cosmic one. To this we have been called.

⁷² David Smith, *Liberating The Gospel: Translating The Message of Jesus in a Globalised World*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2016.

⁷³ A term used by Paul Hiebert in *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts: Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World*, Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999, 113.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS TO ISLAM: A MENA PERSPECTIVE

MLH & GF

INTRODUCTION

Islam is more than just another religion next to Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism or Judaism. Islam claims to be a way of life. Islam is a system. It is a socio-political, socio-religious, socio-economical, educational, legislative, judicial, and militaristic system garbed in religious terminology.

The Qur'an teaches that Muhammad was sent not only to all mankind but to the demonic world too, many of whom have submitted and become Muslims.

Islam has nine rooms (areas):⁷⁴

(1) West Africa, (2) North Africa, (3) Indo-Malaysia, (4) West South Asia, (5) Persian World, (6) Arab World, (7) East Africa, (8) Turkestan, (9) Eastern South Asia. Some statisticians estimates that the number of Muslims are as high as 1.4 billion in the world, which equates to nearly one out of every four people, while a more conservative estimate places it at one out of every five persons, with a total of 1.2 billion. The demographics for other countries are as follows:

7 million Muslims in the United States;
307 million Muslims in Africa;
778 million Muslims in Asia;
32 million Muslims in Europe;
1.4 million Muslims in Latin America.

North Africa is home to four of the largest Muslim populations in the Middle East-North Africa region: Egypt (79 million), Algeria (34 million) and Morocco (32 million) Tunisia (10 million). The Middle East region with the largest Muslim populations include: Iraq (30 million), Sudan (30 million), Saudi Arabia (25 million), Yemen (23 million), and Syria (20 million). The population of the remaining eleven countries and territories in the region

⁷⁴ (Ref: David Garrison: A Wind in the House Islam (The House of Arab World – part 2).

are Libya, Jordan, Palestinian territories, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Israel, Qatar, Bahrain and Western Sahara totals about 31 million. Although India is predominantly Hindu, there are 100 million Muslims in that country as well. There are as many Muslims in Indonesia (nearly 150 million) as there are Arab Muslims in the central Middle East. Islam is the second largest religious group in the United States, behind Christianity and likely ahead of Judaism. Islam is the second largest religion in Europe behind Christianity. Muslims are in the majority in forty-five African and Asian countries.⁷⁵ The global birth rate after the year 2055 will be at least 50 percent Muslim, according to the United Nations.

In terms of impacting the world, Harvard professor Samuel Huntington has compared the Islamic resurgence in the late twentieth century to that of the Protestant Reformation in the late sixteenth century. Social revolution occurs through youth, and in Muslim countries, the number of youth between 15 and 24 years of age has exceeded 20 percent of the population. Almost half of the 300 million Arabs are under the age of 15. Islamic publications describe it in these terms:

Islam in its clear and direct way of expressing truth has a tremendous amount of appeal for any seeker of knowledge. It is the solution for all the problems of life. It is a guide toward a better and complete life glorifying in all its phases God, the Almighty Creator and the Merciful Nourisher.⁷⁶ Islam is the first and the final religion of mankind. Islam is the most rational religion. It gives a clear code of life.

Taking the above into account, The Christian witness needs to have a meaningful response to these claims, not only by way of clear arguments but also through a convincing life testimony.

1. The challenge of Islam

One of the well-known Islamic slogans is: “Africa is to be the first Islamic continent”. In this regard one could ask: Is this mere propaganda or do Muslims pursue this goal earnestly?

Since its birth in the seventeenth century A.D., Islam had the overt ambition to conquer the entire world. Fourteen centuries later, this ambition has never been abandoned, but has been slowed down by invisible hands. Africa was the first continent into which Islam spread from Asia in the early seventh century. Almost one-third of the world’s Muslim

⁷⁵ (For more detailed stats please see attachment – PEW Research Muslims Population, Oct 2009).

⁷⁶ (Ref: Islam at a Glance, Durban, RSA)

population resides in the continent. Muslims crossed current Djibouti, Somalia and Eritrea to seek refuge in present-day Ethiopia during the Hijarat هجرات (immigrations). Most Muslims in Africa are Sunni. The complexity of Islam in Africa is revealed in the various schools of thought, traditions, and voices in many African countries. African Islam is not static and is constantly being reshaped by prevalent social, economic, and political conditions. Generally Islam in Africa often adapted to African cultural contexts and belief systems forming Africa's own orthodoxies. It was estimated in 2002 that Muslims constituted 48% of the population of Africa.

Islam has a large presence in North Africa, in the Horn of Africa, on the Swahili Coast, and much of West Africa, with minority immigrant populations in South Africa. However Islam has encountered criticism and resistance in several nations of Sub-Saharan Africa. Since the end of the last World War there has been a total upheaval and dramatic change in the world order. The collapse of the colonial systems, the victory of liberal humanistic thinking over former perceptions of justice and ecology, the victimization of people and systems which resisted changes in their value system, the new interpretation of socialism, democracy and freedom, as well as the shift from the East-West conflict to an impending North-South one, and the migration of many millions of people in search for a better future, has produced a new society in many places on our globe. The population explosion, the AIDS threat, massive unemployment and the soaring of criminal activities have led to an unprecedented pessimism and hopelessness in many areas of the world.

Consequently Muslims claim that Islam can provide a better conservative way of life unlike the Christian loose way of life. At the same time the industrial revolution with its ever-increasing appetite for energy – which is largely found in the oil fields of the formerly poor and unimportant Islamic countries of the Middle East – has created right there an unprecedented wealth. And – as we all know – wealth represents power. It is therefore not surprising to observe in these countries, the strife for military superiority, is perfected by offensive nuclear weaponry. The human potential of Islam increased vastly when the former Soviet Union broke up and a number of the Republics in the South began to view themselves as Islamic states.

The title “Ayatollah” means “sign of Allah”, which is not a very modest assessment. The word “Islam” means “submission”. While one would not expect a country to revert to the proverbial “Middle Ages”, we have to realise that what happened in Iran demonstrates the truest form of Islam. Many Westerners perceive the Iranian revolution as an excess. But it is not that. It reflects fundamental, original, Islam. It is certainly not

our intention to defend the present Western value system, but it still allows freedom of expression and freedom of religion and worship which largely ceases when the Sharia, the Islamic law, is introduced to a country. The ultimate goal of Islam is to bring all people into submission to Islam. Nevertheless, to understand the underlying system, we ought to consider some theological aspects. A look at the Qur'an will be helpful here:

سورة الأنفال – Al-Anfal: Verse 39

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

“And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression. And there prevail justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere: But if they cease, verily Allah doth see all that they do”. The actual rendering should read “until all of religion comes to Allah”.

سورة الصف – As-Saff (61) : Verse 9

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ

“It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, that he may proclaim it over all religions, even though the pagans may detest (it).” This is backed up by a Hadith:

The Messenger of Allah says: I have been commanded to fight against people till they testify the fact that there is no god but Allah, and believe in me (that) I am the messenger (from the God) and in all that I have brought. Sahih Muslim I, p. 17.

However, the church cannot legitimately try to force its influence on the state, or rule the state as this would go against the spirit of the Gospel. Attempts along this line have been made, wars have been fought, but none of these could be based on or could claim to have been supported by Scriptures. Islam works differently. Only when the Sharia is the established law in a country, it constitutes an Islamic state. To affect this, the government must be in the hands of Muslim leaders. Islam does not differentiate between the secular and the spiritual. It follows an integrated system. Hygiene and politics, family life and prayer, hunting and business practices are all regulated by the Islamic law.

While Christians and Jews may be tolerated, they are certainly strongly disadvantaged and not permitted to propagate their faith in an Islamic country. We can observe how in recent times much of the economy of Africa, but also of Europe, America, Australia and Asia is going into Muslim hands. Whoever controls the economy has also a strong influence on government, the media and education. Muslims, like all other people, are a creation of God! “They have a zeal for God – but it is unenlightened” (Rom. 10:2).

Our Lord Jesus died for every Muslim as well! God loves the Muslims too!

We have to differentiate between the religion of Islam and its system, which does not offer salvation or assurance of forgiveness, and those people who grew or grow up under its teaching. They have little chance to believe, because they have not sufficiently, effectively and convincingly heard and understood the Gospel. That is certainly not their fault. To some degree it is ours – if our evangelistic effort excludes the Muslim people in our environment – or if our effort does not take into consideration the altogether different mindset and understanding of a Muslim.

Islam subdivided the world into two houses, namely the House of war (Daru El Harb or Dar El Harb) or The House of Islam (Darul-Islam or Dar al Islam). The house of war is this part of the world belonging to infidels which has not been subdued to Islam. The house of Islam is the part of the world under Muslim rule, the part of the world in which the edicts of Islam are fully promulgated. The burning desire of Muslims has been and still is to convert the world into a single house, the house of Islam, and that by all means necessary. In Islam, the end justifies the means.

Today, Islam pursues the goal of creating a big African-Islamic continent. Christians must be killed or expelled. Some of the main Muslim strategies for winning the world in general and Africa in particular are: Dawah, the Jihad, and commercial relationships.⁷⁷

2. Strategies of Islam in Africa

Islamic movements are using various strategies in accomplishing the goal of Islamizing the world in general and Africa in particular. Islam learned from its past errors but also from the best practices of Christianity. Its strategies involve: national and international collaboration, education, health services, emergency aids, proselytism, politics, marriage, humanitarian aids (NGOs), building of Mosques, funding of income generating activities, polygamy and media.

2.1 National and International Collaboration

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)⁷⁸ is the second largest inter-governmental organisation after the United Nations which has a membership of fifty seven countries spread over four continents but predominantly in the Middle East and North Africa. These countries include the world's Muslim majority nations, as well as some few countries with Muslim minorities like Gabon. The Organization was established in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco (Africa) on 25 September 1969 as a result of criminal arson of Al-

⁷⁷ The Challenge of Islam – Gerhard Nehls, www.answering-islam.org

⁷⁸ This was formerly known as the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem on August 21, 1969. The conference chose Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, as the Headquarters of the Organization, pending the liberation of Jerusalem, which would be the permanent headquarters. The impetus was in large part the 1967 defeat of Arab armies by Israel. The OIC's main goal is to galvanize the Ummah [the global community of Muslims] into a unified body.⁷⁹ It aims at promoting Islamic solidarity in economic, social, cultural, and political affairs. The OIC is the collective voice of the Muslim world. It ensures to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world. Among the objectives of the OIC are:

To enhance and consolidate the bonds of fraternity and solidarity among the Member States;

To safeguard and protect the common interests and support the legitimate causes of the Member States and coordinate and unify the efforts of the Member States in view of the challenges faced by the Islamic world in particular and the international community in general;

To support and empower the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and establish their sovereign State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, while safeguarding its historic and Islamic character as well as the Holy places therein;

To strengthen intra-Islamic economic and trade cooperation; in order to achieve economic integration leading to the establishment of an Islamic Common Market;

To disseminate, promote and preserve the Islamic teachings and values based on moderation and tolerance, promote Islamic culture and safeguard Islamic heritage;

To protect and defend the true image of Islam, to combat defamation of Islam and encourage dialogue among civilizations and religions;

To safeguard the rights, dignity and religious and cultural identity of Muslim communities and minorities in non-Member States. The Member States undertake that in order to realize these objectives, they shall be guided and inspired by the noble Islamic teachings and values.

2.2 Development projects and Humanitarian aids

For some years now, we have seen the birth of several Muslim Non-Governmental Organizations with the main goal to promote Islam. While Christian NGOs shy away from evangelism, Muslim NGOs unabashedly promote Islam. In Mali, while World Vision tends to conceal all Christian signs and reference during their service to Muslims, a Muslim NGO called Al Faruk (Distinguisher between truth and false) does not miss a single opportunity to assert its Muslim nature and its purpose to help Muslims. With the goal of winning the house of war, several programs are designed, such as education, health services, building mosques, and emergency aid.

⁷⁹ Katherine Marshall, *Global Institutions of Religion: Ancient Movers, Modern Shakers*, p. 79

In the area of education, Muslim groups manage good quality schools in several African countries. The teaching of Islam is part of the school program. The Hizmet (service in Turkish) School Network is a good example. The founder of Hizmet is Muhammed Fethullah Gülen (born 27 April 1941), a Turkish preacher, a former imam, and a writer. He is described in the English-language media as an imam “who promotes a tolerant Islam, which emphasizes altruism, hard work and education”.

Gülen’s followers have built three hundred schools in Turkey and over one thousand schools in one-hundred and sixty countries around the world. There are approximately one hundred Gülen Movement-affiliated schools operating in Africa.

In addition to providing educational activities, the movement has also been active in providing humanitarian aid, health services, aid following natural disasters, poverty eradication programs, scholarships to needy students and other philanthropic schemes.

2.3. The different kinds of threats

The Islamic conquest of Africa began in the seventh century, when the Umayyads spread the faith in the Mediterranean lands which had long been Byzantine. However, the penetration was difficult in deeper Africa. Gambia, Senegal and Mauritania are already ninety percent Islamised. Now, with modern methods of warfare, we are witnessing a wave of Islamization with unforeseeable, tragic consequences.

The “Islamic project” is trying to build a unique athan (Islamic call to prayer) from the Libyan minarets to the Juma Mosque in Durban, South Africa. Several Islamist militant groups are active across the continent to achieve this goal.

a) al-Shabab

The Somali jihadist group al-Shabab emerged from the ashes of another Islamist grouping, the Union of Islamic Courts, in 2006. Its leader, Ahmad Abdi Godane, has formalized its alliance with al-Qaeda. It used harsh punishments based on Islamic law, such as stoning for adulterers and amputating the hands of thieves. It also banned radio stations from playing music and stopped local video halls from showing foreign football matches. However, it used to use radio and Television networks to present its propaganda in the form of domestic news reports, but its broadcast footprint waned in the wake of territorial losses. As a result, al-Shabab has increasingly been using the internet to convey its message. Its English-language output, particularly its use of Twitter, has demonstrated a level of sophistication unmatched by similar militant outfits, and reports suggest that it has proved an effective tool for recruiting Muslims overseas.

b) Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

Al-Qaeda is the oldest of the Islamist militant groups operating in North Africa. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) came into being in 2005 when it changed its name from the Algerian Salafi Group for Call and Combat (GSPC) and announced its allegiance to Osama Bin Laden. The GSPC was founded in 1998 following the dismantling of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) – the militant group that fought the Algerian government during the 1990s. The group operates in Algeria and in Mali.

c) Ansar Al Dine

Ansar Dine is a militant Islamist group led by Iyad Ag Ghaly, one of the most prominent leaders of the Tuareg rebellion in the 1990s. He is suspected of having ties with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, which is led by his cousin Hamada Ag Hama, as well as other splinter Islamist groups. Ansar Dine wants the imposition of strict Sharia law across Mali. The group's first action was in March 2012. In June of 2012, the Ansar Dine group, which controlled much of northern Mali, attacked the mausoleum of Sidi Mahmoud, one of 16 shrines in the city. Ansar Dine's spokesman Sanda Ould Boumama told the AFP news agency that the shrines would be destroyed; all of them, without exception. In addition to the shrines, Timbuktu is home to some 700,000 ancient manuscripts held in about 60 private libraries.

d) Mouvement pour l'unité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO)

The Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) was formed in late 2011 and came to prominence in April 2012, when it joined two Tuareg groups, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and Ansar al-Din, in seizing control of northern Mali. MUJAO controlled the town of Gao between April 2012 and January 2013. Its members seek to promote jihad and establish the rule of Sharia (Islamic law) in West Africa.

e) The son of the Islamic Sahara Movement for Justice

This group split from MUJAO in May 2013 and reportedly works in northern Niger, western Libya and south-eastern Algeria. The group seems to be made up of Libyans, Algerians and Malians.

f) Boko Haram

Boko Haram was founded in 2002 by Muhammad Yusef. The name Boko Haram is actually a byname of the group given to it by its neighbours.

The name Boko Haram is popularly translated as "Westernization is sacrilege" or "Western education is a Sin". The group identifies itself as People Committed to the

Propagation of the Prophets' Teachings and Jihad or Association Committed to the Spread of Islam through Jihad. The group opposes the influence of Western civilisation and wishes to impose a strict version of Shari'ah law in Nigeria. Boko Haram is now led by Abubakar Shekau. Most of the attacks of the group have targeted police stations, churches, schools and other educational institutions.

g) Ansar La Muslimin in the lands of the blacks (JAMBS)

The Nigerian jihadist group, Ansar al-Muslimin in the Lands of the Blacks (JAMBS), is thought to have been founded following a split from Boko Haram. Also referred to as Vanguard for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa, or simply Ansaru.

h) Ansar la-Sharia

Several groups using the title Ansar al-Sharia have emerged across the Arab world since 2011. Two prominent examples appeared in Libya and Tunisia, exploiting the disappearance of restrictions which were imposed on Islamist groups by the ousted governments of Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia and Muammar Gaddafi in Libya.

Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia has established a vibrant internet and social media presence with websites, and Facebook and YouTube accounts. At the local level, persecution and different kinds of threats are used to maintain people in Islam though they no longer believe Islamic teachings.

Physical abuse, excommunication from the family and the group, threat to abandon the body without proper burial if you die out of Islam. Terror attacks are more and more common not only against the house of war but also against the house of Islam. The house of Islam has become a divided house, a house at war against itself.

2.4 Marriage

One of the main factors of Islam growth is by birth. Marriage fulfills a religious purpose. Marry many wives and get many children for Islam. Polygamy is therefore a good way to increase the population of Muslims. The fourth and fifth verses of the fifth chapter of the Quran declare that marriage with the women of the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) is permitted. Part of the Muslim strategy is to marry Christian girls and convert them to Islam. Some Muslim men make a fake conversion to Christianity if that is a prerequisite and a condition that the parents of the girl lay before them. After the wedding and after the woman has given birth to one or two children, the husband reveal his real nature and threat the woman to convert to Islam or be divorced. The girls or well-known Christians are particularly targeted. For example, 7000 Muslim Syrian men are being sent to Madagascar as workers each month for that purpose. In August 2017 the President of Tunis, agreed to pass a new law which approves: Equality between male

and female in regards of inheritance. Muslim women can marry non-Muslim men. Al Azhar of course rushed to announce that the president of Tunisia is not allowed to go beyond Islamic law, he was thus considered an infidel.

2.5 Media

Islam makes use of the new media technology to spread their message around the world and in Africa. Muslim radio and television stations broadcast everywhere in Africa. Tones of Muslim materials and resources are available on internet.

2.6 Politics

Archbishop Giuseppe Bernardini reported that during a synod that the Vatican held on October 1999 to discuss the rapport between Christians and Muslims, an eminent Islam scholar addressed the stunned audience declaring with placid effrontery: "By means of your democracy we shall invade you, by means of our religion we shall dominate you."

Islam does not separate religion and politics. It is expected that Muslim politicians take advantage of their political position to promote Islam by any means necessary.

3. Social prestige and social and financial constraint

In becoming a Muslim the converts renounce their African names and take an Arabic name, which they consider to be a Muslim name. They feel offended when you call them by their African name. The convert regard themselves as a higher class in the society.

Proselytism through the offer of material goods and financial resources has played a major role in the spread of Islam in Africa. Very often, when the family member who controls the resources becomes Muslim, he constrains the family to embrace Islam. It is fair to say that African Islam is an Islam of the belly. Christians converted to Islam receives often substantial financial support.

A young Muslim was caught in Mali while he was touring the mosques declaring that he used to be a Christian but had become Muslim. Unfortunately for him, he went in one of the mosques where he met somebody who knew him and he was caught.

3.1 Trade and Business: Islamic Banks

Trade and businesses have been part and parcel of Muslim strategies for spreading Islam. Islam has developed its own theology of prosperity where prosperity is seen as a sign of God's approval and blessing.

Muslims control the economy of many African countries even countries where they are a minority. The success of Muslim traders has attracted many non-Muslims to embrace

Islam. Muslims disguise their real intentions of Islamization of Africa under the cover of Islamic banking and of avenues to eradicate poverty in Africa. Some tribes are convinced that Islam is their religion and for them to leave Islam is similar to leaving the tribe.

3.2 Immigration as a means of propagating Islam⁸⁰

Muslims have resorted to immigration as another strategy for spreading Islam. This is demonstrated by the immigration of Muslims to Europe and North America, and to African countries where Muslims are a minority. The goal is to increase the Muslim population and therefore take control of the Dar al Harb. In the host country Muslims arrogantly exhibit the external signs of their religion.

The historic Muslim universities in Cairo, Fez, Marrakesh and Kairowan are being used as training grounds to inculcate a spirit of nationalism in African students, whose numbers have grown remarkably in the last five years. This has led to the curious phenomenon of Negro Muslim religious leaders vigorously preaching “Arab” nationalism to their fellows in some parts of French West Africa.

4. The many faces of Islam hidden and manifested

After the terrorist attack on America’s World Trade Center and Pentagon, there has been a clear debate in the international media regarding the nature of Islam. We have seen the media change from the one extreme of being explicitly anti-Islamic, to the other, for the sake of presenting a political and human balance, of being pro-Muslim.

After the recent Arab Spring, a big earthquake happened and is still happening affecting the foundation and ideology and beliefs of the Muslim people and the Muslim scholars and teachers. The secular media and Muslim religious leaders are in trouble. ISIS has helped to unveil hidden faces of Islam.

4.1 The face of Islam: The Mecca Verses

In Mecca, where Mohammed started his new religion in the year 610 A.D., he was not yet strong. To be accepted by all people, he presented a peaceful and loving picture of Islam, avoiding any mention of violence. Here are some quotations from the Quran about that first stage:

سورة البقرة (2: 256) "لا إكراه في الدين"

Mohammed was told not to impose Islam by force in: Surah Al baqarah (2:256) Let there be no compulsion in religion.

⁸⁰ Islam and the Modern Middle East 1959 – John S. Badeau.

سورة العنكبوت

"ولا تجادلوا أهل الكتاب إلا بالتي هي أحسن ... وقولوا آمنا بالذي أنزل إلينا وأنزل إليكم وإلهنا وإلهكم واحد ونحن له مسلمون"

Mohammed was told to speak pleasantly to "people of the Book" (Christians and Jews) in: Surah Al Ankabut (29:45) "And dispute ye not with the people of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation), but say: we believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and that which came down to you; Our God and your God is One; and it is to Him we bow (in Islam)."

4.2 The face of Islam: Medina Verses

After Mohammed moved to Medina in the year 622 AD and his followers grew in strength and number, he became a relentless warrior, intent on spreading his religion by the sword, and this is the message that now lives on. Here is some evidence from Qur'an of this stage:

"(سورة الأنفال 8:60) "وأعدوا لهم ما استطعتم من قوة ومن رباط الخيل ترهبون به عدو الله وعدوكم ..."
(Surah Al Anfal 8:60) "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts) of the enemies of Allah and your enemies ..."

Testimonies of eminent Muslims include that of *Mohammed Hassanein Heikal*, a well-known Egyptian Muslim author, who refers to this fact in his famous book, *Autumn Furor*. He said, "The element of Jihad (Holy War) emerged in the ideology of Abul Alaa AlMaudoody, who is a fanatical Muslim in Egypt." He went on to differentiate between two separate stages a Muslim community goes through:

- The stage of weakness – In it a Muslim community is unable to take charge of its own destiny. In this case – according to his thinking – they must withdraw for the purpose of preparing themselves to be capable of executing the second stage.
- The second stage is the Jihad (Holy War) stage, and it will come when the Islamic community has completed its preparation and is ready to come out of its isolation to take charge, through Jihad.

In this, Abul Alaa AlMaudoody was making a comparison between the two stages of weakness and Jihad on the one hand, and on the other hand, Mohammad's struggle in Mecca, then in Medina." [Following the same strategy of Mohammed]. Nonetheless, Hassan Abdulla Al Torabi,⁸¹ the most fanatic Sudanese Muslim leader, was accustomed to say openly, "We pretend to be weak, till we become strong."

⁸¹ The grandson of Hassan Al Torabi is a strong believer and follower of Jesus Christ .

4.3 The face of Islam: Taqiya

It is to show contrary to what you intend or have in your ear, suppose for the good cause of Islam and Muslims. (التقية)

4.4 The face of Islam: Moderateness and modernism

- Moderate Islam: the picture which some of the Muslims try to draw for Islam.
- Modern Islam: this is what we see nowadays in Saudi Arabia: is going more open for example towards Women: allowing women to drive though it is not total freedom to do so, allow women to travel without being accompanied by a male from the family even if he is underage. Different interpretation of the Qur'an: depending on the different groups in Islam.

5. What makes Islam attractive to Africans?

To understand the influence of Islam in Africa, it would be appropriate to discuss the teachings of Islam vis-à-vis those of both the traditional African spirituality and its Christian beliefs. Such a discussion would illuminate the reasons for the rapid expansion of the faith among Africans. Islam has the advantage of being able to adapt fairly easily to the traditional African religions and to give a social prestige to its adherents.⁸² It does not encumber itself with ethics when it comes to recruiting followers: money, strength, deceit, cunning and violence are accepted ways to make disciples. It can count on the petrodollars of the Arab countries to build places of worship and stimulate the adhesion of new members. And even because of the violence of its actions, it enjoys the support of the West. The so-called Arab spring is an Islamic spring: Wherever the popular uprising has dismantled the powers in place, it is Islamist movements that have taken over.

Popular Islam is the form of Islam that prevails in Africa. It is characterized by its flexibility. It reveals a large number of extra-Koranic practices, drawn from the repertory of ancestral traditions and traditional religions. It relies mainly on the hadith and the teachings of the marabouts."⁸³

6. The present context and the pluralism deficit⁸⁴

⁸² (Fuabeh Fonge, 2015).

⁸³ Paper presented at AEA GA June 2015 – Zimbabwe.

⁸⁴ "The Second Arab Awakening and the Battle for Pluralism: by Marwan Muasher (ex. Jordanian Foreign Minister) (Yale Univ. Press; 2014).

Pluralism is the operating system that we need to solve all our problems, and as long as that operating system is not in place, we will not get there. This is an internal battle. Let's stop hoping for delivery from the outside.

The Arab world will go through a period of turmoil in which exclusionist forces will attempt to dominate the landscape with absolute truths and new dictatorships. But these forces will also fade, because, in the end, the exclusionist, authoritarian discourses cannot answer the people's needs for better quality of life.

As history has demonstrated overwhelmingly, where there is respect for diversity, there is prosperity. Contrary to what Arab societies have been taught for decades by their governments to believe ... experience proves that societies cannot keep renewing themselves and thereby thrive except through diversity.

Patronage: an element of the culture.

Resources: limited, few opportunities; so need a champion/provider.

Patron-client: patron provides resources and opportunities; client gives loyalty & seeks to imitate the patron.

Application: individuals (typically father or tribal elder seen as patron), governments, non-state actors

Mission application: Jesus as the ultimate patron: alive, ascended, seated at the right hand of God with access to all resources; imitating Jesus equals discipleship.⁸⁵

7. Islam and a changing context

Arab Spring or Arab Awakening? It affected everywhere in different ways. The Arab Youth Survey 2016 (age 18-35) showed desire for better rights (esp. for women) but prioritise stability over reform.⁸⁶

7.1 Christianity under pressure in MENA regions

The Christians in Turkey and Lebanon have been strongly reduced by external pressure. Christians in Egypt are under constant scrutiny and are dictated upon by the State. Christians and pagans in Southern Sudan are being exterminated. The press speaks of genocide. There is no freedom of religion in any of the North African countries, and in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan or Malaysia. After the establishment of ISIL in Syria and Iraq the Christians were the main target to eradicate their existence in these countries. Two or three years back there was a massive move of Iraqi Christians from Al Mosul city in the north of Iraq.

⁸⁵ Background Paper North Africa Consultation – March 2017.

⁸⁶ Arab Human Development Report 2016.

7.2 Christians in the Middle East

The Churches of the Middle East have always played an important role in society at large. The past decade has been catastrophic for the Arab world's Christian minorities. Despite sizeable Christian populations holding on in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, Arab Christians are leaving almost everywhere, latest as it happens in Iraq. The decreasing Christian presence can be a dangerous step away from the historical inclusive, multicultural and secularist Arab societies in which Christian Arabs and other minorities have played a vital role in defining a secular Arab cultural and political identity. Christians are not persecuted all over MENA, but have a good reputation, and the majority of Arab Muslims would say that Christian presence in MENA is historical and a positive add-on to the temporary MENA region. Christians and Muslims live side by side in many places, but there are countless religious and cultural stereotypes of the other which are not conducive to a coherent and peaceful Middle East. There is a lack of human trust across religious and political divisions, and due to the current volatile situation in the MENA region the need for dialogue across sectarian, political and religious standings is immense. However, the latest extremist developments in Syria and Iraq are further increasing the pressure and threats towards the Christian communities.

The decrease in the demographics of Christians in MENA affects the theological education and its environment. The theological education have to be developed regularly and Christian leaders have to be surrounded by a vivid environment. The churches need strong and credible profiles to be able to manage themselves in the political game. They need good leaders to run the church institutions. The churches and the people associated have to be able to pass along a good education and counseling for their congregations. The churches have to be able to keep its relevance for the people; that inquires theological thinking too; and there is a need to further build on networks between different Christian religious educational institutions.

Furthermore, throughout the last year it has been a problem in the Middle East that the churches are not capable of gathering in an ecumenical cooperation. There are great internal disputes and power struggles hindering a strong common Christian voice to come out against the extremist pressure. The main challenge is seen from one side of the coin; a lack of mutual recognition of the need for cooperation in intra-Christian settings, and seen from the other side, an implicit expectation that Christians across the different traditions have a natural bond that should be stronger than a religious bond to a Muslim neighbour, which is not necessarily the case.

To ensure that the Christians will have a future in MENA, an important step is to ensure the ability of the churches to keep its contextual relevance and not only historical ties

and to be in dialogue and cooperation with their fellow Christians on the one hand and co-citizens, mainly Muslims, on the other hand.

A paradigm shift seems to have been unfolded as young Arabs – the majority of the population – increasingly have taken on an empowered and influential role in all the various aspects of public life, but the chances to realize their individual dreams are limited.

The position of youth is an important issue in the MENA region. Most Arab countries are highly influenced by the large bulk of young people which some analysts over years have described as the youth burden.

In the summer of 2014, we were all exposed to pictures from the regional war zones with children as victims of the wars. Another vulnerable and excluded group in most Middle Eastern societies is the women. In some MENA settings, women are not allowed to participate in activities and do not feel comfortable to bring forward their ideas due to social and cultural norms. To address the issue and change the situation in relation to gender equality, female civil society leaders, journalists, academics and female leaders from churches and mosques have to be addressed.

MENA is a region with strong and very sincere challenges for both Christians and Arabs, for societies and for the structural set up in societies. At the same time it is a region with opportunities and with glimpses of hope.⁸⁷

On the 2nd of September 2017 the Bible Society of Jordan called for the largest Christian gathering in Jordan where representatives of all the Christian denominations were present. It was a great breakthrough. William Muir, one of the great and indeed very fair orientalists (1819-1905), made a statement which almost sounds like a prophetic utterance:

It is my conviction that the sword of Muhammad and the Qur'an are the most fatal enemies of civilization, liberty and truth which the world has yet known.

Quite in line with this is the liberal World Council of Churches (WCC). It seeks dialogue' with other religions in order to learn from each other and to accept one another. In practice this replaces the Christian witness of Jesus Christ, as the only hope for mankind.

⁸⁷ DAN MISSION/MENA Strategy 2015-2017

The plan of God's salvation includes those who acknowledge the Creator, and in the first place among them the Muslims.

This situation is the direct result of ignorance. The Christian Church has fought bitter and bloody wars against Muslims, but made hardly any move to present the Message of Grace to them. It is time for the church to say and declare: Who the Church is and who the Christians are.

Let us look at the following statements:

The Conference notes the yearning of Muslims everywhere on the continent who have been deprived of their rights to be governed by the Sharia and urges them to intensify efforts in the struggle to reinstate the application of the Sharia.

The arising question certainly is how can any country be administered when two sets of laws are applied to different people? The Muslims in Britain are pushing for the same. This can only lead to either confrontation or disintegration.

While we understand and have to accept the effort to establish Islamic Da'wa (mission) centers and to promote Da'wa work all over Africa, we find unacceptable the "establishment and application of the Sharia to all Muslims", if this is done while Muslims are a minority, and if such action leads to Christians being disadvantaged, which will, no doubt, be the case.

The following objectives are also unacceptable:⁸⁸

To ensure the appointment of only Muslims into strategic national and international posts of member nations.

To eradicate in all its forms and ramifications all non-Muslim religions in member nations (such religions shall include Christianity, Ahmadiyya and other tribal modes of worship unacceptable to Muslims).

To ensure that only Muslims are elected (!) to all political posts of member nations.

To ensure the ultimate replacement of all Western forms of legal and judicial systems with the Sharia in all member nations before the next Islam in Africa Conference.

Among the disclosed names of the member nations we find Nigeria and Tanzania which have no Muslim majority. A number of other nations have not been made known. These are likely to have an even lesser Muslim presence. It is indeed noticeable by now that these aims are being implemented and not only in Islamic states, but also in those with Muslim minorities.

⁸⁸ Islam in Africa Organization – Nigeria Nov 1989.

In close agreement with the above we find an article in the Turkish newspaper “Dünya” (1980). It speaks about Islamization and says: The whole territory is to be Islamized before the year 2000 and in the Middle East in such a way that all living (people) who did not turn Muslims, (the Coptic Christians, the Christians in Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syrian (i.e. Syrian-orthodox Christians), Armenians, Nubians and Israelis), must be totally annihilated’.

The North African culture, together with many others worldwide, places greater emphasis on the rights of the group. Of significance here is conversion; when a Muslim turns to Christ it is an individual choice that profoundly affects their family and others that they live, work, study, socialize and worship with and amongst. What persecution do we see across North Africa? What pressures (subtle change of terminology) do we see at present? Primarily, the pressure is from family, extended family and societal attitudes. Common experiences are exclusion from family and disinheritance. For some, this means eviction from home making them dependent on others for accommodation. Some are divorced by their spouses, often at the behest of in-laws. Job discrimination occurs at times. Identifying with Christ is costly.

Another issue concerns that of burial. Most cemeteries are for adherents of a specific religion and the Christian cemeteries are for expatriates only. Denial of proper burial is a widespread concern, especially amongst certain age groups. This has a profound, and perhaps little understood, effect on nationals becoming Christians. This issue is not only in North Africa, but it is in the Gulf area where there is no previous Christian existence or any traditional church. Across North Africa the assumption is that all citizens are Muslims, with exceptions made in Morocco and Tunisia for the small Jewish communities. Consequently, nationals who turn to Christ, are treated as Muslims by society whilst living and worshiping as Christians. In Libya, there is the overt threat of jihadist violence in some parts of the country. The threat of such is present in other countries although there have been no actual incidents in recent years. For the church, the primary pressure is the absence of legal recognition. Algeria is the exception. In the other North African countries, national churches cannot acquire legal status. Expatriate churches have assorted challenges in each country.”⁸⁹

7.3 The role of ethnic identities

Arabs: originate in the Arabian Peninsula; spread into North Africa in the 7th and 8th centuries. **Berbers:** a collective term for the numerous ethnic groups present across

⁸⁹ Background Paper North Africa Consultation, March 2017.

North Africa prior to the arrival of the Arabs. Many Berber peoples retain their indigenous languages and customs; their ethnicity is a key part of their sense of identity. **Africans:** a collective term for the numerous ethnic groups from sub-Saharan Africa some of whom are present in North Africa.

Over the centuries, there have been some inter-marriages leading to hybrid identities. Those of African origin are marginalised in many places. In North Africa in the last 20 years there has been greater official recognition: of Berber languages such as Tamazight in Algeria & Morocco. We are seeing now that the Berbers/Tamazight are rising up, reviving their own language, culture, and heritage, dissociating themselves from Arab\Islam religion, culture, et cetera. As we are preparing this document the Kurds in Northern Iraq are having their first referendum for their independence from Iraq.

The Coptic Church in Egypt has always kept the Coptic language as a main language of the mass. The Coptic Christians are reminding the Muslims in Egypt that they are not Arabs and they were forced to stop using Coptic language and were forced to learn Arabic and accept Islam as their religion. In Tunisia and Morocco: the church is asking for membership with the both AEA and WEA. In Morocco the Christians are sending messages to the government and to the King asking them to recognize the Moroccan Christians. In Algeria the Berber Christians have asked to be recognised as a Christian community in Algeria.

7.4 Historical Context – Imperialism and Colonialism

Let me provide a succinct list of historical eras in the Common (Christian) Era. There was the Roman era that gave rise to the spread of Christianity. Several early church fathers originated from North Africa, e.g. Origen, Tertullian and Augustine. The New Testament canon was ratified at synods/councils that were held in Hippo and Carthage (modern day Tunisia) in 393 CE & 397 CE. Since the seventh century onwards there has been a massive decline of the church. Factors cited by some includes, the lack of scriptures in the local languages, the weakening of the church by internal division, and the church's failure to adequately pass on the faith. Blaming Islam is overly simplistic.

Subsequent empires, culminated with the Ottomans. European colonial period, 19th century onwards: France, Italy and UK as pre-eminent colonizers in North Africa. Today's nation States were created post the Second World War; they are relatively new; most are colonial constructs with limited historical sense of a cohesive, shared, national identity.

8. Islam in the Middle East

Historically we know how Islam spread (invaded) the region. Islam varies widely across the Middle East in practice, legal and theological orientation, attitude towards women, and its role in government and society. The Middle East includes Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine/Israel, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Qatar, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Syria, and Lebanon. Islam has developed in four major periods in the Middle East: foundations (622–750), institutional formation (750–1050), classical period (1050–1800), and modern transformation (1800–present).

In the Christian circle there are new divisions: the Near East (Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Iraq) and the Arabian Peninsula (The Gulf Countries).

8.1 Al -Watan Al-Arabi (The Arab Nation)

There are many ways to classify Arabs in ancient Semitic languages, predating current historical nationalities.

8.2 The word Arab (Hebrew ereb)

The word *Arab* was used to connote the desert and the people who lived there. Arab Christians (Arabic: مسيحيون عرب Masīḥiyyūn Arab) are Arabs of the Christian faith. They are descendants from the ancient Arab Christian clans that did not convert to Islam, such as the Kahlani Qahtani tribes of Yemen (i.e., Ghassanids and Banu Judham) who settled in Transjordan and Syria, as well as Arabized Christians, such as Melkites and Antiochian Greek Christians. Arab Christians, forming Greek Orthodox and Latin Christian communities, are estimated to be 520,000 703,000 in Syria, 221,000 in Jordan, 127,000 in Israel and around 50,000 in Palestine. There is also a sizable Arab Christian Orthodox community in Lebanon and marginal communities in Iraq, Turkey and Egypt. Emigrants from Arab Christian (including Melkite) communities make up a significant proportion of the Middle Eastern diaspora, with sizable population concentrations across the Americas, most notably in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, and the United States. The first Arab tribes to adopt Christianity were likely Nabataeans and Ghassanids. During the fifth and sixth centuries, the Ghassanids, who adopted Monophysitism, formed one of the most powerful confederations allied to Christian Byzantium, being a buffer against the pagan tribes of Arabia. The last king of the Lakhmids, al-Nu'man III ibn al-Mundhir, a client of the Sasanian Empire in the late sixth century, also converted to Christianity (in this case, to the Nestorian sect). Arab Christians played important roles in al-Nahda movement in modern times, and because Arab Christians formed the educated upper class and the bourgeoisie,^[14] they have had a significant impact in politics, business and culture of the Arab world. Today Arab Christians still play important roles in the Arab world, and Christians are relatively

wealthy, well educated, and politically moderate. Arab Christians are not the only Christian group in the Middle East, with significant non-Arab indigenous Christian communities of Chaldeans, Arameans, Armenians and others. Although sometimes classified as “Arab Christians”, the largest Middle Eastern Christian groups of Maronites and Copts often claim non-Arab ethnicity: a significant proportion of Maronites claim descent from the ancient Phoenicians while Copts also eschew an Arab identity, preferring an Ancient Egyptian one.⁹⁰

The Arab Christians have been for a long time accused of being pro-Israel. Muslims don't understand why Christians read the Torah and Zaboor (The first five books and the Psalms). Muslims accuse the Christians that their loyalty is not to their country but to the West because in their perspective Christianity is a western religion. That is why the Arab Christians are considered to be infidels not only because of their faith and belief but also because of their loyalty. In spite of it all, on the other hand the Muslim believe that Arab Christians are trustworthy and peaceful people.

8.3 The word Arab in the broader sense

However, in the broader sense the word “Arab” has come to mean any person or persons who speak a version of the Arabic language. This constituency is now vast. In the century following the death of Muhammad, Arab armies extended an empire greater than Rome at its peak, assimilating into their culture and language more alien peoples than any other culture in history.

8.3 Arabs today

Contemporary Arabs are an amalgamation of races and nationalities that each bear testament to this conquering legacy. For example, coffee-coloured Moors in Mauritania call themselves Arabs and speak a Yemeni dialect brought to them by Bedouin warriors a millennium ago.⁹¹

Aboriginal Berbers in Libya's Jebel Nefus (Mountain of Souls) now claim only Arabic as their native tongue. Pharaonic Egyptians, Nubian Nilotics, Syro-Phoenician Lebanese and Balkans of Mameluke descent have all been assimilated into the orb of the great al-Watan al-Arabi, the Arab Nation. From their roots, Arab people are a Semitic people, *elder brothers to the Jews*, tracing back to a common father, Abraham. Throughout their history they weave in and out of The Arab World biblical record, from the story of

⁹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Christians

⁹¹ Not only in the pre-Islamic era, but also long after that, the term “Arab” meant primarily “Bedouin”.

Abraham's son Ishmael (Genesis 16:11 ff), to the Midianite wife of Moses, Zipporah, daughter of Jethro. The Arab World Today, spanning many nations and ethnic peoples, Arabic speakers comprise the fourth or fifth largest language group in the world.

8.4 A family of languages

In reality, the Arabic language is a family of languages. Though Modern Standard Arabic is the written and official language used throughout the Arab world, its colloquial versions vary widely from Morocco to Iraq, and many Arabic-speaking inhabitants of the Arab world find the 7th-century vocabulary of the Qur'an to be almost unintelligible. Illiteracy remains the bane of the Arabic speaking world. More than half of all Iraqi, Mauritanian and Yemeni citizens are illiterate, with illiteracy among women in those countries as high as 76 percent.

8.5 The Arab League

The Arab League counts 22 member nations stretched over five million square miles with a population of more than 400 million citizens. Some 237 million of these citizens speak a dialect of Arabic as a first language. When adding all those who rely upon Arabic as the untranslatable language of the Qur'an, the number swells to 1.6 billion.

8.6 Arab Christians

Though many Westerners still view Arab as synonymous with Muslim, more than five percent of the population of the Middle East are Christians, and the majority of the Arab population in North and South America are Arab Christians, not Muslims. Much like the English-language pilgrims who arrived before them, these Arab Christians in the Americas came to the new world either fleeing persecution, or seeking greater economic and social freedoms.

8.7 Arab Muslims

Arab Muslims view their history as evidence of God's miraculous hand. A band of semi-nomadic religious warriors emerging from the scorching sands of the Arabian Peninsula to challenge, defeat, and conquer the greatest military powers in history lend weight to such a lofty interpretation. Within two decades of Muhammad's death, Arab cavalry had overwhelmed frontier-hardened Byzantine armies in the ancient cities of Damascus, Jerusalem, and Alexandria. Undaunted by a Persian Empire that had stifled Roman advance for eight hundred years, the vastly inferior Arab militia swept across the Persian Empire with one decisive victory after another. Arabs today are acutely aware of their proud history, which has made their current state of affairs all the more painful to accept. Over the centuries, the great Arab empire has been conquered and subjugated by Persians, Mongols, and Ottoman Turks, but in each case it was the Islamic faith that ended up conquering its conquerors.

8.8 Arab invaders

Likewise, seventh-century Coptic Christians in Egypt, whose patriarch had been imprisoned for opposing the doctrinal authority of the Catholic Church, swung open the gates of Alexandria to Arab invaders under the promise that Muslims would allow them to worship freely.

8.9 Christian slaves converted to Islam

As Muslim armies continued across North Africa, they found thousands of slaves who had been owned for centuries by Christian patricians. Though Muslims did not reject the institution of slavery, and would later become some of the world's last champions of the slave trade, they immediately saw in the unjust conditions an opportunity they could exploit. The Islamic conquerors informed these slaves that no Christian was allowed to own a Muslim slave, prompting thousands of Christian slaves to win their freedom simply by converting to Islam.

8.10 Muslims who found refuge in Christianity

Injustices perpetrated or simply tolerated by Christians persist today, and Muslims are not slow to identify these inroads, while offering Islam as the solution. On the contrary, when Christians are proactive and move to combat social injustice, both at home and abroad, we inoculate our communities against Islamic incursions. And more importantly, we honor the cause of Christ.

In the same way, many of the Muslim movements to Christ we are witnessing today have occurred because of unaddressed injustices that have been ignored within the House of Islam, prompting Muslims to find refuge and justice in the person of Christ.⁹²

Islam in Iran (Persia) is unlike any other room in the house of Islam. While 90 percent of the Muslim world adheres to what they regard as Orthodox or Sunni Islam, Iran follows a different path. The people are over-whelmingly Shi'ite, literally, partisans of Ali the son-in-law and cousin of the prophet Mouhamad. For the first 700 years Iran was a Sunni but in the 16th Century, Ismail I, founder of Iran's Safavid Dynasty (1501–1736) turned the population towards Shi'ism. Shi'ites believe that the dominant Sunni stream of Islam disregarded the Prophet's desire for his son-in-law to succeed him as leader of the faithful. Iranian Shi'ite Muslims have defined themselves in stark contrast to the rest of the Sunni Muslim world. The Persian World Sunnis draw their authority more exclusively from the textual tradition of the Qur'an, Shi'ites are different. Though they venerate the Qur'an, they also rely on religious authorities, ayatollahs (literally signs of Allah) to interpret Islam for the Shi'ite faithful.

⁹² Ref: A wind in the House of Islam – Part 2:12 – David Garrison.

Iranian Islam, its history, values, philosophical and mystical traditions, were challenged when Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini came to power in 1979. Khomeini's new Islamic government imposed a stringent vision for the country that began with a massive cleanup of all the Western remnants of Shah Reza Pahlavi's regime.⁹³

9. What is happening in the Islamic World now?

9.1 The Islam in Africa Organization

The Islam in Africa Organization was founded by representatives of 24 African states at Abuja in Nigeria in November 1989. In its founding communiqué we are informed about its aims and purposes. It expresses very understandable and to them legitimate desires, such as the unification of all Muslims throughout Africa, the putting away of “artificial boundaries”, and re-instating a strong and united “Umma” (congregation of all Muslims) with the purpose of fulfilling the commands of Allah. We will have to consider, however, the little syllable “re-”. It keeps on occurring in this document: “re-instate the Umma” in Africa, “re-store the use of Arabic script in the vernacular”, “re-instate the application of the Sharia”. This means that what was there before, will have to be instated again, implying that there was an Umma in Africa, within which the local languages were written in Arabic lettering, and that Africans were under the Sharia law. All this is not true, except North Africa and some very isolated cases in which for example Ki-Swahili was written in Arabic script. In the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, after the Arab Spring things are not the same. There has been a great shake among the Muslims asking, “does this represent Islam; where are our Muslim leaders?” With ISIS reaching the peak, Muslims are questioning their leaders, their faith, themselves. Of course there are different groups: those who are refusing Islam and looking for a “better way” of life and searching for Christianity, another group who went into a neutral ground saying, “We believe in God, but want to find him our way, not the way of Islam.” The third group approving that ISIS is the real Islam and it is their desire to die in Jihad to please God and maybe “win heaven”, while the fourth group is saying “I pick and choose what I want to believe, accept or reject from Islam as a Muslim.” There is a big confusion among Muslims themselves and between Muslims and their religious leaders, this debate and talk goes on circular media.

There is a call for Islamic reformation, but the question is: can Islam be reformed? The Government authorities at their level are making a twofold push: a) emphasizing the Islamic religion and heritage in the education system, b) saying that the problem is the

⁹³ Ref: A Wind in the House of Islam – Part 2:8 – David Garrison.

educational curriculum and the reformation it needs. Islam has in itself the seed of its destruction. There is a conflict how to be Muslim and secular or how to remain Muslim and still be accepted in the world. New voices are coming up saying: 'the people in the Arab world are not all from Arab Origin' and many attempts are made to dissociate themselves from the Arab Muslims.

For example: **Iraqis:** Assyrians, Akkadian, Sumerian. **Syrians:** Aramaic, **Lebanese:** Phoenician, **Palestinians:** Canaanites, **Egyptian:** Pharaonic, **Sudanese:** Ethiopian, the **Gulf countries:** form Arab Tribes in Yemen and Ethiopia, **Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia:** Tamazight/Berber.

The Islamic revival began in 1967 with losses in the Arab-Israeli War and the failure of modernisation and development plans. Modernists and secular programs lost favour, and political Islam or Islamist reformers gained popularity. They remain the dominant opposition to the surviving monarchies and military dictatorships. The most overtly religious states are Saudi Arabia and Iran, both of which claim to be Islamic states and implement Islamic law. Forms of states differ; Saudi Arabia is a Sunni monarchy, while Iran is a Shi'ite republic that holds elections.

An eminent Muslim scholar has said that Islamic history can only be understood as a constant tension between the "ruling institution" (politics, economics, society) and the "religious institution" (law, theology, savants). It is therefore understandable that many observers predict the rapid decay of Islamic influence in the Middle East. Yet, though the evidence of the practical impotency of traditional religion in many current affairs is unmistakable, this conclusion is unwarranted, at least as a generalisation. To say that Islam is changing its role today is not necessarily to say that it is on the verge of disappearing – only that one more compromise is taking place, the final form of which cannot yet be determined. The negative emphasis that is always the most prominent characteristic of periods of turbulent change arises from:

- Firstly, the loss of Islamic influence in the state, society and individual life is far more apparent and dramatic than the religious elements that quietly endure.
- Secondly, the difficulty comes from the nebulous content of the term "Islam". Since the Muslim religion, in origin and theory, lays claim to regulate the totality of human activity, it has historically been the "cell wall" of the social organism. While many elements, non-Muslim in origin, have always operated within the life of Muslim communities, these have been fitted into the framework of Islam.

In a sense almost everything that has occurred in the Middle East since the rise of Islam can be labeled “Islamic”. But to define Islam so inclusively makes it almost impossible to isolate the specific role religion plays in social and political activities. This difficulty is escaped when Islam is defined in concrete institutional and theological terms. For, in the Caliphate, Sharia Law, Savants (Ulema علماء) and theological systems, there are influences whose content and current status can be determined. But to adopt this more specific definition is to rule out historical and psychological influences which, profoundly if subtly, affect the life of the modern Muslim community even when its outward religious observances have weakened.

In the Arab world, this lead has not been followed. The separate Arab states are still formally Muslim, with Islam as the state religion. Sharia Law has continued to have a place in the national legal system and Islamic institutions play an influential role. Yet in most of the Arab world Islam is steadily losing power as a political form and increasingly serves as the façade behind which the forces of nationalism operate. Yet useful as this approach is, it contains a measure of artificiality. No one “Islam” exists in isolation from its neighbours and the interactions between the various “Islams” must not be neglected. With this caution, a preliminary estimate of the role of Islam in the modern Middle East can be made under various categories.

In terms of political organisation from its inception under the Prophet, Islam has claimed to provide a political organization for the community of the faithful. While the elaboration of this into the medieval Muslim empires involved the absorption of many non-Islamic elements, the state operated behind the façade of a Muslim theory of government. The most evident sign of its weakening is the lost hope of pan-Islamism. In terms of institutional life Islam is not only a political structure, it is also a series of institutions represented by legal codes, centers of learning, philanthropic agencies, bodies of Uama’a and such social practices as the system of Waqfs (property endowment for religious or charitable purposes).

How does this aspect of Islam fare in the Middle East today? Here three significant changes are apparent. The first is that the graduates of religious institutions no longer play a major role in occupying important posts in government or as political leaders. A second change has come in the increasing limitation of the area in which Sharia Law operates. In most of the Middle East today, the Sharia is confined to matters of personal status (divorce, marriage, inheritance). The third change is the control by the national government of many of the institutional activities of Islam. In terms of its social structure Islam as a constituent of the social structure lives on long after political and institutional life has become secularized. In terms of its theological-philosophical system, there are indeed many “defenses of Islam” in modern literature, but the very

phrase “defense” reveals what is happening. In the past, Muslim thought was the standard by which the activities of man and his society were judged since it was the eternal truth revealed by God.

Today few writers take this attitude. Implicitly and explicitly, the intellectual content of the modern world is accepted as normative, and attempts are made to show that Islam fits in with it. But this gives away the whole show – for when religion loses its claim of ultimate validity and becomes an instrument for defending or furthering some other values, it ceases to be religion at all. This failure to provide a modern reinterpretation of Muslim thought has much more than religious implications. If either the reality or the pertinence of the Muslim tradition disappears, it may leave the chaotic modern world of the Middle East without any framework of alternate values to assist in directing its destiny.

In terms of its ideological milieu while it is clear that many of the outward and formalized forms of Islam are losing their relevance in the Middle East today, there is obviously a residual deposit of attitudes and reactions from the centuries of the past which in some measure determines the way modern Muslims react to their problems. Firstly, there is the feeling that Islam creates about the community. This means that in the Muslim mind the community claims primacy over the individual. A second element in the intellectual milieu is the sense of Islamdom being set over against Christendom. Thirdly, it must be noted that in most Middle Eastern countries full nationality is either openly or unconsciously identified with status as a Muslim. The non-Muslim – Jew or Christian – is seldom considered quite the equal of the Muslim. This is true even in Turkey, where the state has repudiated any religious connection. The only exception is Lebanon, where the balance between Christian and Muslim is so nearly equal that each must accept the other as fully Lebanese.⁹⁴

9.2 Why is it that some Muslims become Islamists and some Islamists turn to violence?

One of the reasons why we have such difficulty in responding to issues related to Islam is that we find it hard to distinguish between Islam (the whole system of beliefs and the way of life of 1.3 billion Muslims), Islamism (Islamic Fundamentalism sometimes called Revivalist, Radical, Activist or Political Islam), and Islamic terrorism (terrorism carried out by Muslims in the name of Islam). As a result of the failure to make these distinctions, many suggest, for example, that terrorism carried out by Muslims is a natural expression of Islamic beliefs.

⁹⁴ Ref: Essay by John S. Badeau – Jan 1958, www.foreignaffairs.com

Many Muslims dissociate themselves completely from the militants and terrorists, but would not openly condemn it.

10. There are some basic convictions that are held by all Muslims

The concept of the umma (the Islamic nation or people who accept the core beliefs of Islam) creates a strong sense of solidarity among Muslims worldwide, so that they generally feel that an attack on one group of Muslims is an attack on the whole House of Islam. For most of the fourteen centuries of recorded Muslim history, jihad was most commonly interpreted to mean armed struggle for the defense or advancement of Muslim power. The emphasis on spiritual jihad is therefore a comparatively recent phenomenon. It is in this context that we need to understand jihad, the word means struggle and is used to describe the struggle in which all Muslims should be engaged in the path of God. Some Muslims regard it as the sixth Pillar of Islam, and therefore an obligation for all Muslims. It is difficult to point to one consistent attitude towards Christians in the Qur'an since it contains a wide spectrum.

The most hostile verse instructs Muslims:

Chapter 9 Repentance – سورة التوبة – At-Taubah: Verse 29

قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ

Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya [tax on tolerated communities] with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.

There are two principles used by Muslims to enable them to interpret verses of this kind.

- The first principle is that every verse has to be understood in the light of the context in which it was revealed to Muhammad.
- The second principle is known as Abrogation, and means that in a certain number of cases (the exact number is disputed) a later revelation abrogates or cancels out a previous one.

There are also certain convictions which turn a Muslim into an Islamist. It is important to recognize that the Islamists are generally just as angry, sometimes even angrier, with fellow-Muslims than they are with the non-Muslim West. The initial urge for the Islamist is a feeling that something is wrong that has to be set right.

عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه قال : سمعت الرسول يقول :
(من رأى منكم منكراً فليغيره بيده ، فإن لم يستطع فبلسانه ، فإن لم يستطع فبقلبه ، وذلك أضعف الإيمان)
رواه مسلم .

It was narrated that the Prophet ordered anyone who sees an evil thing to change it with his hand. If he cannot, he should change it with his tongue. If he cannot, he should change it with his heart, and this is the weakest degree of faith [Muslim].

Osama bin Laden: Jihad and the rifle alone: no negotiations, no conferences, and no dialogues jihad will remain an individual obligation until all other lands that were Muslim are returned to us so that Islam will reign again: before us lie Palestine, Bokhara, Southern Yemen, Tashkent and Andalusia.⁹⁵

The meaning of the weakest degree of faith is that it is the least fruitful, as what was mentioned by An-Nawawi and Al-Mubaarkafoori رحمه الله. As-Sindi رحمه الله said that it means that denouncing evil with the heart is the weakest thing that can be done; it does not mean that the person's faith is weak because this might be the only thing he can do. Al-Izz ibn Abdus-Salaam رحمه الله said that this Hadith urges believers to achieve a higher degree than denouncing evil with one's heart. Ibn Hazm رحمه الله said that it means that there is no faith beyond that. In terms of this argument, one can conclude that God did not give the Shari'a, it is the collection of all the teachings and interpretations of Qur'an and hadiths put all together by Muslim teachers. However, what should be our responses?

The Arab so called **Spring** is a علامة فارقة **landmark** in our modern history, not politically, socially, economically only, but spiritually too, not in the region only but all over the world. Many years ago people in the region could not talk and discuss religion as it is being done today. If you did so, you were called racist, fanatic, dogmatic, or even put in jail. The Muslim would play the victim role and would say you misunderstand Islam; Islam is innocent of all the violence. But now the other face of Islam is being unveiled and is done by Muslims themselves without knowing it. Muslim leaders and religious teachers are obliged to give an answer to other Muslims explaining the violence and the killing.

The church should discern the move of the Spirit of God, and be aware of the Muslims' quest for "A Better Way". For example, a Saudi Islamist who was travelling to North Syria to train Jihadist, on his way back to Saudi via Lebanon, asked the taxi driver if he could get a Bible. The person who gave him the Bible asked: "Do you mind telling me why you want the Bible?" Then he revealed his identity and said: "I am tired of what I am doing; there must be 'a better way'."

95 Ref: Cambridge Papers – 16 no. June 2007 – Colin Chapman.

In the words of the New Testament, let us throw off everything that **hinders** us and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus – the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-2). “Everything that **hinders**” could be the following: minority and inferiority mentality, victim mentality, fear, prejudice, ignorance, complacency, pleasing authorities different from respecting and obeying, compromising, hatred, anger, division, disunity, dependency on external factors (financial support, and teachings).

“We need to rise above the spiraling conflict and violence that occupies those bound to an earthly perspective. Our meager talents and abilities no longer limit us; we have been caught up by the wind of the Spirit that blows wherever it pleases and carries us along with it. Today, some Christians want to match Muslims in a blow-for-blow contest, argument for argument, ‘an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’. Unlike the embattled flock of the first century, our twenty-first century church is powerful, Christians today follow the world’s largest ‘religion’, possess the greatest wealth, and has the mightiest army. Indeed, we are no longer the refuse of the world (1 Corinthians 4: 13) that we were when we began and so we are tempted to engage the challenge of Islam in our own strength. But to do so is to forfeit the insuperable power that has been willed to us by the one who took on himself the Cross.”⁹⁶

There is however verses in the Qur’an that shows a toleration. For instance, Chapter 3, The family of Imran سورة آل عمران - Aal-e-Imran: Verse 55

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ خُذْ هَذِهِ وَاتَّبِعْهَا إِنَّهَا تَصَوِّرُكَ عَلَىٰ سِدْرٍ مَّجِيدٍ وَتَجْعَلُ لَكَ تَحْتَهَا نَهْرًا يَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهِ الْأَنْهَارُ فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَنْصِتْ لَهَا إِنَّهَا تُكَلِّمُ الَّذِينَ أَحْسَبُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْمَعُ لَهُمْ قَوْلًا وَلَا يُرِيدُ لَهُمْ بَأْسًا وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

Behold! Allah said: O **Jesus!** I will take thee and raise thee to Myself and clear thee (of the falsehoods) of those who blaspheme; I will make those who follow thee superior to those who reject faith, to the Day of Resurrection: Then shall ye all return unto me, and I will judge between you of the matters wherein ye dispute.

In the verses above we can observe the following. Islam as a religion has many faces depending on the goals needed to be achieved. Islam is not moderate neither tolerant. Muslim people choose to be either moderate, fanatic, practicing or not practicing Islam. We as followers of Christ cannot follow the pattern they present. For example, we cannot be militant to be able to face militant Islam to win Muslims. Though we are called by Jesus in Mathew 5:43-45. “To love our enemies, to bless them

⁹⁶ (Ref: A Wind in the House of Islam – Part 3:15– David Garrison)

that curse us, to do good to them that hate us and to pray for them who despitefully use us and persecute us. We need to be wise and discerning. We need to stand our ground as disciples of the same Jesus when it comes to the “New Humanism” of the New One World Religion which was activated by Pop Francis on 04 February 2019 with the signing of the ABU Dhabi Declaration with Omam Ahmed Al – Tyyeb in UAE.⁹⁷

CONCLUSION

We need to discern the times and seasons. God is miraculously at work, and in many ways. Prayer, fasting and interceding are keys in reaching Muslims, depending on the Holy Spirit for supernatural and miraculous moves among Muslims. Christian missionaries should be bold in their Christian life and testimony. They should understand the world view of the Muslims and learn about Islam and break down its false image and faces. They should be intentional in reaching out to Muslims, and build them up in their faith. They should minister to them and serve them, love them as neighbours and share the Christian faith and live with them. They should educate the young generation about the ideology and strategies of Islam. Then, protect them and equip them to reach out more effectively. Lastly, they should be ready for persecution, as it is a natural result of doing mission in those spaces. Grace and Truth are the key words and actions in reaching out to Muslims. Islam is a religion with many faces. Muslims choose either to be peaceful or militant. Islam will not tolerate the existence but of one house, the house of Islam. The other house should either disappear or submit. In Islam the goal of bringing the house of war under the edicts of Islam justifies the use of all means necessary. The strategies we surveyed, are but some of the main ones.

Christians should be aware of the Muslim agenda. Grace should be our attitude in reaching out. Truth should be our utterance in sharing the truth with boldness and respect. Christians should stop being inward looking, comfort zone seekers. Muslims are looking for the truth and we have the truth in Christ. It is a battle of the kingdom of God against the kingdom of this world, therefore we need “to take the whole Armour of God in order to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might to be able to stand.” Ephesians 6:10-20.

⁹⁷ Reference: A DOCUMENT ON Human Fraternity For World Peace and Living Together.

THE ROLE OF CHRISTIANS IN NATION-BUILDING

GIDEON PARA-MALLAM

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century has ushered in a time of unprecedented changes in the world and in the Church. There is no doubt that enormous geopolitical reshaping of things is being witnessed all around us in the world today. This is well captured in the descriptive postulations of Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (1996) and Henry Kissinger's *World Order* (2014). We are also witnessing interesting and quite shocking changes in the global economic order. The questions that naturally arise are: where is the Church, especially in the Global South when it comes to its role in the area of nation-building today? Does the Church have a role to play or is theological ignorance allied with lack of understanding power dynamics in society blinding the Church? In what practical ways should the church contribute in the building of stable, peaceful, just and economically strong societies as part of her call to discipling nations? Unless the Church responds to these challenges creatively and effectively, the danger is real, that one day, the majority Church in the majority world of the global South could reject the gospel as being irrelevant to her contextual reality.

God is very interested in the well-being of the nations. Revelation 22 talks about the healing of the nations. Only broken things require healing. Many nations are broken, and much healing is needed. This healing sometimes comes through the process of nation-building which manifests itself in good governance. Effective nation-building is an art of seeking national healing in mending the broken parts. According to the Lausanne Movement's mission resource material of 21 – 26 October 2019:

The global church is split between those who prioritize either the 'spiritual dimension' or the 'social dimension' of the gospel. The article emphasised that 'integral mission' is calling all believers back to a balanced view of word and deed, emphasizing the importance of both spiritual evangelism as well as social service (Jayakaran, 2019:1).

Historically, missions have mostly been the foundation for the Church's involvement in nation-building. The history of nations whether in Europe, Asia, Latin America and specially Africa will give credence to this fact. Integral missions has been a driving force in social involvement and activism on the part of the Church.

The responsibility of the Church towards nation-building does not end with conversion of people to faith in Jesus Christ. If there is any time the Church needs to understand and grapple with issues of nation-building, that time is now. And for nations in Africa, the imperative of nation-building is even more urgent and compelling in view of the many challenges of the continent. Yes, indeed we live in a globalized and inter-connected world today. No nation or society can afford to advocate or practice an isolationist domestic or foreign policy approach from the rest of the world.

Therefore, it is imperative that in midst of the crises of failed states – the breeding ground for terrorism, insecurity, wars, diseases, and poverty – we must seek a collective and realistic agenda that promotes the re-building of collapsed nations so that they can become healthy, civil, and eventually prosperous. In this effort, nation-building seeks to create a strong national identity that recognizes the diversity and historical antecedents of its entire people. When a nation is divided along ethnic, religious, and racial lines, there is always an unhealthy lingering of tensions and lack of cohesiveness for growth and development, as various groups become sceptical and resentful of each other.

In addition, nation-building requires local people to be available to take over most of the tasks of government. Within the African context, nation-building requires that we embrace reforms that affect education, security, economic wellbeing, social well-being, institutional development, and democracy. It must also include a commitment to transitional justice. This task demands us to be socio-ethical and Theo-political! On systemic injustice, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (as cited in Thompson, 2017), the German theologian suggests that in a clime of social injustice which does not promote nation-building: *We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice; we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself.* The process of driving that spoke is unquestionably an act of nation-building in order to grease the wheels with the oil of justice.

1. The Concept of Nation-building: An African Perspective

Civilisation has brought a lot of changes to humanity. The concept of nation-building is a multidimensional and complicated one. For any meaningful nation-building exercise to succeed in a given national context, it must involve the active participation of its citizens from various walks of life in an inclusive manner. Strong and powerful nations are built on the dedication and hard work of its citizens. A responsible government needs to compliment the efforts of its citizens with good governance through Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant and Time-based (SMART) planning in the area of setting goals. Nation-building begins with a process of constructing a national identity using the enormous power of the state which aims at unifying people within the state. Smith

(2005:28) states that nation-building could be “*the production and interpretation of the pattern of the values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations*”. For a nation to harness her natural and human resources for sustainable development, every citizen must participate in the process of nation-building. In other words, nations are not built by mere chance but through the deliberate efforts of her citizens: both men and women.

According to Maduagwu *et al* (2011) the concept of nation-building is sometimes used interchangeably with the concept of “state building”, even though they have similar meanings. It all depends on their usage. Nation-building should be pursued vis-à-vis the inoculation of national identity, while state building should focus more on building the institutions of Statehood. International bodies like the United Nations, tend to view the concept of state building as *an indigenous or internal process* (Whaltres, 2008).

True efforts at nation-building help create deeper sense of one’s identity that fosters state and national development from personal and collective efforts. To achieve this, several institutions must be put in place, either from personal or governmental agencies to promote and facilitate the idea of nation-building.

In an attempt to clarify the term “nation-building”, it is very imperative to do this in order to provide focus and direction as to what we will be looking at regarding the subject matter of this chapter. A nation, from a missional perspective means ‘*ethne*’ (ethnic nationality): a group of people bound together by a common heritage, descent and cultural values. In the context of this book, we are looking at a nation as a State that is made up of diverse people or groups. The Black Law’s dictionary defines a nation as “A historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on basis of a common language, territory, economic life, ethnicity and/or psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.”

Therefore, looking at this definition, one may be tempted to ask questions such as: why and what do we need to build in a nation? What is the essence of building a nation? For a nation to function as a cohesive unit there is need for working institutions consisting of structures, systems, and law-abiding citizens. Every state needs order for its people to function, or co-exist. People need to be guaranteed of the presence of rule of law in any given country. In addition, I believe the greatest form of nation-building which Africa also needs, goes well beyond institutions, structures and systems to build people. Shaping minds to help the people to think collectively of how they could jointly harness the resources of the nation for the common good. People are the greatest asset-resource for national transformation. Developed nations are the fruits of developed minds. The more

developed minds you have in a nation, the more developed the nation becomes and the more unique minds you have in a nation, the more unique the nation becomes. In my opinion, a call to nation-building in the context of Africa suggests the need to radically develop the African mind for creative problem-solving capabilities in the twenty-first century. I would like to focus more on the role of Christians in their contributions to nation-building in their respective nation.

God created all nations for a purpose. It is in discovering this purpose and deploying it that brings about a difference in the world. Nation-building helps not just the people, but it qualifies the country to make a unique contribution to the rest of the world. When a nation fails to live out its purposes, it becomes a failure or what in modern terms is described as a “failed State”. There are many failed States in the world today which underscores the need for genuine national builders. Failed States manifest lack of national identity. When a nation is saturated with people who value their national identity, group rather than individual (or self) interest is the order of the day. We were Africans before the coming of the colonial masters; although, they did a great job in enlightening our people as far as Western education was concerned, but they also reshaped our world view in a manner that has distorted our identity. Colonialism, in some ways, resulted in the cloning of African peoples. Instead of developing us to be Africans with respect and pride in our African heritage, a people created by God, they became fixated with the inculcation of their Western values, which tend to make Africans want to live like the very nations that colonized or cloned them. The result of which became the manifestation of our lost identity as Africans.

Our positive uniqueness basically vanished and our distinctiveness as a people is almost consigned to the dustbin of history. Therefore, the need for Africans to arise to rebuild their nations is necessary without doubt. The gospel is therefore to be domesticated yet made to maintain its biblical authenticity while remaining contextually relevant. So, the work of nation-building should also represent a call to help the non-Western majority world to rediscover their uniqueness in God’s image. Christians cannot continue to abandon the institutions of power to the enemies of the cross and later cry of marginalization or lament that they are being persecuted or tormented. Pursuing the path of national building needs to be factored into our Christian discipleship.

2. The Theology and Biblical Basis for Nation-building

My focus here is to look at the concept of nation-building from a biblical perspective. God is the originator of the concept of nationhood. He created the peoples of the world from the beginning. Acts 17: 26-28, confirms that we all – referring to humanity – move and live according to God’s purposes. A cursory look at the Bible will reveal that God has

instituted a pattern for how the nation of Israel is to be governed. When God called Abram in Genesis 12, he signalled his intended purpose of building a nation which will reflect his glory in the way the citizens are governed. Through the nation of Israel, God signalled that he was not just birthing a nation but revealing how to build a nation which is founded on the principles of godliness, justice and fairness. If we did a study on how nations are built, we will learn a lot of principles from God's interactions with Abram, who later became Abraham and the commencement of the journey of nation-building in the way God dealt with the Kings of Israel and the rulers of other nations in the world. The Bible shows:

- God as a Nation-builder
- Jesus Christ as a Nation-builder
- Holy Spirit as a Nation-builder
- Christian call to Nation-building

2.1 God as a Nation-builder

God is not only the creator of nations; He is also a builder of nations. The creation mandate in Genesis 1:28 points to the origin of nations. Nations do have unique roles to play in the overall plans of God. He built the nation of Israel from one man transforming his descendants into a nation. The architecture of this vision was constructed with the first call of Abram as a foundation. Then the building blocks were laid with procreation of the family line.

This unique approach teaches us that nation-building should go well beyond building systems and structures to include people. God modelled how not to only build structures and systems in defining nation-building. He first built the nation of Israel by building a people for himself and proceeded to train the people to build the nation and making them as a nation to be a blessing to other nations of the world.

2.2 Jesus Christ as a Nation-builder

Jesus came to restore humanity to their original place in God's redemptive plan. Jesus started building people with the call of his disciples. He trained them and thereafter sent them out to reach communities and nations. "Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all nations."

The principles of nation-building adopted by Jesus in the Bible could easily be developed and applied in contemporary nation-building. Jesus Christ as a nation-builder focussed not just on building structures and systems but also on building people through discipleship. Christ was also actively involved in shaping the worldview of people around him to be effective nation-builders.

2.3 The Holy Spirit as a Nation-builder

The Holy Spirit also plays a key role in nation-building through equipping people and empowering them. At Pentecost, the disciples were empowered to go and witness to the world about the kingdom of God. Nation-building from God's standpoint goes well beyond the political kingdom. The Holy Spirit is still playing a major role in building nations by giving identity and power to men and women who are saved to carry on with the task of fulfilling the Great Commission assignment.

2.4 Christian Call to Nation-building

We are not engaged in domestic politics, in church building or in social uplift work but we are engaged in nation-building (Garvey, 2004:05).

Christians are called to nation-building; one can ask the question, why did Jesus die? The simple reason, in one word, is to reconcile us to God. On the issue of nation-building, believers must understand that after salvation, the next thing is to arise and find solutions to the challenges of the nation and not just to relax in their comfort zone and only be awaiting the second coming of Jesus Christ (Genesis 41:41). God delivered Joseph to fix the nation's economy in the land of Egypt.

3. Hindrances to Nation-building in the African Context

Since the attainment of political independence, most African countries have continued to contend with many challenges to nation-building. "The continent is plagued with multidimensional problems which are antithetical to peaceful co-existence, such as socio-economic imbalance, instability and inequality" (Idakpo & Theophilus, 2015). Our tribal affiliation, endemic conflicts, injustices, poor governance, poor education, corruption and wide spread poverty are among few issues that contribute to making the task of nation-building more difficult than it should be. Okpanachi (2011) maintained that the several structures and institutions through which effective government can be entranced are heavily compromised from the beginning to the end. This is why Achebe (1985) observed that the failure of Nigeria as a nation (which also speaks of other nations) is not in the system but rather in the calibre of persons entrusted with the management of the nation's vast human and material resources. Nation-building could be hindered by the limited mindset of a people who are plagued either by ignorance or biblical illiteracy. The mindset of patriotism and a deeper insight into pursuing a vision of joint ownership in the process of nation-building as part of Christian discipleship is the beginning of a process for effective engagement.

Nation-building is a process, a continuum and this has its fair share of challenges. Today there are bio-ethical issues which could no longer be ignored. This is reflected through

over population which is becoming, whether we admit it or not, a demographic warfare strategy in the game of numbers called democracy, especially in Africa. Nigeria is a major culprit in this regard. There are also environmental realities which, if ignored can have dire consequences. Other challenges affecting nation-building in the Nigerian context include such realities as: historical challenges, socio-economic inequalities, constitutional manipulations due to weak democratic institutions as well as stunted economic growth and development. At the heart of these challenges is corrupt leadership which seeks not the common good but the greed of few. Unless these challenges are well addressed, they could end up becoming hindrances to nation-building.

3.1 Ineffective Leadership and Corruption

Leadership challenges have always been a dominant issue in African polity. Many African leaders lack leadership qualities and attributes of good governance like the rule of law, transparency, effectiveness, efficiency, equity and accountability which are essential for the development of the society. They often abuse the mandate and trust of the electorates and become the public's enemies once they assume positions of authority. Many political leaders are neither in office for national interest nor are they there with a view to make a difference, but are in office to enrich themselves, or their siblings, kinsmen and tribesmen. The resultant effects of these poor leaders on the nation are sectionalism and tribalism. There is also an alarming rate of corruption among the political class in the government. Corrupt practices take many forms like embezzlement of public funds, theft, illegal use of public property, bribery of officials, instigation of unending crisis and influence on procurement decisions. The phenomenon of corruption has been a major factor in Africa's underdevelopment. It undermines the effective implementation of government policies that could translate into development. There is a general notion in Africa that politics is only formidable on paper but very poor on the ground. This is because corruption has impinged on the policy formulation process resulting in unsteadiness and inconsistency in the nature and character of government policies and programmes (Idakpo & Theophilus, 2015). Most policies initiated are not achieved or are designed to benefit a set of minorities – the ruling class. Foreigners are reluctant to invest in a country with unstable political climate rife with corruption.

3.2 Inter-Religious Intolerance

Religious crises and fanaticism have no doubt become a trend and threat to the nation's political development or transformation and security. Religion in Nigeria and other African countries is a concept deeply interwoven with the life of the people. One would therefore be quick to ask why has religion that plays a very significant role becomes a source of sorrow to the people of Africa judging from the number of religious conflicts and destructions in the past decades (Olanrewaju, 2014)? Persistent insecurity resulting

from religious crises impacts negatively on the economy and development prospects of every nation. Take Nigeria for instance, the tempo of economic activities in the northern part of the country has declined tremendously as a result of untamed insurgency. Investors' confidence has also been greatly hampered, thereby limiting the realization of the tremendous potential that the economy presents. Obviously, religion is a medium through which peace and peaceful coexistence can be promoted but it can also be used as a tool to incite violence. One of the tasks of nation-building should be focussed on promoting religious tolerance and harmonious co-existence in a nation.

3.3 Ethnic Crises

Ethnic tension and crises have also become worrisome for many countries in Africa and a threat to nation-building. Africa is a continent with different cultural as well as human and natural diversities. Unfortunately, instead of finding strength in these diversities, it has been exploited to create ethnic rivalries and intolerance as is exhibited in the numerous ethnic violence cases across the continent. In Nigeria for instance, examples of such violence from ethnic clashes in the past, include the crisis between the Andonis-Ogonis/Okirika, Jukuns/Tivs, Ife/Modakeke, Umuleri/Aguleri and Ijaw/Itsekeri. Also, conflicts between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary farmers in the country are pandemic, especially between the Fulani herdsmen and the natives. Most of the conflict in Africa can be traced to the struggle for ownership and access to land resources. This underscores the need for justice, fairness and equity in the distribution of economic resources on the continent (Idakpo & Theophilus, 2015).

Other threats confronting African nations are fetish practices and syncretism, poverty and underdevelopment, lack of knowledge, social injustice and inequality. With these challenges, Africa's desired vision for national transformation will remain a nightmare. This is because the education, security, transparency, peace and stability which constitute the pivot for national transformation will elude the nations of the continent as a result of the above factors. With these challenges hindering effective national transformation in Africa, what kind of leadership is expected of the Church?

3.4 Poverty and Poor Educational background

Extreme poverty anywhere is a threat to human security everywhere. Kofi Annan (as cited in Breneman & Mbuh, 2006:130), former United Nations Secretary-General. Poverty is one of the major challenges affecting several African nations and this has been a major hindrance in the task of nation-building. One major challenge plaguing the majority world countries is poverty. To engage in productive nation-building exercise in any country, putting the right measures in place which seek to address the eradication of poverty should be a matter of priority in Africa. Education is one of the key enhancers of

nation-building. Today's students are the leaders of tomorrow and without doubt they are nation-builders. I came across the following quotation through a WhatsApp message. It is reported to have been placed at the office entrance of a professor at one of Africa's universities. It stated that:

Collapsing any nation does not require use of atomic bombs or the use of long-range missiles. It only requires lowering the quality of education and allowing cheating in the examinations by the students ... The patient dies in the hands of such doctors. The buildings collapse in the hands of such engineers, money is lost in the hands of such accountants, humanity dies in the hands of such religious scholars and justice is lost in the hands of such judges. The collapse of education is the collapse of the nation.

The author is unknown. The collapse of a nation's educational system suggests that the fundamental structure which provides the platform for raising nation-builders has ceased to exist.

Inkeles and Smith (1974) contend that the individual is the most important factor in the development process because the modernity of a nation depends on its people and that a nation's economy cannot be *"highly productive, or its political or administrative institutions very effective, unless the people who work in the economy and staff the institution have attained some degree of modernity."* (p. 9)

4. Peace building as a vital component in Nation-building

The Bible shows from the book of James chapter 3 from verses 13-18, that God cares about peace and admonishes us to apply wisdom, humility and considerateness in relating and promoting peace with our neighbours. Christians do not live in isolated Islands from the rest of the world. No! They live in the real world and interact daily with their fellow human beings in the society. Christians live with neighbours, some of whom are Muslims, adherents of Traditional African Religions, animists, or atheists. The Bible enjoins Christians to live in peace with all of them. Beyond seeking to live in peace with their neighbours, Jesus Christ in Mathew 5:9 says: *"Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons [daughters] of God."* Without doubt and ambiguity, Jesus introduced the radical element of peace-making or making the peace. Peace-making needs to be done in the context of justice. The world today is not just talking about the concept of peace as an abstract but peace, within the context of social justice. Therefore, peace-making is predicated on this reality: there can be no peace without justice and there can be no development without peace and reconciliation. This is because peace does not suggest the absence of conflict. The power structure mindset which tries to create a narrative that there can only be justice when peace reigns is fraud. Forced

peace by means of coercion can never be enforced; no matter the amount of military might employed. Sustainable peace is only possible through the process of negotiations. This is where justice is factored in and comes first before peace. Peace is more internal than physical. Excerpts from the book *Interfaith Just Peacemaking* edited by Brooks (2011) Thistlethwaite says:

Just peacemaking necessitates not only the participation of individual peacemakers, but also the combined efforts of peacemakers communities. These groups and associations provide a framework for the development of individuals who work for increased cooperation and peacemaking action in the world.

In addition, also, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a former United Nations General Secretary observes that peacebuilding is "... a new approach which emphasizes that in order to achieve lasting peace, the effort to prevent, control and resolve conflicts must include action to address the underlying economic, social, cultural, humanitarian and political roots of conflict and to strengthen the foundations for development." Indeed, peacebuilding is aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict, and to build social relationships and State structures capable of sustaining peace through building stable institutions. Peace-building therefore has a lot to do with the transformation of individuals' attitudes, behaviours, and values.

One of the great tragedies of life is that men seldom bridge the gulf between practice and profession, between doing and saying. A persistent schizophrenia leaves so many of us tragically divided against ourselves. On the one hand, we proudly profess certain sublime and noble principles, but on the other hand, we sadly practise the very antithesis of these principles. How often are our lives characterised by a high blood pressure of creeds and an anaemia of deeds! We talk eloquently about our commitment to the principles of Christianity, and yet our lives are saturated with the practices of paganism. We proclaim our devotion to democracy, but we sadly practise the very opposite of the democratic creed. We talk passionately about peace, and at the same time we assiduously prepare for war. We make our fervent pleas for the high road of justice, and then we tread unflinchingly the low road of injustice. This strange dichotomy, this agonising gulf between the ought and the is, represents the tragic theme of man's earthly pilgrimage (Martin Luther King, Jr. 1981:32).

The Bible also in Romans 13:3-5 admonishes Christians to respect constituted authority by encouraging citizens to shun wrongdoings and focus on doing what is right. Suggesting clearly that this is not just to avoid "*punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience.*" Therefore, on one hand, even though religious leaders have key roles to play in helping their members to obey the laws of their nations and working

to promote peaceful co-existence among its different constituents. The government – on the other hand – should work to stop the flow of money which funds and fuels crimes and violence, along with other resources that support war combatants.

The process of peace-building should be designed to include all stakeholders. Religious leaders must be invited to join hands in mobilizing critical stakeholders in their communities to work against crime, violence and war. Peace-building, among other things, requires working to change the public's attitude of intolerance and prejudice through reducing violence between combatants, by addressing and changing the attitudes of followers and the elites so that in the end all can see peace to be in their interests.

Consequently, peace-building should be integrative in accommodating the critical roles of state and non-state actors and other international stakeholders. Peace-building has the broad potential to create the needed atmosphere for the coordination of new and existing resources for the purposes of conflict prevention, management and resolution. Peace-building should also aim at combatting poverty, creating economic empowerment, socio-cultural cohesion, and institutional reform and restructuring.

5. Strategic Nation-building: Two successful Nation-builders

The concept of nation-building, as mentioned earlier, suggests promoting one's national identity to foster integration and national development of human and natural resources. It is important to highlight the role Christians could play as vital agents for nation-building. There are two relevant case studies to provide an insight: the work of William Carey (India) and Abraham Kuyper (Netherlands) both of whom may be seen as great examples of Christians who engaged actively in nation-building.

5.1 William Carey (Missionary and Nation-builder in India)

William Carey is widely regarded as the father of modern missions in India. Carey's testimony confirms that Christians have played significant roles in time past as nation-builders. Some of these were early missionaries who complimented their roles as proclaimers of the gospel as good news to human kind with tangible social transformation initiatives in their spheres of activity. Ruth and Visha Mangal Wadi portrayed Williams Carey, a British missionary, as one of India's nation-builders. Williams Carey was a shoemaker, pastor, and self-taught linguist, who arrived in India in 1793.

The most recognised religion practiced in India then and now, remains Hinduism. This religion has to a large extent influenced virtually most of India's institutions including public and private discourses.

William Carey captured this when he said,

... there was no difference between them and god. Man, only imagined he was separate from the deity. Therefore, anything they did was divine. (Cunningham & Rogers, 2007:51).

William Carey engaged what some call today *The Seven Spheres of Society*, namely:

5.1.1 Family

The family is the smallest community unit in the society. If families get it right our societies will be built on a sound footing. God, in Genesis 18:19, said, “I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement ...” Carey moved to address the evil practice prevalent at that time, the killing of unwanted babies and the practice of burning widows alive on their husbands’ funeral pyres. Imagine for a moment if Carey thought this was unspiritual work and therefore, he only needed to focus on Bible studies and prayer meetings and choose to only let the Holy Spirit convict those engaged in such acts to stop? Where would India be today with such practices continuing?

5.1.2 Religion

Religion permeates almost every aspect of our lives: social and spiritual. Carey and his co-workers did much in the area of religion by building the Church of Jesus Christ on Indian soil. He founded the Baptist Church of India, which continues to multiply till date. Carey also founded the Serampore College, which trained the first indigenous Indian Pastors and he oversaw the translation of the Bible into forty Indian languages so that the Indians could read it in their mother tongues.

5.1.3 Economy

William Carey introduced the idea of savings banks in India, pushed for reasonable interest rates and attracted foreign investments. In technology, he introduced the steam engine rail system. In medicine, he led the campaign for human treatment of lepers so they do not become social outcasts thereby demonstrating a biblical concern for individuals. In science, he founded the Agri-Horticultural Society, did a systematic survey of agriculture, and brought in the teaching of modern astronomy to offset Indians’ bondage to astrology. Carey also published India’s first books on science and natural history. He wrote essays supporting forestry conservation fifty years before the government did so.

When I read such coming from a missionary in a foreign land as it were, I am humbled and inspired to do something in my native country, Nigeria. For example, the economy

of Nigeria, as that of most African countries, remains in shambles today. Christians have a vital role to play in building the economies of these countries. Participating in stimulating growth in the economy of a country is synonymous with engaging in nation-building.

This was exemplified in the life of Joseph who served in what could be termed a heathen national government in Egypt – Genesis 41. Christians can actively participate in developing the economies of their nations and not just be concerned about profits for their businesses alone. Christians need to avoid the selfish mentality of private splendour but public squalor.

5.1.4 Education

Education is said to be a key factor in building good morals, integration, fostering peace, which hopefully could result in promoting national development.

Education in the real sense should spur the desire to serve in those who have been educated by its ideals. Christians could play vital roles in building schools, writing creative literary books, drama, and screenplays. The Church is one of the best placed institutions today which could influence the minds of our youths towards fostering nation-building. Carey started schools for children and women of all castes. This is where Christians can show a more excellent example of modelling education that is devoid of discriminatory tendencies or traits. Carey authored the first Sanskrit dictionary for scholars and started the first lending libraries in India. The early missionaries who came to Africa particularly my native country Nigeria did a lot in the area of building schools and colleges – not just theological colleges but also Liberal Arts Colleges which engaged in not just training theologians but professionals in various academic fields of Sciences: Engineering, Medicine, Aviation, Social Sciences and Arts.

Therefore, seeing the role of education in nation-building suggests that education should not only be left for the government to implement. Christians and the Church have a major role in promoting education in Africa. Excellent examples abound from the past in other parts of the world, especially the West. However, the Church in the West has basically surrendered education to liberal thinking, and this has brought more harm than good.

5.1.5 Celebration (The Arts)

Carey tirelessly promoted literature by translating and publishing Indian classics. He elevated the Bengali language, previously considered “fit only for demons and women”, into one of the foremost literary languages of India. He wrote Bengali gospel

ballads, capitalizing on Indians “love for musical recitations, to effectively communicate Christ’s message”. He also had a hand in developing the Arts in India.

5.1.6 Public Communication

Communication is an important skill. Carey brought mass media to India which helped greatly in bringing about many social reforms in the first half of the nineteenth century. He believed that “*above all forms of truth and faith, Christianity seeks free discussion.*” He set up the first printing press and established the first newspaper ever printed in an Asian language. Carey also taught Indians how to use it, as well as how to make their own paper. His English newspaper published articles which helped in bringing about many social reforms in India.

5.1.7 Government

Carey’s most spectacular and celebrated success in society came in the sphere of government through his involvement in nation-building activities. Carey worked through partners mostly believers back home in Britain, such as William Wilberforce, a Member of Parliament, who joined Carey in pleading the case for India. They advocated and persuaded the conscience of the English people to adopt a more “Civil Service” approach in their colony and instigate the initiation of reforms in India.

One big battle Carey fought all his life which still hasn’t been won remains the abolition of the caste system in India. The caste system remains in place, keeping hundreds of millions in abject poverty with no way out. Could this be the new challenge that believers in India need to take seriously and work courageously for its abolition?

Beyond India there are similar challenges – age long cultural practise, which are inconsistent with scripture that we need to work to transform through our outsider and insider (government) involvement in national building.

5.2 Abraham Kuyper (Nation-builder in Netherlands)

Abraham Kuyper is another good example of a Christian who engaged in nation-building. He was a Dutchman, a preacher, who later became Prime Minister of Netherlands. He lived through the upheaval years of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. With so many ideologies in the market field of ideas, his main passion was to acquire biblical knowledge. This took him to theological college where his Professor taught him that Jesus was just a man and the Bible a collection of myths which revolve around creation stories and so forth. Kuyper decided to become a Christian and was led to Christ by one of his parishioners. This act showed humility: even though he was a pastor, he humbled himself for a parishioner, to help him encounter Christ and to pray

for him. His biblical knowledge and faith created an avenue for him to set a solid foundation of the Christian faith to the Dutch Church.

Kuyper was not just a pastor, but *he also devoted himself to journalism, writing political and religious columns for the newspaper* (Cunningham & Rogers, 2007:58). He was almost an all-rounder who greatly influenced not only the Church but a nation through his pastoral work and writings/commentary on burning national issues. He modelled how one can be a Christian nation-builder. His convictions and active participation in various fields make him a role model who contemporary Christians could emulate in the quest to be nation-builders.

Kuyper is an excellent example of how a Christian can become a great nation-builder through prayers and searching of scriptures to gain more insights in carrying out activities which could bring about a deep sense of national identity and development in the citizenry.

6. Working for the Future

For Christians to be effective nation-builders, they must first look into the future and work towards utilizing every opportunity to promote value-based education in their Christian pilgrimage. Kuyper in one of his speeches once said:

We are working for the haul. We aim not for the apparent triumph of the moment, but for the ultimate success of our cause. The question is not what influence we have now, but what power we will exercise in half a century; now, how few we have now, but how many of the young generation will take a stand for our cause (p. 61).

Becoming a nation-builder demands that one must have a vision and divine plan for the upcoming generation (s). The aim of the nation-builder should not just be for the contemporary moment but one who is futuristically inclined. Jesus Christ looked into the future to bring about the salvation of the entire world. Christ followers must have a future mindset in their quest to be nation-builders.

To achieve this successfully, Christians need to get into influential areas of the society as Abraham Kuyper did in Netherland and William Carey in India in order to provide leadership in those spheres. We must not let our beliefs about prophecy and the end times keep us from doing everything we can to disciple the nations as Jesus urged us to do in Maththew 28:19.

In their book *Discipling of Nations – the Power of Truth to Transform Cultures*, Miller and

Guthrie (2001), talks about the power of the gospel to transform and develop the entire nation through discipling nations. Stanley Hauerwas (as cited in Adeney, 1995:65) states:

The metaphors that determine our vision must form a coherent story if our lives are to have duration and unity. Such stories create the context of meaning for the concrete moral rules and principles which we adhere. There is no principled way to separate the “religious” from the “moral” in such stories. We discover that our account of our experience needs to be reinterpreted in light of the biblical story (p. 21).

He is talking about development by what we think, development is more than working. It is about thinking and what we think. The attitude of our hearts will show up. St. Augustine recognised that people’s dominant world-view inevitably shapes the world they have in view. And he also recognised that the Church is the starting point for the development of that worldview as it fulfils its calling to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with the Almighty God (p. 22).

Therefore, Christians do have a major role to play in developing the nations through the Church as an institution.

William Carey, who blows apart most modern conceptions of what a “missionary” is supposed to do, thought the same thing in the eighteenth century. Carey wanted to introduce India to the scientific culture of astronomy. He believed that human beings were created to govern over nature. He saw nature as God’s handiwork, so he explored it and developed it as part of nation-building through science.

The world today needs nation-builders like William Carey. Nation-building today may take on other forms of social engineering and transformation which will promote non-discriminatory kingdom values for the common good. Christians need not only to remember the legacies of the many William Careys as nation-builders but also to demonstrate creative ways of achieving similar feats with renewed vision for a brighter tomorrow in their nations or place of assignment.

Despite the many challenges nation-builders like Carey faced, they were able to overcome these social, political, economic and other challenges and went on to become outstanding nation-builders.

7. Strategic Approach to Nation-building: The Nine Gates of Africa

7.1 Personal Dimension

Change starts from within one’s self, an internally generated awareness to see the need for a turnaround in all aspects of one’s life. In some cases, however, we may find out that we are incapable of helping ourselves. So, change could sometimes be externally

induced which triggers a positive activity within us. The Prophet Jeremiah prophesied about the New Covenant which God was about to institute for his people as a change remedy for their redemption from their persistently fallen nature. The basis of this New Covenant, the condition for its expression and validation is the internal change that must first take place in their hearts. Each Christian in Africa represents the future. Therefore, if we expect a brighter, renewed, and transformed Africa tomorrow, then Christians must be ready to make the sacrifices necessary now for positive change in the future. The future of Africa and the building of its nations today depend on individual, dwelling on undoing the past is a revisionist strategy for nation-building (Para-Mallam, 2009).

Influencing others comes in understanding the dynamics of change – one does not need to rebuild only that which is broken down, but also to deliberately maintain and improve on that which has been built. Innovation is critical because the process of sustainability should involve change without much pain. In August 2003, there was a United Nations sponsored conference in South Africa on a critical area of need in Africa: Sustainable Development (Gaye, 2012).

You cannot build without sustaining – and that is where influencing others becomes crucial. In order to sustain an effective nation-building, Christians need to understand the place of others – religious bodies, agencies and government in sustaining nation-building.

7.2 Spiritual Dimension

God has a specific assignment for each of his children. God is the Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer of this world, Christians are a privileged group of people, who have been saved from sin and transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, which is the kingdom of God. We are, in a spiritual sense, already present in the kingdom though our perfection is yet futuristic. This is because our perfection will only take place when the entire creation will be completely restored back to God.

Therefore, each Christian has a mission to do in the present – in this world. Biblical mission is holistic; Jesus addressed the physical, psychological, and spiritual needs of the people He met. He entered the experiences of those to whom He was relating. Let us, therefore, maintain balance of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission remembering that God is at all times the Creator, Sustainer and the Redeemer. Ephesians 2:10 says, “We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.” As John Stott (as cited in Le Peau & Le Peau, 2011:103) wrote: “The Great Commission neither explains, nor exhausts, nor supersedes the Great Commandment. What it does is to add to the requirement of neighbour-love and neighbour-service a

new and urgent Christian dimension (*Christian Mission in the Modern World, Mumbai: GLS, 1998: 25*). Forgetting this priority will naturally make a Christian self-serving, narrow-minded, fanatic, arrogant, aggressive and a legalist – rendering him insensitive to the immediate needs and concerns of others and thus jeopardise the priorities of God, making Christianity appear to others as a kind of Christian imperialism and hegemony.

The Nehemiatic model of nation-building shows him as someone who was a Governor and leader who engaged in rebuilding the broken walls of Jerusalem. This revealed his spiritual depths as a man of prayer – and not just one who ‘employed prayer contractors and fake prophets,’ to do the job of praying for him. He engaged in prayer himself, showing also how prayer can be a strategy in nation-building. He did not stop there! He prayerfully approached the leadership of his day – which is a practical way of engaging those in governance in his quest to promote and achieve nation-building for Israel.¹² We have, in the past, undermined the Gospel by reducing it – to be only a means to enter the kingdom of heaven.

If salvation is assured, we think our Christian responsibility is over. This is to represent what I see as *a self-centred spirituality* which is prevalent even today. Unfortunately, the missionaries who came from the West sold this almost hook, line and sinker to the new believers in the Global South or what is today the majority world. If that is the only objective of becoming a Christian – *the one dimensional entrance into the kingdom of God which many pursue with an uncommon zest*, then we should suspect whether we really entered or will ever enter it as we neglect the task of nation-building to those who have little or no concern about the godly values the Gospel espouses.

This to me is a truncated view of the gospel. The concept of God’s kingdom is not for self-serving people. It is for the followers of Jesus Christ who sacrificed Himself for the salvation of others. He came here into the world and died in the world not in heaven. He taught, challenged and modelled what living transformationally in this world should be. What we need is *a God-centred spirituality* – which is *agape* centred with a self-sacrificing mentality to help others. If we do not save the other person; we do not love him or her. We are not to seek an easy escape from this world as the people of Israel sought an immediate escape from the land of their captivity in Babylon. God, through Jeremiah, said to them to “*seek the peace and prosperity of the city [Babylon] to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper*” – Jeremiah 29:7. God wants us to remain here on this earth till we fulfil our mission, despite the difficulties we may have to face. Our Lord is not a Redeemer only but also, still the Creator and Sustainer. Let us be holistic in our vision and mission –

a vision for a holistic liberation. Let us seek the harmony and prosperity of our nation and pray and work for its growth, development and progress. When Africa prospers, we Christians also prosper.

7.3 Socio-cultural Dimension

A successful nation-building process involves the cohesion or unification of a society from the loosely associated groups that existed previously (social integration), what this means is establishing an ongoing dialogue between the different groups rather than within them. All groups must be involved in all aspects of society, because the exclusion of any one group will only lead to further problems. Nation-building needs a national infrastructure, with things such as transport and communication structures, the development of a national economy from regional or local economic areas, and a nationwide mass media for establishing a national political and cultural discourse as the fragile state seeks to build an enviable civil society. These assets must be accessible to all groups of the population and be used by them for transactions and communication.

In addition to this, an “active and open participation of civil society in the formulation of the country’s government and its policies is crucial” (*Christian Mission in the Modern World, Mumbai: GLS, 1998: 25*). Furthermore, the leadership must do all it takes to inculcate in the general public, the importance of democratic values, of the civic culture and civil society that develop and sustain them. The overall goal then, is to promote and increase social, political, and economic equality, and of human development, rather than just economic development or state-building, which is pertinent in any successful strategy for long-term democratic nation-building.

7.4 Political Dimension

Political involvement, engagement and governance are not mutually exclusive; politics is about governance, and whoever has control over what comes to you dictates what you get. What do you think would have happened if David did not have Hushai in Absalom’s cabinet? What about Joseph in Egypt or Daniel in Babylon? Joseph’s political involvement saved many from hunger and starvation – bringing about economic stability; Daniel and his three friends changed the political equation in Persia. Nehemiah, too, made a personal sacrifice in order to serve his people.

Throughout history, the common people have turned to the church in times of need. It has followed Christ in recognizing their suffering and giving them a voice to speak out against injustice and oppression. Moral bankruptcy, corruption, poverty, disease and ignorance: all clearly call for Christians’ participation in nation-building. Some African

Christian leaders have responded to the call in the past. Sir Francis Akanu Ibiam of Nigeria led protests to Queen Elizabeth of England during the Nigerian Civil War. President Matthew Kereku of Benin convened a reconciliation conference to apologise to African-Americans for the role of African leaders in the nineteenth-century slave trade. Archbishop Desmond Tutu played a strong role in liberating South Africa from the apartheid regime and continues to work for reconciliation (Idakpo & Theophilus, 2015).

African Christians need to understand that the destinies of their nations rest on their political participation. As the Bible says, “When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan” (Proverbs 29:2). Good people can enjoy life when the righteous are in authority, but people will always suffer under wicked regimes.

7.5 Economic Dimension

Economic reconstruction is essential to nation-building and comes after security has been established. Economic reconstruction is however intertwined with the state or nation-building process, and provision of employment contributes to the building of a national infrastructure and civil society, both of which are vital to social integration.

Judging by past examples, “the level of a country’s economic development had proved to be one of the best predictors of a durable democracy” (Nwaneri, 2014: p 30). However, there is a difference between economic development and economic reconstruction in the context of nation-building. Economic reconstruction assumes that there was a well-functioning economy, but that some catastrophic event undermined it and the economy must be put back on its feet. This is opposed to economic development, which refers to building a modern economy where none previously existed.

Obviously, economic reconstruction is the much easier option for the nation-builder, but which task is undertaken, reconstruction or development, depends entirely on the country in question. But if the case is economic reconstruction, it is much more likely that the nation-building effort will be successful because most of the factors of a stable economy were already in place. Money also needs to find its way into the local economy, so “contracts to rebuild utilities, roads, and bridges should give preference to local firms and contractors that meet local hiring quotas” (Gaye 2012).

Given this, in nation-building efforts, it is vital to get the economy back on track with the local populations in partnership with the international community. Now it is clear that a failed nation with a non-existing economy is more dangerous for free and fair economic activities than a functioning, but less liberalised and less open one. After satisfying the

basic human needs it can be differentiated by at least three phases of institution building. Firstly, beyond the basic administration, the mechanism of political consultation has to be built up. It means that there is a need of party formation and political participation of the society on the local and national levels. In essence, democracy has to be a grassroots initiative taking place in the village and town councils, community blocks, the schools, and other civic organizations. In the second phase it has to create – via local political consultations – the frame of polity, in essence, government, parliament, jurisdiction and constitution. Finally, the local society has to create the institutions to make them self-sustaining. The International NGOs are very active in this area. The promotion of “good governance,” anti-corruption programs, training of civil servants, security sector reform, election observation are the most relevant tasks that these NGOs and international organizations such as the EU, the World Bank or the IMF can initiate or provide good practices (*Christian Mission in the Modern World, Mumbai: GLS, 1998:25*).

There is common belief that one cannot engage in successful nation-building without engaging the seven spheres of influence in society. Some call these the gates or the grates, spheres or mountains. In fact, this has been or reviewed to represent eight mountains of society which are:

1. Religion
2. Family
3. Education
4. Government and Politics
5. Business and Economy
6. Public and Social Media
7. Arts, Sports and Entertainment
8. Science and Technology

7.6 Security (including food security)

Engaging the above mountains or spheres I believe will be a more comprehensive approach to nation-building in the twenty-first century. This is not only broad but a strategic engagement of the issues of our time in a manner that will sharpen leaders to be problem solvers in creative ways.

8. God’s Agents for Nation-building

8.1 Mothers

The saying, “If you educate a male child you have educated an individual, but if you educate a female child you have educated a nation” is not just a mere statement. It is a

true statement, of how critical and important the role of women is in nation-building. When you see a family that is living in peace, making progress and growing together, with a close look, you will discover that the wife/mother is a key player. From the biblical times and ours, women have been very instrumental as agents of nation-building. At a time when the unity and sovereignty of Israel was under great threat from the enemy nations, then arose a mother – Deborah. She wasn't just called a mother because of her biological children – she was called a mother because of the military, political and judicial roles she played in rebuilding the nation of Israel. Esther was a Queen, and she put her life on the line to ensure that the Jewish nation was preserved. Hannah's persistent prayer and cry made her to give birth to a nation-builder in Samuel. In our contemporary times we have the likes of Mother Theresa, the immediate past Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first female President in Africa, the former Director General of the Nigeria National Administration of Food Drugs Agency and (NAFDAC), Prof Dora Akunyili, who saved many lives through her energetic campaign against production, importation and distribution of fake drugs in Nigeria, and many others. These are good examples of women who have fought for the common good of their nations.

8.2 The Church

The church is one of the religious and social institutions in the society that has both the divine mandate and the social responsibility to preach the good news and make disciples of all nations. The church through the ages sees its social role as that of guiding the society into all truth. This makes it incumbent upon the church to concern itself with the problems of social behaviour as well as social justice. The church possesses the total truth which could be applied at any given time as its influence interpenetrates society at all levels.

The role of the church is bound to influence citizen's ideas not only religiously but also politically, technologically, economically, environmentally and socially. The church has the wherewithal to initiate social change and sustain it. As an agent of social change, the church brings light to the dark corners of the society. The emergence of the phenomenon of social movement shows how powerful the Church and mosques could become if utilized for positive purposes in society in the promotion of social justice in nation-building.

The totality of the message of discipleship should encapsulate the ingredients of nation-building as part of the core values of Christians who engage as witnesses of Christ in the public square. Values such as compassion for the poor and less privileged in the society – those living on the margins of society, love for God and demonstrated in love for one another and our neighbours. Understanding the concept of discipleship broadly to the

extent that we see this as beyond an individual event but a process, to also include the discipleship of nations are critical to helping Christians engage in the art of nation-building more intentionally. Social responsibility which promotes social justice for the common good should be pursued more intentionally as part of our commitment to nation-building as Christians. Christians should synergize their spiritual responsibility of seeking salvation for all peoples group side by side with the social calling in the area of dynamic nation-building. The call to nation-building is also the call to seek equity and justice for all in society before God. The ability to confront injustice in society and the status quo are credible Christian witness steps in nation-building. The prophetic responsibility of believers in the area of nation-building is a fulfilment of their priestly calling in society.

The crucial role of the church in Africa today is how to bring about transformation of lives among the citizenry especially the political class elites. This is a great task for the church judging from the level of moral decadence that has bedevilled the continent over the years. The prophetic role of the church is to declare the will of God in the political, social and economic life of the nations. Martin Luther contended that the church is put in possession of the word of God and this can transform the hearts and minds of men and renovate the society (Omotoye, 2007). The church is challenged, through its pastors, clergy and laity to ensure genuine religious conversion that will transform people's attitude to possessions, power and social prestige that reflects the demands of the gospel.

How best could the Church in Africa function to provide a positive influence in bringing about national re-birth and helping the process of *national renewal*? The Bible says, "you are the salt and the light of the world ..." Matthew 5:14a (amp). Have you ever wondered why God created light first before any other thing that was created? This is because light holds the beauty of a thing or a place. The beauty of a thing or a place is a function of the light that shines on it. We, the Church, are the light of the world; I mean we are the key to bring about the development and the beauty of our nation.

We therefore need to arise and shine. The church is the light of the world and because of this reason the church must arise and intervene in nation-building. This could be done when the church is deliberate about confronting societal vices and putting on the garment of righteousness.

8.3 Youth

It is said that for any society to obtain true reform, two groups should be targeted: women and the youth. Where the beat and the pulse of the nation are, there the youth

should be also. The generation of the young has always played a tremendous role in breaking and building nations. It is from this rank that arise idealism; the desire to change the world; the raw passion to push forward; the energy to execute these dreams and desires.

There are many examples in the Bible of young people rising as leaders who built great nations – David, Joseph, and of course Jesus himself. In contemporary times, we can think of youth leaders who have struggled and fought for a cause they truly believed in – William Wilberforce (who championed the abolition of slave trade), Martin Luther King Jr. fought for human rights and justice, Gen. Yakubu Gowon fought for the unity and sovereignty of Nigeria, Nelson Mandela also fought for equality, justice and freedom from the apartheid regime of his time. There are other countless youths around the world speaking their minds firmly about the truths they believe in.

Do Christian youths have a role to play in nation-building? A resounding yes! At times, this may seem a daunting task as there are numerous issues to grapple with. This is especially so when the system seems like an overwhelming barrier, but these should then be broken down into smaller sizes that can be strategically targeted. For example, looking at the institutions that make up society and targeting which of these are of most priority: Politics and governance? Corruption in both the public and private sectors? The Media and Entertainment? Education? The Economy? Building up national identity through enhanced religious conversations? Or, Peace-building through dialogue and reconciliation? There are multiple ways in which a young person can get involved in charting a direction for his or her own country.

Young Christian leaders should harness their potentials and ability to impact society and make a tremendous difference in their countries. Starting small with communities that are close to their hearts, and based on Kingdom values. Education should start at a young age, of what democratic principles look like; social justice; helping the marginalised, the poor and victimised in society; cultivating values that eventually build a nation. It has been perceived that the “fall of great nations” were due to systematic moral failings emerging on the form of a corrupt society, crumbling and weakening from within. Instead, to build a strong nation one needs to ensure strong moral values – spirituality for both the public and private life.

These common values shared by fellow citizens regardless of race, religion and gender are fundamental building blocks of nation-building and eventual fulfilment of a great nation.

8.4 Leaders

What common denominator do you see when you look at crises, massacre and genocide happening around the world? One person – there is always one person providing leadership in such heinous and barbaric human orchestrated evil. Little wonder Maxwell (2011) stated that, “The rise and fall of every organisation or institution is leadership.” This goes to say that leaders are either nation-builders or destroyers of nations. Leadership shapes our nations. Abijah is one of the examples of nation-builders in the Bible. As a leader, he demonstrated complete faith and total dependence on God which brought about the preservation of Judah, while Jeroboam led Israel astray by causing the death of five hundred thousand able men. Jeroboam is a typical example of leaders who place no value on the lives of their citizens.

9. Essential Prophetic Steps Towards Nation-building

9.1 A Prophetic Voice

There is the need for a prophetic voice in nation-building. A voice for justice, a voice which calls for focus on the needs of the poor, represents part of the process of building the nation. The presence of such a voice helps a nation; the absence makes a nation weak and compromised in many ways.

9.2 Integrity and Character

A combination of integrity and character attracts favour from God and man. Divine favour shapes destinies of not just individuals, but of nations. Church activities do not define integrity and character; it is who you are on the inside that reflects on the outside. Nation-building starts from the heart, not an ordinary heart, but a heart that is purified because the scriptures reveal to us that “as he thinks in his heart so he is”. Proverbs 23:7a

9.3 Authentic Burden

Prayer should be fundamental, not just supplementary. Some preachers think prayer can be supplementary, so they proclaim that “no amount of praying can make you rich except giving”. They argue that “all intercessors would have been wealthy people today, but most are poor”. Prayer here is supplementary. This ought not to be so; prayer must be fundamental, because Nehemiah created time to pray, as well as carried out specific actions in order to reach his goal and accomplish his objective.

9.4 Vision and Knowledge

Visionary prophetic leaders looked into the future; the past was only a platform which they used in the present to build bridges into the future. Visionary leaders

are bridge builders between the present and the future. They do not always dwell on the past.

9.5 Visionary Leaders are Prophetic Inspirers

“Let us arise and build.” Building families, communities, and nations. To succeed as a nation-builder, you must be no stranger to the throne of grace, drawing strength and inspiration from the Master-builder Himself.

9.6 Self-Sacrifice and Self-less

- If we are to engage in nation-building, we must not be wealth accumulators but servants. As leaders, concern for nation-building, we should be models worthy of emulation in terms of service to humanity sacrificially and not driven by the gain alone. They Teach Trust in God – FAITH (Father All in Thy Hands). Trust is the anchor of development progress in any building venture. Trust puts us in the realms of possibilities for all kinds of change.
- Aspiring nation-builders must be courageous and moral boosters.
- Seeking national change and continental transformation is a Herculean task, which cannot be left undone.

CONCLUSION

This Christian socio-ethical and Theo-political task for appropriating the common good ought to be realistic and holistic, informing our ideas and participation in the global public sphere – as exemplified through the personal narratives and writings of St. Augustine, Aquinas, John Wesley, the Niebuhr’s brothers, Novak, Hollenbach, and the hosts of other scholars and writers. They each taught us that faith in the public square is very different from imposing strict religious values; rather, it is putting to practice those principles espoused by Jesus and the Saints of Christianity. This means tuning our senses into a frequency that sees the world as a landscape that God can transform – as articulated by Loyola’s favourite phrase, *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam*. Translated: For the greater glory of God (Gaye, 2012).

This transformation is one that is prescribed in the Bible: turning society away from dominance, hypocrisy, pride, “greed, malice, deceit, envy, slander, arrogance and folly” (Mark 7:22-23) and towards Christian principles that espouse justice, peace, love, compassion and goodness. In the process of nation-building, we then set out to do precisely that—to build nations based on very concrete values already articulated by our Christian faith. This is an eschatological hope for God’s “Kingdom to come on Earth.” Our actions become intrinsically linked to the values we uphold and the vision we desire for all of God’s creation. Our task as Christians is not to hold back and be indifferent to

others, but to be genuinely prophetic witnesses and builders of nations and broken lives, in our quest to fight and speak against all forms of systemic evils, with love and justice without prejudice of the other. It is therefore important that Christians make a strong case for being actively involved in nation-building. However, one should be open to disagreements as to how these values should be translated into practical terms.

This act of participation requires openness to dialogue in resolving these differences. As well articulated by *Pacem in Terris*, we draw further strengths by knowing that our task obligates us to establish universal peace in truth, justice, charity, and liberty. This document clearly sets the basis upon which justice is grounded, laying the premise that God created all men and women equal, and as such we have rights and duties that are universal, inviolable and inalienable. Therefore, every human being has economic, political, cultural, and moral rights and duties. In detail, “every human being has the right to live, to bodily integrity, to the means necessary for development of life, to be respected, to worship God according to one’s conscience, to choose freely one’s state in life, (and) to freely meet and associate” (Gaye, 2012).

In our call to be universal or global citizens, we ought to draw from our own Christian root of being united through the African spirit of our collective humanity. We share a history with all peoples knowing that we are intricately linked. If one nation goes down we all go down and if one rises, we also rise.

It is my hope and prayer that this chapter will really galvanize what I call positive activism in university students, our youth and Christians in general to re-think their role in their respective nations regarding nation-building. I hope that they could go through a process of transformation which calls for a mindset reset in the area of nation-building, like never seen before. Who knows, maybe this chapter and indeed this book will inculcate the right values to produce the future Nelson Mandela for the coming generations in Africa.

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CHRISTIAN HUMANITARIANISM THROUGH THE LENS OF THE CHURCH IN THE MAJORITY WORLD

RUPEN DAS⁹⁸

Fundamental to any definition of spirituality is that it can never be something that can be isolated from the rest of our existence.⁹⁹

INTRODUCTION

Humanitarianism which has its roots in the Early Church has today moved away from its spiritual and missional foundations and is very much secular in what it does. Christian humanitarian agencies find themselves straddling the divide between being professional and relating to local churches and the mission of God. In the eyes of Christians in the Majority World it raises questions about what it means for an organization to be Christian and exactly what these Christian agencies hope to accomplish within the mission of God.

Humanitarianism, which is the response to human need in times of crisis, has deep roots in the Early Church, but today has become a secular global enterprise. Western Christian humanitarian agencies sometimes use the language of ministry, missions, and Kingdom work, but on the field operate no differently than their secular counterparts. While they speak about integral mission and holistic ministry, any kind of spiritual ministry is not integrated with their poverty alleviation and disaster response programs. The partners they work with in the Majority World have adopted the same values and ways of operating.

This is challenging for the church and Christians in the Majority World, because for them the spiritual is interwoven with the realities of daily life. To separate addressing spiritual issues from responding to human needs for food, shelter, water and a life lived with dignity is not part of their worldview. Responding to human need, whether it is in times of crisis or the needs of those who are destitute or marginalized in society, is a universal value embodied in most religious traditions. However, the complexity of poverty had not

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⁹⁹ (Bosch 1979:13).

been studied or understood till recently.¹⁰⁰ The theoretical term “poverty” is not common in sacred texts or among religious communities. Instead they refer to the “poor,” a term that is used widely in religious texts, or to a state of “ill being” in the tribal societies of Africa and the First Nations in Canada. This reflected the very deep traditions in the world religions of addressing human needs in one’s own community (Brackney and Das 2019; Das 2018). The Bible consistently refers to the poor. However, the poor and poverty described in the Bible is much more complex than just a lack of resources (Das 2016:43-92). Gustavo Gutiérrez writes,

Poverty is a central theme in both the Old and New Testaments. It is treated both briefly and profoundly; it describes social situations and expresses spiritual experiences communicated only with difficulty; it defines personal attitudes, a whole people’s attitude before God, and the relationships of people with each other... [it] is a scandalous condition inimical to human dignity and therefore contrary to the will of God (Gutiérrez 1988:165).

Poverty is complex and is experienced by people in various contexts and cultures differently. There is no one definition of poverty. However, there are different types of poverty. *Chronic* poverty usually lasts throughout the lifetime of a person and may also be generational. Chronic poverty is usually addressed through development projects, community empowerment, and economic policies. *Event-based* poverty refers to the fact that people may be pushed into poverty as a result of unfortunate events (such as conflicts, forced displacement (refugees), loss of family members, failed harvests, hyperinflation, and divorce). Humanitarian action addresses human needs in the midst of conflicts and natural and man-made disasters. It is time bound and is not concerned with chronic poverty, social change, or transformation.

Humanitarian need has reached unprecedented levels since World War II. Displacement is one of the key indicators of the severity of any crisis and today is a telling reality in the Majority World. In 2018 the United Nations reported that the number of people forcibly displaced had reached 70.8 million. (UNHCR 2019) It is the highest global number since World War II. The United Nations in 2018 also identified conflict as the main driver for humanitarian need over the long term, while natural disasters continue to affect people for periods of time. The report stated that out of 135.3 million people affected by disasters and requiring aid, assistance was provided to only 97.9 million. In order to provide this aid, US\$25.2 billion was required (UNOCHA 2018). The magnitude of the present humanitarian crises, the funds needed, and the personnel required to respond

¹⁰⁰ It was only in 1901 that the first empirical studies were done by the British sociological researcher, Seebohm Rowntree, at York University, UK (Maxwell 1999:2).

effectively is putting significant pressure on the humanitarian community as a whole, especially at a time when the major donor countries are withdrawing from global involvement and are becoming more isolationists¹⁰¹ (Beaumont 2019). The decline of the church in the west has translated into fewer funds for Christian missions and humanitarian aid.

Over the past few decades, as Christian humanitarian agencies have grown in size and impact, a number of questions have surfaced as to what makes a humanitarian agency Christian, and whether humanitarian action is part of the mission of God or simply the compassionate response of being human. The more specific questions are:

What is the relationship between evangelism and providing humanitarian aid?
The 2001 Micah Declaration explained the relationship between the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) and the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40).

Integral mission or holistic transformation is the proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ (Micah Network 2001).

The Micah Declaration finally provided the right balance between the verbal proclamation of the Gospel and the demonstration of its reality. Neither operates independently and each has significant implications for the other. While acknowledging that proclamation and acts of compassion are integrally linked, it did not clarify how both can be operationalized without perceptions of manipulation or conditionality.

Is socio-economic transformation, what Christian NGOs aim for, a biblical concept? How different is it from the Social Gospel and its roots in Liberal Theology?

Finally, what is the relationship between Christian humanitarian agencies and the local church? This has raised questions about ecclesiology and accountability.

These are not new questions, but in each generation they assume a fresh sense of urgency. There is a need to answer these questions again as the culture, the contexts, and the times change.¹⁰²

Because most of the humanitarian action is focused on emergencies and disasters in the

¹⁰¹ Humanitarian organisations received 27% less funding in 2019.

¹⁰² John Stott has addressed many of these issues through the Lausanne 1974 documentation and his numerous other writings, as have many others.

Global South, it is important to see how humanitarianism is viewed through the eyes of the Majority World. Humanitarian action is primarily driven by international agencies based in the Global North and funded by western donors and governments. They meet critical lifesaving needs during disasters and emergencies. Christian humanitarian agencies awkwardly straddle the secular professional world that operates on international standards, humanitarian principles, and international law, and the world of Christians and faith communities who are concerned with Christian mission. For Majority World Christians the confusion lies in trying to understand what makes any organisation Christian when it does not engage in Christian faith-based activities, ignores the local Christian community, and only does what secular humanitarian agencies do.

This chapter will first look at the historical origins of humanitarianism and then will explore the question of the place of humanitarianism within missional theology. It will then look at two specific issues. The local church is the focal point of a Christian community in the Majority World. When a Christian organisation comes in and ignores the local church, it is making a statement it doesn't realize it is making. The first issue is what is the relationship between Christian humanitarian agencies and the local church. Secondly, God is working through world events to accomplish His purposes. The second issue is that the world is experiencing a *Kairos* moment in Christian missions. Do Christian humanitarian agencies recognize that and are they able to respond to it? In this chapter, when referring to the church and Christians in the Majority World, it is referring to Protestant, Evangelical, and Pentecostal churches and not the Catholic and Orthodox churches. When referring to the Majority World, the author is referring to conflicts and natural disasters in parts of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Caribbean.

1. Humanitarianism in Historical Context

Though compassion has deep roots in the world religions, responding to humanitarian needs *outside one's immediate community* was not a value that was common in the ancient world. This obligation was always limited in practice to the immediate group, family or clan and very rarely included anyone beyond it.¹⁰³ Abu Zayd 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun al-Hadhrami (known as Ibn Khaldun), the 14th century North African historian wrote, "Only tribes held together by group feelings can live in the desert ..." (Quoted in Gellner1981:x) since the group ensured the survival and well-being of the individual belonging to the group. Biblical scholar Bruce Malina writing about collectivistic societies states, "Should a group member fall ill, the goal of an individual's healing is group well-being. Focus is on the ingroup" (Malina 2010:23). In sharp contrast

¹⁰³ For the concept of compassion in the world religions, see Brackney and Das 2018.

to this attitude, a concern for the foreigner in their midst, as described in the Mosaic Law, was unusual in the ancient world and made ancient Israel distinct from the practices of the surrounding Kingdoms as described in their written Codes and Epics (Das 2016:49-62). The notion of charity towards the poor who were not Roman citizens was not something that was common or valued in the Roman Empire. *Euergesia* (good works) in classical culture as something that the wealthy did, was a civic virtue and contributed to the general wellbeing of society. They gave to institutions like the city or the temple, but not necessarily to the poor. Some poor did benefit through the services that were funded this way. But the poor were never the focus. Church historian Peter Brown refers to the Christians in the Roman Empire (300-600 A.D.) providing for the needs of the poor as a revolution that impacted the social imagination of the times. (Brown 2002:1) It was the Christians, and particularly the bishops who were expected to be “lovers of the poor” (Brueggemann 2003: 30-31). This radically altered social values and the practice of charity within the Roman Empire.

The earliest humanitarian response to people who were displaced was first seen in the 4th and 5th centuries as poverty increased in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire and the cities were unable to absorb the poor, who were not citizens. The assassination of Emperor Severus Alexander in 235 A.D. precipitated not only a political crisis that split the Empire into three, but also an economic collapse which reached its peak by the end of the 3rd century when the currency no longer had any value. This was followed by the forced displacement of the Goths in 376 A.D. and the Battle of Adrianople (modern day Turkey) in 378 A.D., resulting in significant suffering.

Brown writes, “The existing structures of the city and the civic model that had been associated with them collapsed under the sheer weight of a desolate human surplus, as the cities filled with persons who were palpably “poor”. They could not be treated as citizens, neither could they be ignored.” (Brown 2001:8) It was the Christians who responded to the needs of the poor. Brown writes about them, “They [lay and clerical alike] were themselves, agents of change” (Brown 2001:8). Adolf von Harnack in his monumental book *The Mission and the Expansion of Christianity*, writes that the “Gospel of Love and Charity”, where the church demonstrated the love and compassion of God by helping those in need, was one of the main factors in the rise of the Church during this time (von Harnack 2005). The growth and impact of the Early Church was due to the fact that they addressed both the physical and spiritual needs of the poor and displaced. The modern practice of humanitarian response to the needs of people in a crisis *beyond one’s immediate community by an independent organization* first emerged with the experience of Swiss businessman Jean-Henri Dunant as he witnessed the suffering of the soldiers in the terrible aftermath of the Battle of Solferino in Italy in June 1859. He and

some friends founded the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on 1863 to protect human life and health, and to prevent and alleviate human suffering. In 1919 Save the Children was established to respond to the humanitarian needs of children in the aftermath of World War I. Numerous other organizations were set up across Europe to respond to the needs of refugees from the Russian Revolution and the Spanish Civil war. In the early days of World War II, Oxfam was formed in the UK to get aid to women and children in Greece. In the years following World War II and the founding of the United Nations, several UN agencies were established to address humanitarian needs such as food (World Food Program), needs of refugees (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and those of children (UNICEF). Though Henri Dunant was a devout Christian, the organization he founded was secular, operating purely on humanitarian principles with no religious affiliation. This provided a model for the other agencies that were established during this period. Christian humanitarian agencies have been at the forefront of humanitarian responses. In the post-World War II years, according to a 1953 study 90% of all post war relief was provided by religiously affiliated agencies. (Ferris 2005: 315)

In the decades that followed, though Christian agencies were pioneers in a number of humanitarian responses,¹⁰⁴ the religious motivations for humanitarianism were replaced by a secular worldview (Barnett and Stein 2012:5), as religion came to be seen as a hindrance to progress. (Jones and Petersen 2011:1292) The suspicion (sometimes overtly stated) is that local religious institutions because of their communal and evangelistic nature would not be able to adhere to the humanitarian principles of impartiality and non-conditionality. (Kraft 2015:395-421) As a result, there was a significant rise in secular non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that operated on humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law. In order to be relevant and respected in a changing professional context and to be able to access funding from governments and the UN, most Christian humanitarian agencies separated the spiritual dimensions of ministry from temporal assistance and as a result there isn't much that differentiates them from their secular counterparts.

In the past few decades, as the role of Christian humanitarian agencies has changed with little separating them from their secular counterparts, there isn't a proper understanding yet of how they fit into the mission of God. In a chaotic world, there is an increasing concern to respond to human need. Yet, within significant sections of western Evangelical Christianity, there is still confusion as to how to prioritize this within Christian

¹⁰⁴ In 1979, World Vision was the first agency to bring attention to the plight of the Vietnamese boat people. In 1984, World Vision brought BBC reporter Michael Buerk to Ethiopia and make the world aware of the magnitude of the famine gripping the country.

missions and integrate it with proclamation. Part of the confusion arose from the fact that many Christian humanitarian and mission agencies started using terms such as *transformation* and *liberation*, concepts coopted from the Social Gospel and Liberation Theology. Many Evangelicals who were Dispensationalists or NeoReformed felt that Christian humanitarianism had betrayed the fundamentals of Evangelical beliefs.

2. Missional Theology and Humanitarianism

A major challenge that Christian humanitarian agencies face is the lack of a comprehensive theology that grounds them in the biblical narrative of God's work in this world. Christian agencies, like their secular peers, respond on the basis of human need and do not understand how that fits within *missio Dei*, the mission of God. This is highlighted in the first five principles of *The Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*¹⁰⁵ which articulate the fundamental assumptions of humanitarian assistance being non-political and impartial in terms of religion, creed, race, and nationality. The emphasis is on aid being unconditional and based only on need. Yet, this needs to be balanced with a respect for local culture and customs, which invariable includes religion, religious values and worldviews, and religious institutions in society.

The origins of the missiological question of whether ministries addressing humanitarian needs and socioeconomic issues related to poverty should be part of Christian missions, are in the Liverpool Missionary Conference of 1860. Over the first 70 years of Protestant missions, the focus was almost exclusively on evangelism, church planting, and Bible translation. It was only in 1860 that the missionary agencies agreed to address medical and educational issues related to poverty. (The Secretaries to the Conference 1860:100-108, 118-120) Then, with the emergence of the Social Gospel in the late 1800s, Fundamentalist Christians disagreed with the Postmillennial theology of the Social Gospel. Being Dispensationalists, they did not believe in social transformation on this side of eternity and focused on a salvation based on forgiveness of sin and one that only addressed life after death. This has deeply divided the church till today, though efforts have been made to bridge the theological divide.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ The humanitarian imperative comes first. 2) Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone. 3) Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint. 4) We shall endeavor not to act as instruments of government foreign policy. 5) We shall respect culture and custom. (The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the ICRC 1994).

¹⁰⁶ This has been mainly through the three Lausanne Conferences and the related consultations.

For most non-western Christians, poverty is a glaring daily reality that cannot be ignored. Does the Bible and their faith have any relevance in the world they lived in and have anything to say to the poor and about poverty? The struggle of the Church in the Majority World addressing spiritual versus temporal needs was played out in Latin America from 1960s through to the 1990s as Liberation Theology and Pentecostalism emerged among the poor as competing visions of God's heart for the poor. Liberation Theology drew deeply from images of God's liberating acts in the Old Testament and saw a world where there would be freedom and justice for the poor. The poor through a process of *conscientization*¹⁰⁷ win the right to "say his own word, to name the world" (Shaul 1968:13) thus moving from being marginalized or oppressed victims to being agents of change. This is the beginning of social justice and the quest for social transformation. For Gustavo Gutiérrez, salvation is communal in nature. He writes it is "conversion to the neighbour." (Gutiérrez 1988:194) Thus a person is saved when he opens himself up to God *and* to other people. (Stott 1975: 141)

Pentecostal missiologist Wonsuk Ma presents a different vision of the role of the church among the poor. He writes, "Pentecostalism is a religion *of* the poor and not *for* the poor." (Ma 2007: 29) John Burdick writing in the 1990s critically assesses Liberation Theology based on his observations in Brazil. "I did not doubt that many people were having their consciousness raised by the Church. Yet I found myself puzzling over the implications of Brazilian field reports sent by parish priests to the Church's Commission on CEBs,¹⁰⁸ which made clear that in any given town those who participated actively in the Catholic Church comprised only a very small minority." (Burdick 1996: Kindle Location 12) Burdick goes on to state that in any given town in a predominantly Catholic country, there were more Pentecostals in the town than there were Catholics involved in CEBs. He wondered why "hadn't the CEB swept all these other people off their feet?" (Burdick 1996: Kindle Location 21)¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ The term was coined by Paulo Freire. (Freire 1970:19). Andrew Kirk refers to this process of education and *conscientisation* as "a subversive tool, which would cause the dominated to demand the removal of their shackles." (Kirk 1979:25).

¹⁰⁸ *Comunidades Eclesiales de Base* (CEB) in Portuguese. Christian Base Communities in Liberation Theology are fundamental social unit for reflection and action. Margaret Hebblethwaite defines base communities as a grass root, bottom-up development (community) that takes a different shape in every different culture and context. (Hebblethwaite 1994).

¹⁰⁹ Michael Bergunder gives two reasons why Pentecostal congregations grew faster than the base communities. See (Bergunder 2002: 171). First, the Pentecostals were not as strongly secularised as the Catholics and had stronger connections with the traditions of folk religions. Secondly, there was a difference between the lay people and the Catholic Church workers. Cecilia Mariz explains, "The Catholic Church opts for the poor because it is not a church of the poor. Pentecostal churches do not opt for the poor because they are already a poor people's church. That is why poor people are choosing them." (Mariz 1994:80). This is similar to the observation made by Wonsuk Ma.

Burdick called this the paradox of numbers. For a mass movement that was supposed to transform Brazilian society and politics, studies in the 1990s in a number of archdioceses showed no more than 3-4% of the adults were involved in CEBs while the Pentecostals made up 8-10% of the local population. (Burdick 1996: Kindle Location 111)¹¹⁰ While Liberation Theology experienced through the CEBs was attractive to some, the Pentecostal experience apparently addressed issues that many of the poor responded to. The Pentecostal experience in Latin America by the 1990s could probably be summarized by how the Chilean Pentecostals viewed their role in the midst of the poverty and turbulence of their times.¹¹¹ Christian Lalive writes about them.

The large painting which adorns Pentecostal sanctuaries depicts a restless sea surrounding an island upon the rocks of which a Bible lies open, illuminated by a ray of light from heaven. The symbolism is obvious. In a deeply evil world of misery and perdition, the Christian communities stand like islands of peace and repose. The task of the elect is to give refuge to the drowning, without a thought for how the angry sea might be calmed. (Lalive 1968:24)

However, what became increasingly clear is that the divide between the experiences of Liberation Theology and those of the Pentecostals in Latin America were not clear-cut and exclusive of each other, but were much more nuanced. Brazilian sociologist Cecilia Mariz writes that both groups promoted similar practices (such as biblical reflection leading to praxis, developing networks of solidarity), attitudes, and values (the human worth of the individual, overcoming the dualism of faith and life) that enabled the poor in their midst to overcome the problems of poverty (Mariz 1994:131-148). Michael Bergunder refers to the social transformation that resulted when individuals got involved with Pentecostal churches. It was not just a religion of escapism from the problems of society, but the status of women in their domestic life changed, there was behaviour change with the resulting economic benefits to the family when alcohol, drugs and tobacco were renounced, and there was social engagement in communities when they had the opportunity. (Bergunder 2002:163-86) While they may have been less politically engaged than other communities initially, this began to change as their numbers grew and they became aware of their importance in society (Bergunder 2002: 171-72).¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Paul Freston states that in 1998 between 11-15% of the Latin American population was Protestant and that most of it was Pentecostal. (Freston 1998:335-338).

¹¹¹ It must be noted that Pentecostalism in Latin America has moved beyond the poor communities and is now firmly entrenched in the mainstreams of society.

¹¹² American Pentecostal theologian Cheryl B. Johns proposed integrating into Pentecostal spirituality, Paulo Freire's method of liberation pedagogy. (Johns 1994:11-15). Others have noted how Liberation Theology is making inroads within Latin American Pentecostalism. See (Sepulveda 1998:189-203) (Petersen 1991:44-58) (Villafane 1993).

The tensions in Latin America between addressing spiritual needs versus the physical and sociopolitical realities of life were reflected at the International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne 1974 where Majority World theologians Rene Padilla, Orlando Costas, and Samuel Escobar insisted that responding to human need, and not just evangelism, was part of the mission of God.

Samuel Escobar wrote, “We can no longer afford a missiology that refuses to take seriously the social and political realities.” (Escobar 1982:111) Rene Padilla elaborated what that meant even further.

The most important questions that should be asked with regard to the life and mission of the church today are not related to the relevance of the gospel but to its content. To be sure, there is a place for the consideration of ways in which the gospel meets people’s needs in the modern world, but far more basic is the consideration of the nature of the gospel that could meet people’s needs. The what of the gospel determines the how of its effects in practical life. (Padilla 1985:83)

Both Escobar and Padilla were not espousing a Social Gospel, an Evangelical version of Liberation Theology, or a Christian humanitarianism that only responded to the physical and social needs of people. What they wanted was a Gospel proclaimed in words and actions that encompassed the totality of God’s redeeming work of His creation.

Human beings are physical, social, and spiritual, living in a created world, and God’s redemption transforms all these areas.

As Christian humanitarian agencies separated responding to the physical needs of people in crisis from any spiritual and missional paradigm, they were only reflecting a basic premise of western society, which was Plato’s dualistic understanding of reality that separates the physical from the spiritual and the supernatural.

Missiologist Paul Hiebert writes about a two-tiered western view of reality consisting of the natural world governed by the laws of science, and the world of religion dealing with faith, the supernatural, and the sacred. The two are distinct and do not necessarily intersect.

For people, cultures, and religions in the Majority World, there is no distinction between the secular and the sacred, between the natural and spiritual. The natural world and daily life are infused with the spiritual. The *excluded middle*, which connects the two tiers, helps people find meaning and answers for the issues they face in this world by connecting them to their faith and the sacred. They do this by relating to the unseen reality of the spirit world.

According to Hiebert, the questions of the *excluded middle* focus on the uncertainty of the future, the crises of the present life, and the unknowns of the past.

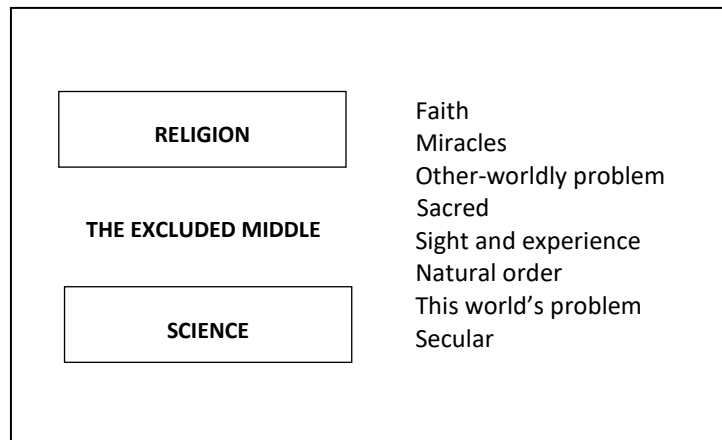


Figure 1: A Western Two-Tiered of Reality (Hiebert 1982:43)

Western humanitarianism operates in the secular natural world of science and does not entertain or address the questions of the excluded middle, the realm where people through the lens of their faith try to make sense of what is happening to them during a time of crisis.

Hiebert explains this as depersonalization, which has a significant impact on how ministry is done.

Depersonalization also occurred because western theology dichotomized people into supernatural and natural beings. Some saw people as spiritual objects to be converted, others as creatures needing social and material aid. Neither viewed humans from a holistic perspective. To be fair, it must be recognised that on the ground level most missionaries were deeply involved with programs of evangelism, relief, education, hospitals, social uplift and development. For example, faced with famine, most did all they could to care for the needy. But a theological dichotomy often led to fragmented programs that ministered to one or another human need, and not to integrated programs that served whole people. Theologically the problem was how to deal with people's humanness and its relationship to their divine calling." (Hiebert 1978:167)

Humanitarianism that originated with the Early Church and was able to meet the needs of people outside one's immediate community, has drifted from its spiritual and missional moorings. The large Christian humanitarian agencies operate like their

secular peers and often find themselves unable (sometimes unwilling) to relate to the spiritual priorities of other mission agencies and the local church. While God uses both Christian and secular agencies to demonstrate His compassion for people in desperate situations,¹¹³ these agencies are not clear if and how Christian humanitarianism is part of the mission of God. Because they are unable to integrate the spiritual dimensions of Christian ministry into their humanitarian responses either directly or through partnerships, or identify openly with the local church, Majority World Christians wonder what makes a humanitarian agency Christian and how does it accomplish God's purposes, other than the way He uses secular agencies.

3. Humanitarian Action and the Local Church

A few decades ago in the 1990s, most Christian humanitarian non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) walked away from partnering with local churches¹¹⁴ because they felt that they did not have the capacity or technical ability to manage projects, and had questions about manipulation and conditionality when churches do evangelism and recruit members in the midst of humanitarian crises. On another level, disassociating themselves from local churches and any type of spiritual activity reflected the Platonic dualism of their worldview, where they made clear distinctions between addressing physical needs versus spiritual needs.

In the cultures of the Majority World, places of worship are an integral part of society. They provide a focal point to define the religious identity of a particular community that distinguishes them from other communities around them. Anglican theologian John Inge writes that a local church in a specific place in a particular time in history is more than just a building where people come to worship. He writes,

Should not all churches be places wherein there is a history of divine self-communication, of 'sacramental encounters' with the worshipping community that inhabits them? Should not their presence in the midst of that community nourish the faith of that community? Should they not proclaim to the secular world in which they stand that God is present and active in the world? (Inge 2003:115)

¹¹³ God uses both Christian and secular organisations to be compassionate to people in crisis. "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." (Matthew 5:45)

¹¹⁴ It is important to remember that this chapter is referring to the Protestant, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches. The Catholic Church works primarily through its own disaster relief organisation called Catholic Relief Services (CRS), which is known as CAFOD in the UK and Development and Peace in Canada. The Orthodox Churches work through their own agency known as International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC).

Just as a temple or a mosque in a specific location identifies the existence of people who worship that particular deity, a local church affirms the presence and identity of the Christian community. In the Majority World, places of worship are sacred ground.¹¹⁵ For the Christian community, the church is a place for Divine encounters and spiritual renewal, and stands as a witness that the living God has people in that location who worship Him.

As some segments of western Christianity have embraced Plato's dualism of reality as part of their theology, church has come to be understood as a spiritual body that is concerned primarily with the afterlife and a place of refuge away from the concerns and realities of the world, with little relevance for life during times of crisis. What is not properly understood by western Christians is the fact that a local church in the Majority World is also a part of the social fabric of the community. A local church along with other institutions in the community (both religious and secular) helps create the community's identity.

Social scientists acknowledge that religious institutions such as churches, mosques, and temples are an integral part of communities. They not only address matters of spirituality but also provide and build social capital, besides being venues through which social services are provided. (Bodenhamer 1996:1) Plamen Sivov, writing from the context of post-Soviet Bulgarian society, asks whether institutions such as churches can have a role as agents of community development, when previously the welfare state provided services and managed change. While acknowledging that the local church as an institutional service provider has no distinct advantage compared to other NGOs or the government, Sivov instead describes the local church as a distinct community. He writes,

Whenever a communal spirit, high level of personal motivation or a personal approach to the sometimes dehumanized "target groups" is needed, the church has a lot to offer. The church cannot compete on the grounds of quantity, but it has no match on the grounds of quality or holistic personalized approach, when it comes to provision of different kinds of care for the vulnerable groups (Sivov 2008:214-15).

There is now a new awareness of how humanitarian agencies can partner with local churches, where each brings their strengths and expertise to work together to maximize

¹¹⁵ Even International Law (The Geneva Conventions) protects places of worship during conflicts because they are sacred to the community.

impact. An indigenous Lebanese Christian NGO¹¹⁶ with international funding, developed and implemented an extensive response to the needs of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and those internally displaced inside Syria, all through local churches (Das 2015:43-50). This provided a local identity to the humanitarian response rather than that of an international agency and strengthened the credibility of the local church. It enabled a local faith community to demonstrate compassion. It empowered the local church to expand its understanding of ministry. It also gave the churches credulity in the eyes of the local municipal authorities. And finally, it ensured a long-term ministry to the refugees after the initial needs were met.

It forged a new type of relationship between Christian humanitarian agencies and the local church. The indigenous NGO provided the back-office functions of program design, proposal writing, accessing funds, procurement of supplies, monitoring, and reporting. They were able to do what the local church is often unable to do – provide the technical expertise needed in specific humanitarian sectors (water, food aid and food security, shelter, nutrition, and economic development). The local church in turn could be a church and do what churches do – show compassion, evangelise, teach, preach, disciple, equip, and pray.

These humanitarian agencies need local faith communities where those in need can feel safe and have a sense of belonging. The local church as an institution in the community naturally has visibility, history, credibility and relationships. It is a natural and logical place from where humanitarian aid can be provided, as long as there is no conditionality or manipulation when the aid is provided. These local churches because of their knowledge of the local community and volunteer base are effective implementing partners for the agencies. (Das 2016) Based on lessons from Europe and Canada where large numbers of Syrian refugees were resettled, local churches were critical in integrating the refugees into the mainstreams of society (Das and Hamoud 2017). When a Christian humanitarian agency comes in to respond to a crisis and do not relate to the local church in a meaningful way, the larger community in that location usually has no clue that the humanitarian agency is Christian regardless of its branding. Research on humanitarian assistance shows that beneficiaries are often unable to differentiate between the various agencies that provide aid in a disaster context. (Elhawary and Aheeyar 2008) What this means is that most beneficiaries of assistance would not necessarily understand the difference between what Christian humanitarian agencies do as an expression of their faith in Christ, and what secular NGOs like Save the Children

¹¹⁶ Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD).

and Doctors without Borders (MSF) do. So, while humanitarian needs are met, it does not necessarily strengthen the witness of the local Christian community. It also leaves the local Christians confused as to why the agency does not relate to them and involve them in some way in the humanitarian response. The Christian agencies miss an opportunity to strengthen the local church by building their capacity and enhancing their witness.

It is important to understand that the political and religious frameworks from within which Christian humanitarian agencies operate are different than the realities that the church in the Majority World faces. Western Evangelical and Protestant Christianity are still very Constantinian, based on a Christianized culture, and access to power and an abundance of resources, rather than being based on models from the New Testament and the Early Church, where Christians were often a persecuted minority. Christians in many parts of the majority world are a minority where the dominant culture is not Christian or Christianized and the government may not be sympathetic to Christians. The question they grapple with is what does it mean to be followers of Christ and citizens of the Kingdom in the midst of hostile or unsympathetic authorities, just as the early Christians struggled to follow Christ in the context of a brutal and unyielding Roman Empire. What this has meant is that humanitarian organizations are viewed by local Christians as being rich because of the salaries they pay, the vehicles they drive, the houses the expat staff stay in, and the large operations they manage. Too often they lure some of the best staff from indigenous organizations, missions, and churches with significantly higher salaries, thus degrading the quality of local Christian institutions. Because of the significant foreign funds they bring into the country, they are able to influence government authorities to enable them to operate with a greater degree of freedom. However, this ability to influence the authorities is rarely used to enhance the social and political status of local Christians and churches.

Many Christians in the Majority World don't understand how a Christian agency can only respond to the physical needs of people without addressing spiritual needs. For them the spiritual is an integral part of who they are and of their daily lives. A crisis often surfaces existential questions which are part of the excluded middle. People affected by disasters don't necessarily want intellectual answers that religion provides. Instead they live in the excluded middle and want to *experience* the reality and compassion of a God who hears their prayers and will protect and provide for them – the reality of a God who call Himself *Immanuel*.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ More on this in a soon to be published book by Das based on field research entitled *The God that the Poor Seek*.

Christian humanitarian agencies by not responding to the questions in the excluded middle miss a missional opportunity. While acknowledging the necessity for legal and operational independence of Christian NGOs which prevent them from using government funding on religious activities, partnering with local churches using private funding raised from Christians and churches would enable there to be a truly holistic witness to Christ and His Kingdom.

4. The Kairos Moments of *Missio Dei* and Humanitarian Agencies

Most Christian humanitarian agencies focus on responding to immediate needs and on long term socio-economic change, just as their secular counterparts do. They see this as ministry, since it demonstrates the love of Christ. Those involved in community development use terms like “kingdom work” or see themselves as “building the Kingdom of God”. The most commonly used term is transformation. Their motivation is encapsulated in Micah 6:8. “And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Beyond that, there is limited understanding of eschatology, no awareness of historical theology and the struggles between the Social Gospel and Liberal Theology versus the Fundamentalists, and little acknowledgement of the mission of God and what He is doing at this point in history. What they are missing is understanding the context within which they operate, namely God’s purposes being worked out in the midst of both man-made and natural disasters. While responding to immediate human needs, they seem to be unaware of God’s move through history at any point in time. They do not consider themselves to be mission agencies but identify themselves as Christian humanitarian agencies and in some vague way believing they are doing “Kingdom work”.

Two of the many dominating realities in the Majority World are the forcible displacement of large numbers of people because of conflicts or natural disasters, and migration for socioeconomic reasons. The slums of the cities are filled with people who have moved from other parts of the country looking for work, and with refugees who have fled crises in their home countries. Out of the top ten countries that play host to the greatest number of refugees in the world, nine of the ten countries are in the Majority World. Conflicts and economic crises are also forcing people out from the Majority World to countries in the Global North. Europe hosts 82.3 million migrants and North America 58.6 million (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2019).

The movement of people (both forced as a result of a humanitarian crisis and voluntary)

permeates biblical history, not as a background to the main narrative, but as fundamental to God's purposes. Old Testament scholar and missiologist Christopher Wright observes:

Migration runs like a thread through the whole Bible narrative. People on the move (for all kinds of reasons) are so much part of the fabric of the story that we hardly notice it as a major feature. Indeed, when the text actually points out that YHWH, God of Israel, has been involved in the migrations of peoples other than Israel, some Bible translations put that affirmation in parentheses – as though to separate it off from the main story, even though it is an integral part of the theological context of the story. YHWH is the God of all nations and all their historical migrations and settlements (Deut. 2:10–12, 20–23) (Wright 2016:1).

The present global refugee crisis and migration is being used by God, as He has throughout history, for the Great Commission and for renewing His Church. Unlike historical missions where western missionaries went to plant churches in the Global South, today Christian immigrants and refugees from Asia, Africa and Latin America are revitalizing the church in the west.¹¹⁸ Church historian Phillip Jenkins writes about the impact of immigrants on traditional Christianity in Europe, UK, and North America.

Southern influence grows through two distinct but related phenomena. In some areas, Third World churches undertake actual mission work in secularized North America and especially Europe. Commonly, though, evangelism is an incidental by-product of the activities of immigrant churches, an important phenomenon given the large African and Asian communities domiciled in Europe ... When we measure the declining strength of Christianity in Europe, we must remember how much leaner the statistics would be if not for the recent immigrants and their children (Jenkins 2007:113, 115).

Migrants and refugees who are away from all that is familiar to them – lost and alone in their new location – seem to be much more open to God in their desperation than they were in their homes which they had left. Missiological researcher Jenny McGill writes,

Migration blesses insofar as it enables the person to experience God and thus experience a change of self-understanding (Gen. 32:22–32; Ex. 3). The nearness of God is perhaps no more acutely felt than during an experience of physical displacement (McGill 2016:204-205).

Today, this is most evident in the openness to the Gospel among the Iranian diaspora,

¹¹⁸ The author has numerous first-hand examples of Burmese Baptists being integrated into churches in Finland, Syrians in Sweden, Iranian and Afghan refugees in Germany and Austria, of Ghanaian, Caribbean, and Nigerian immigrants in the UK.

Syrian and Afghan refugees in the Middle East and across Europe,¹¹⁹ Chinese migrants across the globe, and many others. Many indigenous churches and mission organizations in the cities of the Majority World understand this unique ministry opportunity and have planted thriving churches in the slums and informal refugee settlements.

This is a *Kairos* moment in history when the massive displacement of people has made so many of the refugees and migrants yearn for an anchor in the midst of the turmoil and chaos of their lives. They find this anchor in the God who says “he will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Deuteronomy 31:6). Unfortunately, most of the large Christian agencies who work with local partner agencies and churches forbid any form of evangelism or Scripture distribution as part of their aid program, in keeping with the *Red Cross Code of Conduct*.¹²⁰ They fear that their local partners will make it conditional having to hear a Gospel presentation or receive Scripture in order to receive aid. However, as noted in the previous section, there are ways that this can be avoided without compromising the presentation in word and deed a holistic Gospel.

Within God’s involvement with His creation, there is a unique role for Christian humanitarian agencies to demonstrate the love and compassion of Christ to people who are in crisis or trapped in poverty, regardless of whether there is proclamation or not. God is compassionate towards all that He has created and not just His people. Jürgen Moltmann refers to the Jewish Rabbi Abraham Heschel’s concept of the *pathos of God*.¹²¹ This *pathos* is not what he calls “irrational human emotions”, but describes a God who is affected by events, human actions and suffering in history. This world is no longer the way He had created and intended it to be. Moltmann writes, “He is affected by them because he is interested in his creation, his people” (Moltmann 1974:270).

This *pathos* is contrasted with the *apatheia* of the gods that Judaism and early Christianity encountered in the religions of the ancient world, and what many non-Christians today experience with the idols and gods they worship. God sees human beings struggle with the challenges of life. Because of His compassion for His creation, He uses both secular and Christian agencies to ease the suffering of people affected by disasters and poverty.

¹¹⁹ There is an unusual movement of the Spirit of God among Muslims in so many parts of the world. See (Garrison 2014). Since the book was published there have been new movements among Muslims from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

¹²⁰ *Red Cross Code of Conduct* 3) Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.

¹²¹ Heschel’s discussion on the pathos of God is from *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

By being a purely humanitarian agency, many Christian NGOs are missing God's *Kairos* moment in history right now. While they operate out of a sense of compassion through the aid they provide, the impact would be so much greater if they partnered with local churches or mission agencies to provide a more holistic response.

By separating the humanitarian and compassionate dimensions of ministry from proclamation and other spiritual ministries, they are missing how God is using disasters and human displacement to strengthen His Church and draw hard-to-reach people to Himself.

CONCLUSION

Christian humanitarian agencies are not immune from the challenges that Catholic and Protestant missions have faced over the centuries. Contextualization has required mission agencies to understand their own Christian traditions and theology before they could contextualize the Gospel message and its expression in a local worshiping community in the countries and cultures they went to. More recently they are becoming aware of how their own socioeconomic and political worldviews influence their own theology and missional strategies. For Christian humanitarian agencies contextualization has been limited to the kind of food and other aid that is provided. Some will seek to learn the basics of the local language, and try and understand the social structure of the community they are working in. The assumption is that compassion and responding to human need is a universal value and does not need to be culture sensitive or contextualized.

The question is not whether compassion is a universal value, but rather how compassion is demonstrated. There is a growing awareness that aid provided with the best of intentions in the midst of a conflict has unintended consequences. Mary Anderson's work on *Do No Harm* principles provides a framework to create a contextual awareness of how humanitarian aid and humanitarian agencies unintentionally influence the dynamics between the different warring factions. (Anderson 1999) There have been times when Christian relief agencies have unintentionally gotten identified with one side of a conflict and by default the church and Christians in the country have been put at risk. In natural disasters, humanitarian agencies that don't understand local cultures and livelihoods, may end up creating long term dependency and destroy a community's ability to support itself.

International humanitarian agencies that identify themselves as Christian, need to understand what the label of "Christian" means. It identifies values that they uphold and

describes their motivation stemming from the compassion of God for His creation. What they fail to understand is that they are part of the global Body of Christ. By not relating to local churches and Christians they confuse people about who they are. They often fail to understand the social, political and religious nature of the context and the impact of their presence and how they operate. By adhering to a dualistic platonic view of human beings and focusing on only addressing the physical needs of people in a disaster, they are unaware of missional opportunities and the *Kairos* moments of God working in history.

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THE SHIFT IN GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD¹²²

HWA YUNG

INTRODUCTION

Almost everywhere throughout the Majority World or Global South, Christianity used to be called the “white-man’s religion”. But that is the case no more – the church has exploded all over the Majority World!

In this chapter I would like to look at this shift in Christianity worldwide, and what consequences and implications it has for the global church. In trying to help us understand what is happening, I may sometimes come across as being sharply critical in my analysis or comments. But my purpose is not to single out the problems or weaknesses of any national church or region. Even when these are mentioned by way of illustration, please understand that I do so with love and respect, and not in a spirit of unkind and judgmental criticism. I believe that all of us gathered here desire to have a clearer understanding of the issues so that we can together labour fruitfully for the advance of the gospel in the face of the tough challenges confronting us. In the process I will also raise questions which hopefully will help point the way forward.

1. The Shift in Global Christianity

In 1493 the Pope drew a line from the North Pole to the South, west of the Azores, and assigned all that lay west to Spain and that which lay east to Portugal. He instructed the kings of both nations to bring the Christian faith to the lands assigned to them respectively. Thus began the modern age of Christian missions, led by the Catholics. Protestant missions outside Europe only took off two centuries later.¹²³ In 1705, the

¹²² Presidential Address delivered at the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) World Assembly, 3–11 July 2019 at Bela-Bela, Limpopo, South Africa This was first published as *Shifting Currents: Issues, Challenges, and the Way Forward for Global Christianity* (Singapore: FES Singapore & Petaling Jaya: IFES East Asia, 2020).

¹²³ Lindsay Brown has drawn my attention to recent research that showed Protestant foreign missions apparently beginning as early as with John Calvin in Geneva, sending numerous missionaries out from the 1550s onwards throughout Europe to teach the true evangelical faith. We await with anticipation the publication of this research.

German pietist leader Augustine Hermann Francke sent two disciples to the Danish settlement of Tranquebar, India, at the invitation of the Danish king. From 1732 onwards, Moravian missions from Germany began in earnest, with numerous missionaries sent all over the world in the next hundred years. William Carey, often hailed as the “father of modern missions,” was in fact a Johnny-come-lately by almost a century. The 19th and 20th centuries marked the great missionary advance of the gospel in the world, from the West to the rest.

Throughout this period, the churches in the West (Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand) were largely dominant and those in the Majority World (Africa, Asia, Latin America and MENA) subservient. But the 20th century saw a rapid expansion of the church all over the Majority World. What took most by surprise was that by about 1980, the “centre of gravity” of the church had moved out of the West into the Majority World. At the dawn of the 20th century more than 83% of all Christians lived in the western world, with less than 17% living in the Majority World. Today, the figures have been completely reversed, with two-thirds and more of all Christians living in the Majority World.¹²⁴

Along with this numerical shift, western Christianity is also perceived to have declined in other ways. For example, in Europe weekly church attendance has dropped sharply. The United States on the other hand is supposed to be much more religious, with comparatively higher church attendance figures. Yet even there Christianity has similarly been undermined by modernity and secularism, though in different ways. Ross Douthat, a *New York Times* columnist and a Catholic, titled his analysis of the problems with Christianity in the United States *Bad Religion*. He argues that this is the result of the “collapse of traditional Christianity and the rise of a variety of destructive pseudo-Christianities.”¹²⁵ His conclusion? America is “not a Christian country, but a nation of heretics”!¹²⁶

Most of us are aware that liberal Christianity in the west has been gradually dying. But we would be deeply mistaken if we think that only liberals are in trouble. It is a crisis facing much of western Christianity, including evangelicalism. At a conference held at Wheaton College in April last year, Fuller Seminary President Mark Labberton commented on the predicament within North American evangelicalism today, where

¹²⁴ Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross, eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2009), p. 352.

¹²⁵ Ross Douthat, *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics* (New York: Free Press, 2012), p. 3.

¹²⁶ Douthat, p. 6.

many evangelical leaders appear to be blindly and uncritically supporting Donald Trump. He argues that “the central crisis facing us is that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been betrayed and shamed by an evangelicalism that has violated its own moral and spiritual integrity ... The crisis is caused by the way a toxic evangelicalism has ... turned the gospel into Good News that is fake.”¹²⁷

Christians in the Majority World will forever owe an incalculable debt of love to those from the West who brought the gospel to us in the past, often at great cost to themselves. Personally I owe a great deal to the missionaries, preachers and scholars who have helped and taught me so much, especially in my younger days. Moreover, there is still so much in western Christianity that is good, noble and worth emulating. Nevertheless, in recent years, I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that I have to think twice before I look to today’s western churches for answers. Rather, I tell Christians in my part of the world to learn from the best in western church history, their traditions and theologies instead. And if they have to follow the western churches of today in some things, to do so critically, indeed very critically!

However, many churches in the Majority World still function as appendages and extensions of the churches in the west. Organisationally and financially they may be independent. But in terms of theology, ways of thinking, and doing church and mission, they still adopt western models and answers uncritically. The problem is not only because many churches in the Majority World have been birthed through western missions or movements. It is also because the political and cultural dominance of the West have been so overwhelming throughout the 20th century.

These factors have combined to hold back many Christians in the Majority World from articulating alternative narratives of their faith that are both firmly rooted in Scriptures as well as culturally sensitive and contextually relevant. This failure or inability to articulate alternative Christian narratives within their respective contexts clearly have negative consequences. Firstly, many churches in the Majority World cannot mature fully because they do not have clear identities of their own but are always dependent on western churches for their identities. Next, despite the fact that the centres of growth of the church are located largely in the Majority World, the centres of power and influence remain largely in the West: denominational and organisational headquarters, theological institutions and established mission agencies, publishing houses and the media, an

¹²⁷ Mark Labberton, “Political Dealing: The Crisis of Evangelicalism,” Fuller Theological Seminary website (April 20, 2018); <https://www.fuller.edu/posts/political-dealing-the-crisis-of-evangelicalism/> (accessed Oct 29, 2019).

abundance of “trained” personnel and, above all, money. Given such realities, without the churches in the Majority World becoming mature in themselves, there can be no genuine mutuality and mature partnership between the churches in the West and those in the Majority World. Thirdly, in many parts of the West the churches are struggling. But until and unless the Majority World churches mature fully, they will never be able to work alongside those in the West with real confidence and contribute to their well-being.

2. Issues, Challenges, and the Way Forward

What are some important issues that have emerged in the process of this shift in Global Christianity? What challenges do they pose for Global Christianity and also for student ministry? In what follows, I will like to discuss five issues and their related challenges, although there are others also which need to be taken up when time and space permit.

2.1 Worldviews and the intellectual challenge

Western academia is largely concerned with modernity, post-modernity and the resultant secularism. It is often assumed that these are also the primary concerns of the Majority World. That is not so. Although modernity and post-modernity have affected the Majority World, much of the impact is largely surface. The reason is that modernity and post-modernity grew out of Enlightenment thought, which has shaped the western world for the past few centuries. But we in the Majority World are not children of the Enlightenment, simply because that is not part of our intellectual history. In fact many societies are still pre-modern. The modern concept that only logic and science, but not ethics and theology, can be considered truth and the post-modern idea that all truth is relative are not the controlling intellectual paradigms of the Majority World.

What continues to dominate many societies in the Majority World are the religious frameworks found within the respective societies, be they Buddhism, Chinese religio-philosophical thought, Hinduism, Islam or simply primal worldviews, together with traditional cultures everywhere. Because most of the Christian resources in apologetics, biblical studies, ethics and theology used for our training of students and churches are drawn from the West, many issues faced in the Majority World are simply ignored, or dealt with inadequately at best. So long as our training and theological formation are rooted primarily within a western framework, they will fail to help Christians in the Majority World address the challenges within their own cultural and intellectual contexts.

Allow me to give two simple illustrations. In my theological studies in the UK, we had to

study the proofs for the existence of God in our philosophy of religion classes. So I read all the right books and memorised all the arguments and counter-arguments. When I went back home and started ministering in my country, I found that, outside a tiny group of intellectuals and Marxists, almost nobody asks whether God exists. That simply is a non-question in much of the Majority World! Rather, the question is how we can know who the true God is when there are so many different religions. How then do we teach our students to present the gospel?

My second example is more troubling. In a conversation some years ago with a Christian scholar from India, with a British PhD in theology, I asked him about a problem facing the church there. In India there are some very able Hindu thinkers and journalists who regularly attack the Christian faith in public. So I asked my Indian PhD friend, “Can you think of any Christian scholars in India who can stand toe to toe with these philosophers and journalists, and rebut their attacks publicly?” He thought for a moment and then replied, “I can’t think of any.”

Herein lies the challenge for those of us from the Majority World. Unless we do the necessary theological homework, the churches from which we come will never be able to fully articulate the gospel with clarity and confidence to our own peoples.

2.2 The growth of Majority World churches and the recovery of the supernatural

In referring to the advance of the gospel in his work, Paul speaks of “what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience – by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God” (Rom 15:18). Over the past hundred years, the rapid growth of churches in the Majority World has been driven largely by the same “signs and wonders” that Paul speaks of. These include deliverance from demonic powers and healing, miracles and prophecies, dreams and visions, and the like. It should be emphasised that this is not primarily the influence of American Pentecostalism from Azusa Street making inroads into the Majority World. In many cases it was simply indigenous believers taking the Bible seriously and acting on its teachings, or the Holy Spirit coming in revival and manifesting His awesome power to the church. Under the influence of the Enlightenment, western Christianity in the modern era has either rejected the supernatural as superstition and outdated, as with liberals, or relegated the miraculous to the realm of history, if they believe in it at all. Here at least liberals are consistent but not evangelicals. Liberals reject the miraculous both in the Bible and in the world today; many evangelicals fight tooth and nail to defend the miraculous in the Bible but cannot cope with it when it happens today! Consequently, much of the western church has failed to address this whole area adequately, whether it

is about the signs and wonders of the Spirit or demonic activity in the world. The result, as Fuller Professor Charles Kraft describes it, is that “Enlightenment Christianity is powerless.”¹²⁸

Herein lays a major flaw in western Christianity – its captivity to an anti-supernaturalistic Enlightenment worldview. In my years at university in the West, issues related to the supernatural were treated as largely irrelevant within the student movement. It is not as if these issues are non-existent in the West. Outside Pentecostal circles, the signs and wonders of the Holy Spirit have been making a slow but significant comeback into western Christianity in the past fifty years. Moreover, one just has to read a book like, *I Believe in Satan’s Downfall*¹²⁹ by the late Michael Green, to see the reality of demonic powers everywhere in daily life. And when ceremonies are now held openly to throw hexes and curses on Donald Trump and others, it shows how deeply witchcraft, until recent years underground, has penetrated public life in the West! Could this blindness to the spiritual realm be one reason for the decline in western Christianity? Be that as it may, surely one of the challenges before us is how our movements can help students recover the supernatural dimension in our Christianity today.

2.3. Ministry and mission by human management versus dependence on the Spirit

Latin American theologian Samuel Escobar, a former President of IFES, has critiqued a trend within evangelical missiology in the later part of the 20th century, associated especially with the Church Growth School. He calls this “managerial missiology” and describes it as “an effort to reduce Christian mission to a manageable enterprise.”¹³⁰ To achieve this, reality is simplified into an understandable picture. “Missionary action is thus reduced to a linear task that is unfolded into logical steps to be followed in a process of management by objectives.”¹³¹ Thus, for example, mission goals are quantified by the number of converts won or churches planted, and strategic plans are laid to bring about the desired results. The whole exercise is based on secular strategic planning approaches, built on the scientific method which produced our technological age. I would like to suggest that Escobar’s critique of managerial missiology is part of a much wider problem in the modern church. Is it not the case that without realising it much of our thinking has succumbed to modernity’s approach to doing church and

¹²⁸ Charles Kraft, *Christianity with Power: Your Worldview and Your Experience of the Supernatural* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1989), pp. 37-49.

¹²⁹ Michael Green, *I Believe in Satan’s Downfall* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981).

¹³⁰ Samuel Escobar, “Managerial Missiology,” in *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations*, eds., John Corrie, et. al. (Nottingham: Intervarsity Press, 2007), pp. 216-218.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

mission? Do not most of us assume that if only there are sufficient resources, enough suitably trained personnel, adequate finances and sound management, the church will grow and our mission goals certainly achievable within our human time frame?

Ultimately, there are *two major problems* with this approach. The *first* is that reducing our mission goals primarily to quantitative measures of how many converts are made and churches planted falls far short of Christ's command to "make disciples." As one writer puts it: "When we aim only at what we can measure, we ignore the most important goals of character, discipleship and holiness, which we cannot predict or quantify without falling into legalism ... Lukewarm churches are the results of this assembly line mindset."¹³²

The *second* problem is that both the New Testament and church history have demonstrated again and again that the gospel never advances by mere human methods alone. Rather, what we find is that revivals and major advances of the church are invariably the result of two powerful intertwining forces at work. On the divine side we see the initiative and power of the Holy Spirit, and on the human side we find less tangible factors such as radical holiness, prevailing prayer, obedience and sacrifice. These, and not human management and strategic planning, are foundational. "The wind blows where it wishes ... So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). In the past hundred years, we see this repeatedly in the growth of the church in the Majority World. How else can you explain the phenomenal growth of Pentecostal churches in Latin America in the 20th century? How do you explain the ministry of Prophet Harris, who in eighteen months of ministry, from July 1913 to January 1915, in Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, brought some 200,000 to faith and baptised more than 100,000?¹³³ Similarly, what else can account for the ministry of Simon Kimbangu, who preached for only a few months in Congo in 1921 and was then thrown into prison by the Belgian colonial authorities for the next thirty years, yet left behind churches whose total membership are in the millions today?¹³⁴

Allow me to give one more example from Asia. The greatest Chinese evangelist and revivalist of the first half of the 20th century was John Sung, a brilliant American-trained

¹³² Jim Plueddemann, "SIM's Agenda for a Gracious Revolution," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol 23 (1999), pp. 156-160.

¹³³ Gordon MacKay Haliburton, *The Prophet Harris* (New York & London: Oxford University Press, 1973); David A. Shank, *Prophet Harris, The "Black Elijah" of West Africa*, abridged by Jocelyn Murray (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994).

¹³⁴ Marie-Louise Martin, *Kimbangu: An African Prophet and His Church* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975).

PhD. When he returned to China in 1927 in response to God's call, he found that the Protestant churches were growing only slowly despite the great efforts of the missionaries. As he prayed God revealed to him the heart of the problem. Western missions had brought in thousands of missionaries, and built many of the finest orphanages, hospitals, schools and universities in China. And both western and Chinese leaders were depending on these human resources and not the Holy Spirit for growth. Sometime before his death in 1944, John Sung revealed that God had showed him that a great revival was coming to China. But first all the missionaries must leave. As he predicted, shortly after his death, every missionary had to leave China with the Communist takeover in 1949. Everything that the western missions brought was confiscated by a hostile government. And then, under intense persecution and left with nothing but God, the revival came! As they say, the rest is history.¹³⁵

Human resources, good management and strategic planning all have their proper place in the work of the church. But for the gospel to advance, ultimately our dependence has to be on God and on Him alone. How then do we reshape our discipling and formation processes for our students to take this reality into account? Crucial to this is the recovery of a life of prayer which has to begin in their student days!

2.4 The challenge of shallow discipleship or nominalism

The rapid growth of Christianity in the Majority World does not mean that everything is well. In many parts of the Majority World nominalism is a serious challenge and leadership problems persist in churches everywhere. In Asia, for example, in spite of the wildfire church growth, especially in 1950s to the 1970s, Protestant churches in South Korea are facing a crisis today. Church growth began slowing in the 1980s, and plateaued or began declining in the early 1990s. Contributory factors include church disunity, lack of social engagement, and overemphasis on megachurches, inadequate pastoral oversight and failures in pastoral leadership. And similar problems can be found in many churches all over Asia.

Likewise, in Africa, the Rwandan genocide which killed some 800,000 people took place despite the country being over 90% Christian. In many African cities, the proliferation of the Prosperity Gospel is particularly acute, with many poor being conned out of their hard-earned savings through succumbing to false assurances of multifold returns on their supposedly sacrificial giving! Elsewhere, in the cities of the Majority World, there

¹³⁵ William E. Schubert, *I Remember John Sung* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 1976), pp. 65f. See also John Sung, *The Diary of John Sung—Extracts from His Journals and Notes*, compiled by Levi (Singapore: Genesis Books, 2012), pp. 79, 197f, 210, 231, 369 & 383.

have been problems of all sorts with senior church leaders and megachurch pastors. All these are contributing to shallowness of discipleship throughout the churches in the Majority World. Clearly, in many parts of the Majority World church, Christian fundamentals are not in place, especially in relation to commitment, holiness and character formation. But what makes this even more serious is that this is now paralleled by the decline of the quality of Christian discipleship in the West today, under the influence of liberal theology from within and secularist pressures from without.

This is perhaps most clearly seen in the realm of sexual ethics, relating to the LGBT and same-sex marriage issue in particular. Broadly speaking, liberals have given up the fight because they no longer accept the clear teachings of the Bible on this. Western evangelicals are doing their level best to draw the line here, in spite of intense liberal and secularist pressure. But the problem is that many have already compromised the plain teachings of the Bible on divorce and remarriage. How then can they possibly expect to succeed in maintaining the authority of the Bible on the same-sex issue?

You cannot compromise on one aspect of biblical teaching and draw the line on another. Thus the problem of shallow discipleship is clearly a threat to global Christianity at large and to Christianity in the Majority World in particular. Unless this is addressed, churches in the Majority World will never properly mature, however spectacular their numerical growth may be.

It is at this point that Christians in the Majority World need to ask what lessons they can learn from the highest traditions of spiritual formation found in church history. These must include great biblical preaching, the best of monastic spirituality, Puritan pastoral care, Lutheran pietism, Methodism's small groups with its holiness agenda, and costly sacrifice which empowers mission advances. There are no short cuts in discipleship.

2.5 Confidence in the gospel of Christ

The late 1940s to the 1960s were the heyday of the anti-colonial movement. Beginning in the late 1960s the liberal wing of the church began calling for a moratorium on or a withdrawal of missionaries. Western missions were perceived to be a new form of imperialism and thus missionaries were told to "Go home" so that the churches in the Majority World can find their own identities.

The whole idea of preaching the gospel and converting others to Christianity was derogated as religious imperialism. Furthermore, secular anthropologists often accused missionaries of destroying the cultures of indigenous peoples because the process of

conversion also took the converts out of their former cultures.¹³⁶ All this gave rise to a pervasive “western guilt complex”¹³⁷ about the whole missionary movement.

Addressing this phenomenon head-on, the late African scholar and Yale Professor Lamin Sanneh has demonstrated cogently that the accusation of missionaries being culture destroyers does not find support on the ground. In fact, through translating the Bible into the indigenous languages, missionaries actually helped preserve many languages and cultures from extinction. In other words, in many parts of the Majority World they were in fact the preservers of cultures, not the destroyers.¹³⁸

More recent studies have gone even further to vindicate the whole modern missionary enterprise as a major factor in bringing social and material advancement to many parts of the Majority World. This has been demonstrated by the social scientist Robert Woodberry in a piece of ground-breaking and prize-winning research published in the prestigious *American Political Science Review*.¹³⁹ He shows that Protestant missionaries in the past hundred and more years made major contributions to socio-political and economic advances wherever they have laboured.

Areas where Protestant missionaries had a significant presence in the past are on the average more economically developed today, with comparatively better health, lower infant mortality, lower corruption, greater literacy, higher educational attainment (especially for women), and more robust membership in nongovernment associations.¹⁴⁰

In fact missionaries contributed greatly to the spread of stable democracy around the world. He argues that they “were a crucial catalyst initiating the development and spread of religious liberty, mass education, mass printing, newspapers, voluntary organisations, and colonial reforms, thereby creating the conditions that made stable

¹³⁶ For a neat introduction and response to the accusation that missionaries destroy cultures, see Don Richardson, “Do Missionaries Destroy Cultures?” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movements: A Reader*, 4th Ed., eds. Ralph Winter & Steve Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), pp. 486-492.

¹³⁷ For an introduction to the phenomenon of the “western guilt complex,” see Douglas Murray, *The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity and Islam* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2018), pp. 157-177.

¹³⁸ Lamin Sanneh, “Christian Missions and the Western Guilt Complex,” *The Christian Century* (April 8, 1987), pp. 331-334, (also accessible in <https://www.religion-online.org/article/christian-missions-and-the-western-guilt-complex/>). See, for a more detail treatment, *Translating the Message—The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989).

¹³⁹ Robert D. Woodberry, “The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 106 (2), (May 2012), pp. 244-274.

¹⁴⁰ Andrea Palpant Diley, “The Surprising Discovery About those Colonialist, Proselytizing Missionaries,” *Christianity Today* (Jan/Feb, 2014), pp. 34-41; here p. 40.

democracy more likely.”¹⁴¹ As one of Woodberry’s research supervisors said, “you couldn’t think of a more unbelievable and offensive story to tell a lot of secular academics.”¹⁴²

As the above indicates, in recent years doctrinally conservative and orthodox Christians of all traditions in the West have been under secularist attacks in various forms in academia and the media. The churches there have not been helped by the public disclosure of many of its internal failures, including revelations of widespread sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and the excesses of megachurch pastors and TV evangelists. Many western Christians, especially liberals, appear to have lost confidence in the gospel and its message of redemption for the world. Even if they believe in it, they find it increasingly difficult to articulate their convictions openly because of hostile public opinion.

One of the clearest examples of this public hostility to Christianity was seen in the debate over the new European Union Constitution in 2004. The row was over whether Christianity should be cited as one of the sources of European civilisation. Many intellectuals and academics argued against it because they treated Christianity not only as irrelevant to public life, but an obstacle to the evolution of a secular Europe.¹⁴³ This led the North American Catholic observer George Weigel to ask, “Why did so many of Europe’s political leaders insist that the new constitution for Europe include a deliberate act of historical amnesia, in which a millennium and a half of Christianity’s contributions to European understanding of human rights and democracy were deliberately ignored – indeed denied?”¹⁴⁴ Militant secularists in a post-Christian Europe seemed bent on denying that Christianity made any significant contribution to the well-being of European society despite its long Christian history!

But this is not how Christianity is being viewed in many parts of the Majority World. For example, the late David Martin, Emeritus Professor of Sociology of London School of Economics and Political Science, has studied in detail the impact of Christianity through the rapid growth of Pentecostalism among the Latin American poor in the second half of the 20th century. He shows “how those things ... that lie at the social margin can, nevertheless, be powerful sources of change ... how poor and marginal people could

¹⁴¹ Woodberry, p. 244.

¹⁴² Christian Smith, quoted in Diley, p. 37.

¹⁴³ George Weigel, *The Cube and the Cathedral: Europe, America, and Politics without God* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), esp. pp. 54-68.

¹⁴⁴ Weigel, p. 20.

initiate a revision of consciousness amounting to a cultural revolution.”¹⁴⁵ He further argues that “morally, evangelicals may be conservative, but sociologically, they are one of the forward sectors of radical social change.”¹⁴⁶ This has resulted in the upward socioeconomic mobility of the Pentecostal poor in Latin America, and thereby the gospel through Pentecostalism has been and is transforming the social landscape of Latin America.

This positive view about the role of Christianity is not just seen among those on the social margins. At the other end of the scale are concerns expressed publicly by many non-Christian Chinese intellectuals today. As China marches relentlessly onwards towards becoming a world power, they are concerned about how it can become a nation that is just, righteous, corruption-free, economically strong and fully democratic. Many of these thought leaders in China are not Christians, yet they call themselves “cultural Christians”! Why? Because, having done their intellectual homework, they have come to believe that only Christian values can provide a sufficient foundation upon which China’s future can be built.¹⁴⁷

Some years ago I personally met one such person. She was a full engineering professor in China and on sabbatical at Oxford University. On finding that I was a Christian theologian, she just blurted out, “You people must come to China to preach the gospel.” When I questioned further why she had said that, her reply as a non-Christian was, “China needs God. Otherwise she has no future!” Thus in stark contrast to European secularist thinkers who deny any relevance for Christianity to their history, many Chinese intellectuals see Christ as their primary hope for China’s future!

The point is this: whilst many in the western church have lost their confidence in the gospel as “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16), that is not the same story in the Majority World. In many societies and cultures in Africa, Asia, Latin America and MENA, the encounter with Christ is recent and the experiences of its efficacy and power are fresh and liberating. How can this freshness and confidence in its saving power revitalise global Christianity today?

¹⁴⁵ David Martin, *Forbidden Revolutions: Pentecostalism in Latin America and Catholicism in Eastern Europe* (London: SPCK, 1996), p. 66.

¹⁴⁶ Martin, p. 60.

¹⁴⁷ On “Cultural Christians,” see Samuel Ling and Stacey Bieler, eds., *Chinese Intellectuals and the Gospel* (San Gabriel, CA: China Horizon, 1999).

CONCLUSION

Why are these issues important? In the above I have looked at five areas that pertain to the shift of Christianity's numerical centre from the West into the Majority World. Why is it important to discuss these? Perhaps some of you think that what I am saying is not relevant to the church in the West. If that is your view, then allow me to respectfully respond by suggesting that perhaps you are still locked in the outmoded paradigm of the West being better than the rest. Given the state of the church in the West, sticking to such a narrow paradigm can only spell spiritual suicide. For the rest, I believe that addressing these issues by the global church at large, and not just by Christians in the Majority World, will lead to four related positive outcomes.

First, it will enable Christians in the Majority World to develop clear and confident indigenous identities of their own. *Second*, the development of mature Christian identities and theologies in the Majority World will also provide a needed corrective to western theology, especially in areas where Christians in the West had been blindsided by their own histories and cultures. *Third*, only if that happens, can there be true mutuality and mature partnerships between the churches in the West and those in the Majority World. *Finally*, such a maturity will empower Christians in the Majority World to work with full confidence alongside western Christians in world mission, including the re-evangelisation of the West.

Almost exactly forty years ago, while doing graduate theological studies in London, an Asian Christian was graciously invited by the late Rev. John Stott to his home. Upon his arrival, the first thing that John Stott said to him was something which he would never forget: "As the western church continues to decline, we are looking to Christians from the non-western world for leadership!" Way back then, John Stott could see clearly what was happening worldwide. Already then on behalf of the western church he was calling on us in Africa, Asia, Latin America and MENA to go and help revitalise western Christianity. How will we respond to this call?

Will we from the Majority World have the faithfulness and courage to embrace our God-given task for this generation? Will those of you from the western world have the grace and humility to allow Christians from the churches, most of which were founded by your forefathers, to work alongside you in full partnership and to serve you?

Allow me to address two further comments to those of us from the Majority World. If we are going to fully embrace our God-appointed destiny for global Christianity, we must

do two things at least. *First*, resist the temptation to migrate to the West unless we have a definite and clear calling to leave our homeland in the Majority World. If we emigrate because of the attraction of higher economic standards and more lucrative career prospects in the West, we will lose our calling to be part of God's wonderful purposes in the global church. *Second*, if we in the Majority World are to live out our calling to serve the global church, we must learn one important lesson from western church history. It is simply that the advance of the Kingdom of God will inevitably involve costly sacrifice. This sacrifice includes the churches giving of their best and most able sons and daughters for service in church and mission. One of the great weaknesses of the churches in the Majority World is that we send almost all of our best and brightest into lucrative professions such as medicine, law, finance, engineering and business consultancy. But few, too few, are given to God like little Samuel of old! Without consecrating our best and most gifted to God for His service in church and mission, the Majority World will at best produce a stunted church which never reaches its full potential. We will fail to contribute to the leadership that is desperately needed in the global church today. How will we in Africa, Asia, Latin America and MENA respond to God's call?

Finally, the theme of this World Assembly is "Messengers of Hope," which is a call to the students of our generation to bring the Gospel of hope in Christ to all. As we move forward into the increasingly complex and challenging world of the 21st century, we must recognise that the task of proclaiming Christ in the world is far too big for any one group or region to dare think that they can manage it all on their own. The way forward for the global church has to be one of genuine Christian partnership of all churches, between North and South, the West and the Majority World, and between rich and poor whether materially or spiritually. May God grant that we may have the grace and humility to work together for the advance of His Kingdom! That will make it possible for us to become fruitful "Messengers of Hope" for a world lost and without true and lasting hope.

THE QUESTIONS FOR POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICAN MISSIOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION (4IR)

EUGENE BARON

INTRODUCTION

South African missiology has seen a shift in its praxis since the late twentieth century. David J. Bosch made a crucial contribution in this regard.¹⁴⁸ The shift includes mission as contextualised praxis and agency. In mission studies, agency has become necessary in postcolonial mission, primarily because of the loss of identity of the oppressed in colonised countries. Through contextual theologies of liberation, African theology, Black Theology of Liberation (BTL) and postcolonial studies, theologians were able to reflect on the human dignity of the colonised. However, there are still significant efforts needed in this quest, and therefore the praxis cycle used in missiology is useful to also assess effects on the oppressed and marginalised through the emerging context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). In the task of doing mission in the world differently, the questions that missiologists ask are important. The emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution aims to merge the biological with the technological and will bring more challenges to mission work in Africa. This will drastically change the notion of human agency, the theologies espoused in such a time, and missiologists' contextual lenses and strategies employed. These should have to be carefully considered especially in a post-apartheid context. The researcher will, therefore, use the commonly used praxis cycle in missiological research to explore through a Socratic (questioning) approach what the implications will be for missiologists and mission agents in the quest of transforming the church and the post-apartheid society.

The *missio Dei* (participation of the triune God in the earth) has in the last decade been used as a notion to re-imagine mission within different contexts and has been employed to discuss the cutting-edge challenges in societies.¹⁴⁹ Nico Smith (2002:18) reminds us

¹⁴⁸ See Bosch's (1991) part three, "Towards a Relevant Missiology" in his magnum opus *Transforming mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*.

¹⁴⁹ See for instance the missiological contribution of Botha (2009:287) on transformation within missiology suggesting that the mere "mission as.." of David J. Bosch opened up missiology for other possibilities which was a transformative act in itself. I quote, "His consistent description and analysis of 'mission as', rather than 'mission is', is in itself a major transformation from clinical, watertight definitions to a more open-ended understanding of mission".

that as much as mission is about God's work in the world, it is also God's love for human beings (*missio hominum*). The shift in missiology has also been taken further through the *Oikos* journey of the Oikos Study group in South Africa that argues that mission is about God's *oikos* – the "household of God".¹⁵⁰ This is argued to function as a metaphor to understand God's mission in the world beyond the human interest exclusively. The Oikos Study groups that particularly focus on poverty and how the *oikos* metaphor would operate states, "God's economy concerns how the bounty of the world in terms of earth, water, air, plants, help human life to flourish" (Oikos Study Group, 2006:24). All these contributions usher within mission studies a different paradigm in God's mission on earth: a move from the linear to the circular, a move from humanity to *Oikos* (whole inhabited world). Bosch (1991:355) also refers to the symbioses against the subject-object approach in mission.¹⁵¹ Mission is also about the interdependence of God's creatures on earth. Bosch (1991:355) showcases that God's mission is liberating and transformative for all God's creatures. Whether the 4IR would espouse such a paradigm and features mentioned above, or not, depend on the critical questions that need to be posed by missiologists.

Therefore, this article will focus on the imperative questions that missiologists should ask in a 4IR context in a post-apartheid South Africa. The author will provide a brief definition of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) followed by an introduction of the praxis cycle that will function and operate as a theological/missiological method in this article. It will then proceed with four critical and imperative questions that a missiologist in post-apartheid South Africa should pose in a 4IR context.

1. The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)

Klaus Schwab (2016) as the director and founder of the World Economic Forum was the first to coin the new emerging context as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) during the economic forum meeting in Switzerland. He refers to the effects that the emerging context will have on all societies. It will "fundamentally alter the way we live, work, and relate to one another". This also shifts the "blurring [of] the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres" (Schwab, 2016a:5). He further explains that it is "a culmination of emerging technologies fusion into the physical and biological worlds, the

¹⁵⁰ See also the Book on the Oikos journey entitled, *The Oikos Journey. A Theological Reflection on the economic crisis in South Africa (2006)* published by the Diakonia Council of Churches in Durban South Africa (Oikos Study Group, 2006).

¹⁵¹ Bosch states (1991:357), "A basic reorientation is thus called for. One should, again, see oneself as a child of Mother earth and as sister and brother to other human beings. One should think holistically, rather than analytically, emphasise togetherness rather than distance, break through the dualism of mind and body, subject and object, and emphasise "symbiosis".

likes of which has not been seen before” (Skilton & Hovsepian, 2016:9) (Andreoni, 2019:vi). Since the work of Klaus Schwab and his book *Fourth Industrial Revolution* (2016) missiology has not adequately responded to the challenges that such a context would pose to the South African society in terms of missiological research. The challenges in South Africa would relate to that of any other neo-colonial¹⁵² context – which cannot rule out the ongoing marginalisation, and dehumanisation of persons.

Nevertheless, quite recently (2020) an edited volume, *Engaging the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Perspectives from theology, philosophy and education* was published as an outcome of scholars in theology that also reflects on the 4IR. van der Berg (2020:10) admits that within the field of theology, the dialogue between 4IR and theology is non-existent.

Though the volume provides some theological reflection on such a context, it does not address missiological concerns. Therefore, this contribution shows the gap in the missiological discussion, which this article will attempt to provide. Though these brief mentions to the 4IR are insufficient to understand it and its effects, the author will provide more elaboration within each question-section as related to the praxis cycle.

2. The current social imagination within missiology

The contextual scope of the disciplines of missiology and practical theology (twin disciplines) has been considerably associated with the physical sphere as the ‘practical’ and contextual spaces in which the discipline functioned and is imagined. This is quite evident in the conceptualisation and social imagination within these disciplines by a mere cursory reading in missiological discourse. For instance, in practical theology, the work and theological method of Osmer is commonly used at Faculties of Theology and Religion in South Africa. A close analysis of his book *An Introduction to Practical Theology* (2008) it is apparent that the case studies in his book particularly his characterisation of “listening” and “presence” in his vignettes are based on the “physical”. In missiological discourse, this has also been a similar case. In a recent (2014) book published by missiologists at the University of South Africa (UNISA) *Pavement encounters for justice. Doing transformative missiology with homeless people in the City of Tshwane* (Mashau & Kritzinger, 2014), it is interesting to note the reference to “pavement” encounters which the editors argue signifies the hard realities that homeless people in the Pretoria has been struggling with. Though the notion “pavement” is clearly defined, this in itself would also signify the ‘context’ of missiology to be done primarily within the physical

¹⁵² Where the former coloniser and colonialist share the same geographical space.

contexts – which eventually happened, during the research process – to engage the homeless people personally through contact at one of the centres in Pretoria.¹⁵³

Nevertheless, within various missiological research projects itself at South African universities, where the praxis cycle has been used, the focus was on case studies and contexts that have often been less or non-virtual than physical. However, the difference is not only between virtual and physical, but the blurring of those lines. This has not been addressed within missiological research before and therefore provides a research gap in terms of providing the necessary methodological methods and instruments (questions) that would transform the way missiologists could re-imagine research in the 4IR context. In the 1990s missiologists at the University of South Africa (UNISA) introduced the praxis cycle (an adaptation of the pastoral circle of Holland and Henriot 1982). This cycle has been argued to be appropriate to unearth the realities that the marginalised and oppressed people have experienced in neo-colonial contexts, including South Africa (Baron, 2020:5). It is also crucial to state that the challenges posed by the 4IR was not part of the arguments and discussions at the time and factored into the pursuit of missiologists to address societal transformation. Therefore, based on the two arguments above, it is necessary to explore what the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), would pose as a new context on missiological research in the future, but moreover – what would be the appropriate questions to ask.

3. Mission as Transformation

The previous section focused on the role that a missiological method would have in terms of transforming society. This section discusses the importance of missiological research to change the livelihoods of South Africans, which has been suffering within a post-apartheid context. It is within such a framework that this article proceeds. This issue of mission as the transformation has been well addressed by Botha's (2009) review of the International Missionary Council (IMC) meetings and subsequently the CWME meetings under the auspices of the World Council of Churches (WCC), showcasing the epistemological transformation that missiology has undergone but also the transformation that mission itself posed towards societies where mission agents participated in. It is important that in the light of the transformative role of mission in church and society, the questions and the conceptualisation of human agency in mission should be addressed. Moreover, how would the kind of questions missiologists pose transform the situation of the poor in the 4IR context?

¹⁵³ The research was conducted at the Tshwane Leadership Foundation in Pretoria.

The mission approach in post-apartheid South Africa should be based on the preferential option of the poor in society. The notion “preferential option for the poor” has been well articulated and placed at centre stage in ecumenical Protestantism but also during the World Mission Conference in 1980 in Melbourne with the theme “You’re Kingdom come”.¹⁵⁴ The author argues that the dimensions of the praxis cycle are based on the perspective of the poor and to transform their conditions. It would enable missiologists to ask the appropriate questions on human agency, on how to interpret the context, the theology and conceptualise the appropriate missiological strategies to usher the “shalom” of God into the spaces of the marginalised, oppressed and poor in a post-apartheid context. Botha (2009:287) in his study on transformation refers to Tina Adhonen’s study on Bosch. In her study, she refers to the Christian community in God’s mission of transforming the world: Bosch asserts,

We know that evil, injustice, hatred, estrangement, prejudice and fear will never entirely disappear from the face of the earth before the kingdoms of this world are finally consummated in the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, the moment we allow this harsh reality to paralyse and sabotage our efforts, we can no longer pray the Lord’s Prayer – “thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as in heaven”. To offer that prayer implies believing that Christians make a difference to this world ... the community of those who are enjoying the foretaste of perfection – should get involved in God’s mission of transforming the world.

Let me refer to some other issues that Botha raises in terms of mission as transformation. Botha argues that through a cursory look at Stephen Neill’s contribution at the Whitby World mission Conference 1947 and his reference to the centenary of the Communist Manifesto in 1948 – Botha argues that “ideas on transformation in Christian Mission should be kept in creative tension with secular ideas of transformation”. In fact, he argues that if this is done Christian mission would be able to contribute immensely to the world (Botha, 2009:289). Botha mentions the immense contribution of the Bangkok World Missionary Conference in 1973, where a clear association was made between personal salvation and the transformation of social, political and economic structures of society as “an instruction of God” (Botha, 2009:289). This is based on the biblical text in Luke 4:18-19. In terms of this texts, Botha (2009:290) argues that mission as salvation (transformation) is reflected in four dimensions “the struggle for economic justice and against the exploitation of human beings by human beings, the struggle for human dignity in the face of political oppression, the struggle for solidarity in the face of the alienation of human beings, and the struggle for hope against the hopelessness in individual lives”. This is in a nutshell how mission as transformation could be

¹⁵⁴ See Botha’s (2002:25) reference the notion and its discussion at the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the World Council of Churches.

conceptualised. It is within this paradigm that the arguments of this article operate. Therefore in the context of transforming South African society for the vulnerable, what questions should South African missiologists ask in a post-apartheid context and at the same time the emergence of the 4IR? The following section is structured in terms of the four dimensions of the praxis cycle that would raise some of the critical questions in each section that missiologists in a post-apartheid context should ask in a 4IR context.

4. The conceptualisation of human agency in 4IR

One of the paramount questions that missiologists should ask within a postcolonial context is to identify how the mission agents perceive themselves in relation to that community that they are participating in. It is about how they understand themselves and how they want others to understand their role and function.¹⁵⁵ This has been highlighted by Kritzinger as a two-way encounter in mission praxis, the “self-identification” and the “self-knowledge” continuum (Kritzinger, 2008:76). It is apparent in the discourse of the 4IR that it will produce a “mixed reality” (Nandram, 2019:15) – and this situation will warrant people to envisage each other through their experience of physical contact as well as how they experience others through the digital platforms (e.g. applications on their phones) (Nandram, 2019:15). Mission agents should be able to integrate these “presentations” and experiences in a creative way. There is evidence that this would be complexed in the face of the split of social identities between the physical and the virtual. The analysis of an online community will, therefore, require a different kind of analysis of people’s expression, participation and interaction. Missiologists that were only focused on the either/or situation – meaning its either online or physical engagement will have to deal with the conflation of the two. The person’s reactions within an online context might not be congruent with that of a physical contact situation. This is indeed a matter of consciousness.

It concerns the experiences of each participant in an online, digital environment. In the post-apartheid situation, the notion of black consciousness has become crucial to promote the experiences of black people in South Africa. However, those new (online) spaces should become liberating spaces not only for black faces but for black experiences. It is evident that the struggle in the post-apartheid context is both a class

¹⁵⁵ Nandram (2019:16) argues, “In the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we can augment the use of our senses through, for example, implants of artificial eyes in our bodies. These implants are not extra accessories that we can decide to use. Instead, they become part of ourselves. How will one be able to know what the real self is? The question of ‘who am I?’ will have to be reconsidered many times in life. As contextualising things again and again will become important, a special kind of intelligence is required – an intelligence that is contextual”.

struggle and a struggle of racism. This encapsulates Mbembe's (2007:144) notion of new black solidarity in the post-apartheid context. Therefore missiologists should ask how these online and digital spaces would be liberating to the "black experiences" in a post-apartheid context.

A second issue that would be influencing the issue on human agency in mission is the reproduction of human being's functions, abilities, in the form of artificial intelligence. Though this would rapidly change the efficiency of tasks and responsibilities being done in business environments as well as promising various benefits also within ecclesial contexts, missiologists should be posing critical questions on the agency of human beings in the post-apartheid context. Williamson-Lee (2018:1) writes on Artificial intelligence (AI),

From these language models, they create associations between words, some problematic like "he' is to 'she' as 'brilliant' is to 'lovely.'" With people's implicit biases modelled through language, machines become trained in the sexism and racism predominant in our culture.

Nandram (2019:16) underscores the reproduction of human beings' functions and abilities during 4IR. Though this might also pose various benefits in terms of efficiency, it would, at the same time, pose serious concerns for mission practitioners and missiologists. It would be imperative for them to ask in terms of human agency: Whose human beings' standards, actions, and patterns would all human beings be standardised? This is crucial to ask in the post-apartheid context where all human life is mostly standardised in terms of the middle-class citizens' lifestyles and personhood. It would, therefore, be important to observe what those new standards will be, and in terms of who and which human being's actions, patterns would be reproduced and standardised. Would such standards also take into consideration the effects of apartheid that has not left its claws from the most vulnerable and the poor in our society? In the latest attempt by scholars at the University Free State, that included a theological perspective on the matter, this has been affirmed. Van der Berg (2020:3) states,

Technology is increasingly becoming embedded within societies, objects and even our human bodies. The impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution thus resulted in dramatic changes in the industry, markets, employment trends, society, culture, and even the balance of global power. Unfortunately, technology is never neutral.

This standardisation will also find concreteness through the introduction of "robotics" that has already found its way into some specialised fields and instruments. The notion of 'robotising' will become a new way of singularising purpose and actions (Nandram, 2019:16), which makes up most of the critique in Bosch's seminal work *Transforming Mission* (1991). The postcolonial discourses also argue for the movement from singularity to plurality and contingency – the endless possibilities! However, the

“robotising” that forms part of the new technological advances that the 4IR would usher into post-apartheid South Africa would move society also in a philosophical way back to the modernism paradigm. In contrast, Bosch introduced a new paradigm shift, namely the postmodern approach in mission (cf. Bosch, 1991:349), towards boundless creativity and the eschatological.

Nevertheless, robotising would, on the other hand, frame human existence in standardised patterns that Bosch equates with an “evolutionary” pattern and a non-eschatological pattern (Bosch, 1991:356-357). In terms of the praxis cycle itself, it fosters new adaptation, fluidity in the process of engagements aligned with Bosch’s suggested postmodern paradigm (1991:356). In contrast, the approach within the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) process is too neatly pre-packaged with all its accommodations and simulations and algorithms. The innovation that 4IR will, therefore, only provide a middle-class epistemology. This being said, missiologists that want to do missiology from the perspective of the poor and the marginalised should keep the tabs on indigenous knowledge systems as often a “Cinderella” episteme in science and technology and become a scare one in the 4IR.

The agency of the world in *God’s mission (missio Dei)* will be also tested on the sharing of authentic experiences of God’s creatures. The liberating experiences that 4IR technologies should provide black people with challenges when such experiences are outsourced to robotics and artificial intelligence (Waghid, 2019:6). What will this mean in terms of the interception of robotics in the realm of pain and trauma? It would mean more if a person who was causing the hurt and pain to confront the “other” themselves as part of the healing process and this would pose a challenge for Artificial intelligence (AI) where a “robot” could be used to do it on behalf of humans? Blacks in terms of the philosophy of Ubuntu mean that a person is a person through another person. That cannot be translated into the interception of technology between human persons and the cosmos.¹⁵⁶ The migration to various technologies could also endanger that the function of land and the cosmos serves for the flourishing of African life and African cultures. The question in this section is also about where the power will lie through the novice developments in South Africa Bosch (1991:357) critiques in terms of a Western development approach, when he states,

The consequences of the development model were, however, contrary to what had been expected. The rich countries became richer, and the poor still poorer.

¹⁵⁶ See Van Schalkwyk (2019)’s article on Ubuntu and African culture as part of Ubuntu philosophy.

Human beings in the non-western world became “regarded as mere objects in a network of planning, transfer of commodities and logistic coordination in which the development agent was the initiator, planner, and master” (1991:357). However, more importantly, on development (in this case technological development) Bosch argues, “It became clear, deep down, this [power] was the real issue, and that authentic development could not take place without the transfer of power” (Bosch, 1991:357). Bosch also reminds us that with the West having a head start with technological advances, it will make it “virtually impossible for other countries even to catch up” (1991:357). This reminds us to be cautious that the poor will not again be left powerless through the structural nature of 4IR and lose its agency in the hope of the promising benefits of the emerging context.

In terms of human agency, in a 4IR context, it should be important to think critically about the replacement of humans and their empowerment in mission. Klaus Schwab (2016) states, “As automation substitutes for labour across the entire economy, the displacement of workers by machines might exacerbate the gap between returns to capital and returns to labour”. This calls for cautionary measures and to be careful that it does not circumvent the role and function of human beings to facilitate transformation. This projection of Klaus on the effects of the 4IR also makes it imperative to ask how mission agents interact with their communities. Will it take place at a distance, will it value personal contribution? Schwab (2016a) states, “Ordering a cab, booking a flight, buying a product, making a payment, listening to music, watching a film, or playing a game – any of these can now be done remotely”.

Moreover, the sense of “outside” control of neurotechnologies for practical expediency in the 4IR context poses a danger for decoloniality in Africa. According to Nandram (2019:16),

Virtual reality devices can be used to analyse users’ responses by tracking their eye movements and head positions, and by monitoring their emotions. This data then can be used to influence human behaviour.

This might be incredible and efficient, especially the emergence of medical equipment that would be able to ‘take-over’ the tasks and roles of a person. However, the “encounterology” approach that Kritzinger (2008) proposes for mission praxis that should form an integral part of mission encounters could easily become obsolete. This is important in the post-apartheid context where trust should be developed between people in a former racially-divided country which has not yet overcome its racial past. This authentication in relationships through “encounters” that Kritzinger suggests is of crucial importance for validation, trust, and hope. Kritzinger argues that it is not only the

mission agent and the community or individual who participates in the act of mission but the “encounter” itself. This is what would be “missing” when human agency has been “outsourced” through neurotechnologies.

The challenge will also be in the mission encounters, and missiological research, to re-imagine “physical” encounters and reflect on what “virtual encounterology” would entail. Waghid (2019:6) provides an appropriate illustration of how this can be imagined in 4IR context through 3D imaging. This might help the “encounterology” the experiencing of others when a person through the virtual reality experience the “other” whether in “poverty”, “unemployment” but these technologies would serve as a good alternative.¹⁵⁷ But what would this mean for an African culture that is in essence, link to the cosmology (the earth) – this would in African culture not meet the criteria of “encounterology”.

However, on the other hand, certain 4IR technologies do not focus on the role of a person and their “self-identification” and “self-determination” in the process. This should be a critical aspect that should be analysed by missiologists in a post-apartheid context. Williamson-Lee, (2018:1) remind us that computers are not “conscious”. This does indeed go against the notion of “human agency” as integral to the process of doing mission. She states,

Perhaps conscious machines in the future would have the reflective capacities to recognize their own biases, but as it stands now computers are not capable ...

Mission agency cannot be outsourced – the church and God’s creation alone can fulfil his *missio Dei* in the world. The awareness of God and one’s agency in the world is important, which cannot be replaced. Bosch (1991:355) states,

First the machine replaced the human slave, then human were turned into slaves of the machine. Production became the highest goal of being human, resulting in humans having to worship at the altar of the autonomy of technology.

The notion of agency as in the missiological praxis cycle will become inclusive of “digital beings” and not only “real human beings” within 4IR contexts. The interactions, the relationships could become more “digital” and such “encounters” will become the norm

¹⁵⁷ “Put differently, when students, for example, are initiated into deliberations about poverty and inequality in South African communities, teachers could use 3D images on the basis of which students would be exposed, through virtual reality, to images depicting poverty and unemployment. In this way, students could become more compassionate towards vulnerable others in their learning – a matter of exercising compassionate imagining through seeing and putting oneself in the shoes of vulnerable others” (Knot-Craig, 2018:6).

in a 4IR context. The missiologists would be required to become skilful in the analysis of those digital interactions and power relationships that transpire on “digital” platforms. Nandram (2019:16) argues,

It seems that our ability to make decisions will be diminished in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Decision making or, in other words, exercising wisdom is a core human activity. Wisdom, put merely, is knowing when to do what and to what extent.

The praxis cycle within missiological research also placed emphasis on collective participation in terms of solving missiological problems. Schwab (2016b:97) states,

The fourth industrial revolution renders technology an all-pervasive and predominant part of our individual lives, and yet we are only just starting to understand how this technological sea-change will affect our inner selves. Ultimately, it is incumbent upon each of us to guarantee we are served, not enslaved, by technology. At a collective level, we must also ensure that the challenges technology throws at us are properly understood and analyzed. Only in this way can we be certain that the fourth industrial revolution will enhance, rather than damage, our wellbeing.

Bosch (1991:362) asserts, “The enlightenment creed taught that every individual was free to pursue his happiness, irrespective of what others thought or said”. However, Bosch argues that in the postmodern paradigm of mission it should, “retrieve togetherness, interdependence, ‘symbioses’.” In contrast, the digital spaces have become in some ways often isolated spaces where people would become unauthentic, indifferent “selves”, but also become isolated from the outside world (Nandram, 2019:16). In terms of effective mission practice, mission agents should be able to discern those patterns and encourage people not to construct online enclaves. Online platforms become more exclusive and often involve groups that could enforce conformity instead of diversity. For instance, it is interesting to observe how many groups would be formed on social media platforms that would encourage uniformity instead of pluriformity. This would lead to a narrow and singled-storied view of the ‘selves’, but it can also lead to a “pluri-view” of the “selves”. This should be negotiated in new ways within digital social spaces. The choices that people make in this regard will determine their agency in society and transformation in the world and the impact of their choices. In terms of an online environment, connections and relationships could easily be formed, but at the same time, it can also easily enforce “group pressure” and social pressure that could stifle individual creativity, autonomy, and self-determinism (Knot-Craig, 2018:2). Botha addresses mission as transformation in one of the edited volumes of the Edinburgh 2010 centenary series when he argues that mission as transformation would “reject conformism” (Botha, 2009:283).

However, there is no need to underplay also the bridging between communities that virtual platforms can create: “More people connecting with more people makes for a bridge between communities, and one big community from many little ones” (Knot-Craig, 2018:4). Knot-Craig (2018:4) states,

When university teachers and students become increasingly engaged in the digital world, there is invariably more pedagogical space for disruption and dissent as a manifestation of the engagement of such teachers and students with otherness. In this way, university education would become connectivists rather than just instructivists, which leaves open the door for more innovative and flexible ways of becoming.

5. Imperative missiological questions for the 4IR context

The contexts would indeed change and would require different questions from missiologists for the emerging context. Excluding the manner in which human beings would be regarded in a 4IR context, we should look at other contextual issues that would require critical questions from missiologists. In terms of the praxis cycle, the context analysis would primarily focus on physical contact. However in a 4IR context, missiologists should engage their context beyond the physical but still needs to pose critical questions in those spaces – relating to the social and political, and engage the effects and impacts on “missiological” issues and its manifestation also on digital platforms. It would be imperative that missiologists should become more skilled in analysing the ‘political, economic and ecclesial issues on those platforms. It would be important to note that such an experience would be different from experiences of physical contact. Missiologists should analyse the influence of the digital environment on a person or community’s physical experiences. How do their online engagements influence their engagements with people in physical encounters? This would be one of the questions that would be crucial in a 4IR context. Moreover, missiologists should be aware of the interplay between the two environments, and this should be taken into account when engaging the online communities. This is well illustrated through the example of Knot-Craig (2018:3) that “we will behave better” when all movements are under surveillance.¹⁵⁸ In psychological discourse, it is a scientific fact that people would

¹⁵⁸ He states, “Today there are cameras everywhere and more people connected to the internet who has access to what they film—accountability in high definition. Everything exists forever and is easily accessible and distributable. Bad behaviour is shared and shamed, so you can’t do anything anymore without risking public exposure”. He further states, “Would the Gupta brothers have been as brazen if they knew that their business emails were going to be leaked? No. Would Mduzuzi Manana have beaten-up two women outside of a Cubana if he knew that the video of it was going to make the rounds? Unlikely. Would Adam

behave differently when they are aware of the attention on them (example before and after an interview than in the course of an interview). The dynamic of this interplay between the physical and virtual spaces would need some critical engagement from the vantage point of missiologists when analysing their new context. There would be a definite emerging consciousness of mission agents needed as well as participants in mission in terms of how they experience the world (Nandram, 2019:16).¹⁵⁹ The mission agents should discern what the “world” and “reality” (ontology) is for the participants in the mission encounters. There would be instances where the “reality” is virtual, and exposure to “physical spaces” is limited. Their experiences of the world and “reality” will also be different. Therefore, as one enters into the emerging 4IR, this would require additional analytic skills and discernment of missiologists.

The design of the praxis cycle is also to empower and transform the lives of the most vulnerable. Therefore, the dimension of context, and in this case, the emerging context of 4IR should not be engaged with, without laying bare the influence of the new context on the inequality, power and domination that it will pose for the African context. The argument that Williamson-Lee (2018:1) makes is that the 4IR would not work if society, which the author understood as post-apartheid (neo-colonial) and “classist” does not change. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other 4IR instruments will perpetuate the conditions that are entrenched in human society. Therefore missiologists should be able to observe who has been profiting out of the new “context” and how does it disempower others. Nandram (2019:16) states that new technologies “can undermine trust, collaboration, and empathy. Where these technologies can be used, they can also be misused”. The National Development Plan (2030) of the South African government does refer to the “digital divide” that the 4IR can create (cf. Waghid et al., 2019:3-4). However, it remains crucial that missiologists would be able to keep tabs on the livelihood of the poor and the vulnerable in South Africa.

Klaus Schwab (2016) states about the inequality of the context,

In addition to being a key economic concern, inequality represents the most significant societal concern associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The

Catzavelos have thought twice before throwing around the k-word on his Aryan holiday if he knew what the backlash would feel like?”

¹⁵⁹ “Virtual, augmented, and mixed technologies will blur the lines among artificial technology, the external world, and the role of human intuition. They will also give rise to existential questions about how humans experience the world. With these technologies, a person can realistically simulate being in another country” (Nandram, 2019:16).

largest beneficiaries of innovation tend to be the providers of intellectual and physical capital – the innovators, shareholders, and investors – which explains the rising gap in wealth between those dependent on capital versus labour. Technology is, therefore, one of the main reasons why incomes have stagnated, or even decreased, for a majority of the population in high-income countries: the demand for highly skilled workers has increased while the demand for workers with less education and lower skills has decreased. The result is a job market with a strong demand at the high and low ends, but a hollowing out of the middle.

It is apparent that the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) would provide access to some, but would become inaccessible to others. Therefore, the missiologist, through his research on 4IR, should always ask who is not part of this community, especially when it is an online research instrument and platform. Who does not participate? It would perhaps within a 4IR context be more appropriate to analyse the context through the perspective of “class” and not exclusively race as a socioanalytic approach.

Nandram (2019:16) argues, “As contextualising things again and again will become important, a special kind of intelligence is required – an intelligence that is contextual”. It is also possible that the online environments become “too global” and that through interconnections and networks that are unrelated to the physical context. This might threaten mission engagements that aim to be first contextual and through its lens, provide global solutions and interventions. It requires mission agents to discern among various global networks in their context and that of the participants. This would be more than ever a challenge for those in the African context that have been able to employ apt contextual approaches to their situations in the recent past. Therefore, it would be important to ensure that Africa uses tools and instruments within the 4IR that is appropriate to address the challenges in South Africa.

Chiweshe (2019:5-6) cautions missiologists of the emerging bias and prejudices that will be further entrenched in society as an outcome of the 4IR context.

The assumption is that computer programmes are bias-free and algorithms can reduce the influence of gender, race, age or any other factors that may affect how people are evaluated. However, algorithms are programmed by humans and as such have an inbuilt gender bias in their language, indicators and measurements, which in many ways perpetuate inequalities. For example, algorithms that measure the productivity of workers may not take into account historical, cultural and social factors such as work-life imbalances that women have to deal with in patriarchal societies.

Finally, what questions should the church ask an agent of God’s mission in the world? The church should, as part of its mission in the world, provide effective and efficient

alternatives in relation to the rest of the South African society. It is interesting to note that the churches are not included in the sectors that need to be developed in terms of the 4IR strategies that are gazetted by the Department of telecommunications and postal services (RSA, 2018:6). Therefore, churches and congregations should be cautious in becoming intentional and deliberate in their integration and embracing of 4IR strategies. The church, especially the Sunday School, might be relatively good environments for exposing children and developing the skills to use such technologies and in such a way also prepare the effectiveness and efficiency of the future church of doing mission in the world. However, the church is also cautioned in its embrace of the 4IR technologies for its tasks of character formation: 4IR could also allow deformation instead of moral formation (cf. Conradie, 2006). It is apparent also that in a 4IR context, there would be a shift from character to skills, and this would be a focus within communities such as the church environment. What will happen to the moral formation task if people become more focused on their skills, but the task of formation becomes less important? This would be the challenge to the church to still focus on such a task of forming the Christian virtues needed for the context. However, as being seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, the church can also become too comfortable with its “e-church”, whereas within most parts of South Africa this remains inaccessible to the majority of South Africans. The church should also not forget about the incarnational nature of the good news, as been demonstrated through the earthly life of Jesus.

6. Theological reflection on encounter in the 4IR context

There exist good theological interpretations and missiological contributions on the physical presence of doing mission and 4IR context. Those who would argue for a biblical mission paradigm, often either used the examples of physical contact, especially Jesus’ mission on earth (incarnation) and the understanding of the “Great Commission”, and also mission at a distance – “Paul’s letters” to his congregations while he was in prison. Though the Pauline missionary approach would be, therefore, closer to the 4IR context, it is not the same. Therefore, missiologists should be able to come up with a theological interpretation of mission and articulation that would demonstrate the shift in a theological-missiological hermeneutic of 4IR context based on appropriate biblical hermeneutics. However, in terms of agency, the contact between people will indeed pose a challenge for the theology of mission in the postmodern paradigm that Bosch (*Transforming Mission*, 1991) was advocating in his seminal work.

We should ask the question of how does the 4IR context allow missiologists and participants in mission to understand God and the *missio Dei*? For instance, when we can have computers to do things for us, with the limited hassle of frustration to get things

done, how would we be able to understand the notion of “grace”, if we will have less to be dependent upon in the world? Furthermore, one has to wonder: if a computer can do a better job of playing chess, how would it affect our spirituality? How do we see their computerised feelings? What if a computer tells you he feels bad because he can pick-up the negative feelings in the air? What will it mean for our biblical narratives of human beings in God’s image? There is, therefore, a need to reflect on the theology of incarnation. What does the situation pose to our understanding of Jesus becoming human, and to make contact with the world in human “clothes”? Our confession that He is both God and fully human, is one that reformed Christians hold on to as foundational to their understanding of Jesus incarnated.

There is a need that missiologists have their contextual theologies (postcolonial, and Black Liberation) in their pockets. These will be necessary to read the Bible from the perspective of the most vulnerable and marginalised in society. Public theology of human dignity is crucial to understand our value and contribution and agency in the Kingdom of God on earth. There should be a reflection on a biblical interpretation of justice in the Kingdom of God and what does it mean to leave the ninety-nine and the focus on the marginalised. Chiweshe (2019:1) states, “It shows that automation in productive sectors is placing women’s employment at risk, as they are largely found in low-skill and routinised professions. Studies demonstrate that in specific female-dominated industries, technology will reduce jobs.

The other misgiving in Africa is that the 4IR, like its antecedents, will further entrench gender inequalities”. This would necessitate the prophetic role that missiologists should embrace during the 4IR context, especially in the light of the deafening silence of the prophetic voice of the church as been argued by Botha and Makofane (2019) as well as Kritzinger (2012). Missiologists should also ask in a 4IR context: for whom is the *good news*? Chiweshe (2019:6) argues, “Technological advances in Africa have not been met by a change in socio-cultural systems, which underpin women’s exclusion and gender disparities.” The danger is that the new technologies will entrench these patriarchal inequalities, as women still lack access to resources such as land, technology and credit. The neo-colonial context, the class society in the post-apartheid context calls for a new Kairos, an opportune time to prophecy the good news for all and that the 4IR would only be embraced once it is good news for *all*. However, Kwet (2019:2) does not only focus on what conditions it will create (inequality, bias) but also who will possess the political, economic and social power. He argues the Global South will again lease its power to another state (United States of America) if it does not ensure that during the emerging 4IR context the people in the Global South does not succumb to digital colonialism.

Missiologists should continuously use as its primary interlocutor the poor and the marginalised. Though it is apparent that the 4IR will deliver myriad benefits for developing countries (including South Africa), the mission of God, through Jesus Christ demonstrates his main concern in the devastating effects caused by the powerful systems of the day. It should be a theology in the context of 4IR that still raises the challenges and conditions of the poor. The 4IR context requires missiology not only to be based primarily on a “race-based” critique, but a “class-based” critique (Knot-Craig, 2018).¹⁶⁰ Therefore, a theology that speaks to inequality through “class” would be the most appropriate critique in 4IR context, especially with the emergence of a new black elite in South Africa (cf. Mbembe, 2007).

The reflection on mission constitutes a question for the Shalom in the *household of God* (*Oikos*) that include the environment and calls for the appreciation of God’s mission and conservation of the earth (cf. Conradie & Ayre, 2016:7-8). Missiologists should ask not only questions about the human agency, but also the effect it might pose to the environment. They would need to reflect theologically on the sustainability of the environment and the transitioning to a “low-carbon economy” (RSA, 2018:10). These systems have been implemented and created by those that are not always close to the vulnerable and the poor and conditions of the marginalised. Therefore, all these systems would not necessarily take into consideration these categories. A theological response from these perspectives would offer an oversight function to continuously assess the effect and impact on the environment and its impact on the marginalised.

7. How would the 4IR change the strategies for mission?

The mission strategy of mission agents will have to change, especially from a conservative position to a position of interaction and encounter. The open and connected environment would immediately allow the frequent interaction between various religious and cultural traditions and would be able to enrich the mission enterprise (Knot-Craig, 2018:4).¹⁶¹ However, it would then be crucial for missiologists to allow their positions to be open to engaging the “other”, which differs from their theological persuasion. This has been emphasised through the discussions at the World Mission Conference in New Delhi (1961) with the theme “Mission and Unity” (Ross, 1983). The 4IR, therefore, would also allow for an opportunity or threat – depending on

¹⁶⁰ It is interesting to note that Knot-Craig does not mention “class”, but that “Societies and business will become more inclusive and less defined by race or gender”.

¹⁶¹ He states, “Online, people are not restricted by geography, gender, sexual orientation, race or religion. This allows them to connect with people that would usually be physically, culturally or socially out of their reach. Moreover, connect because of who they truly are, behind the labels we lump onto them”.

the kind of actions and interactions that the agents would be willing to expose themselves to and integrate. Therefore, missiologists would require a more fluid approach in their encounters. The engagement with online communities that were previously inaccessible would in a 4IR context be able to allow for frequent and closer engagement. In contrast, in the past, most missiologists would only be able to enter those communities through physical contact and encounters. This would especially be good for South Africa that is still struggling to deal with its racial, gender, and geographical segregation. The fusion of identities would be growing at a much faster pace on such digital platforms and would be beneficial for social cohesion.

Nevertheless, the mission strategy should be that of inclusion. Therefore, it would be important to ask how mission would engage with those communities and persons that would be out of the 4IR radar: the homeless, the technologically impaired, the psychologically impaired and conditions that would make it impossible to engage within such an environment. What about those who are mentally impaired and who would not be able to be reached? Surely the 4IR would also be able to have instruments that would enhance mission engagement to those people and communities. However, mission agents would have to be able to facilitate it and provide tailor-made interventions to those communities to ensure that mission remains contextual. The physically impaired would perhaps be better served through technological advances.

However, as the church was involved in walking alongside the poor and the marginalised in South Africa, solidarity through mentorship will be one of the core tasks also of the church. The church should create platforms; engage with stakeholders and investors to assist the poor to gain access and to develop the technical skills of the communities that they engage. Manda and Dhaou (2019:249) states,

The skills challenge in South Africa is as a result of the complexity of socio-economic and socio-historic factors.

This is said against the backdrop of various scholars that there is projected jobless in the 4IR context (Manda & Dhaou, 2019:247). Manda and Dhaou (2019:249) states:

An estimated 30% of workers in South Africa are unskilled with semi-skilled workers constituting 46% and skilled workers being the least at 24% (Statistics South Africa, 2018). The skilling and re-skilling of workers is an immediate priority in preparing for the 4th industrial revolution. The majority of unskilled and semi-skilled workers come from historically disadvantaged groups (Statistics South Africa, 2018). These groups have for decades, been denied socio-economic opportunities such as access to quality education. The effects of the social

injustices perpetrated by the apartheid government are still being experienced two decades.

It should change missiologists' (and mission agents') approach from a primarily physical and contact one to that of a 'virtual' and 'distant' one. It would warrant missiologists to make use of the instruments within the 4IR context that would allow the rapid and boundless engagements with people in various contexts and communities to participate in the *missio Dei*. Knot-Craig (2018:5) argues that projects of public participation would be made convenient, faster, quicker and bring all participants informed about the latest developments on an issue. This has been shown through the COVID-19 pandemic in all countries. Therefore, it is crucial for the participation of missiologists and theologians to be involved in the construction or in an advisory capacity that serves to provide data of the African context and the 'cutting-edge' developments in communities that it is streamlined with the approaches and technological advances that will become apparent in society.

It is not time for mission agents to become pietistic, isolate themselves and focus on the old paradigmatic approaches, but to provide clarity and guidance to transform contextually the societies that will be affected and impacted by the 4IR technologies.

8. What spirituality is imperative in a 4IR context?

Though the praxis cycle has four dimensions, in which the author also poses the critical questions that missiologists should ask at each dimension, the cycle is inherently driven by the missiologist's spirituality. Therefore, in the light of the four dimensions and the subsequent questions, the author wishes now to address the kind of spirituality that is appropriate within a 4IR context.

The 4IR requires a spirituality of communion. This would address issues of inequality as well as individualism that would endanger an individual effort towards the complete liberation of the poor and the marginalised. This is equally needed as what has been the case during apartheid South Africa; a sensitivity towards the poor and the marginalised. Though the 4IR technological advances would assist South Africans to create more financial capital within the current dire economic situation, it would be equally important to ensure that the government, but also missiological research, would promote the notion of equality and equal opportunities. The innovations should also benefit the poorest of the poor. A spirituality of communion would be needed in church environments where people would become accustomed to digital church platforms and not obliged to "enter" physically the spaces of others – especially those that need to 'feel' the embrace and inclusion. Therefore, spirituality is needed that would be

consistent in creating efforts of inclusion, of belonging, and justice on these platforms. Nandram (2019:21) argues,

The Fourth Industrial Revolution needs people who know how to intelligently drive technology in a more holistic and integrative way. It also requires the rebuilding of the narrative of whom we are and why we exist as human beings. Spirituality is at the heart of both of these needs.

There should be a spirituality of love for people and their dignity; It is God's household, not robots, Internet of Things (IoT) and artificial intelligence that remains important in missiological research. The spirituality of mission agents should be based on a love for God's household.

In the last instance, the author argues that missiologists and mission agents should embody a spirituality of incarnation. This is addressed by Bosch (1991:447) when he refers to mission as inculturation. It would still be important for missiologists to become part of communities by making bodily contact with them and "experiencing" other cultures. Bosch (1991:452) states, "The Christian faith must be rethought, reformulated and lived anew in each human culture". The 4IR context might easily become a means of demonising the humanity and our bodily existence in the world. Jesus' incarnation – his bodily interactions – is what we Christians throughout the ages have celebrated with our confession that He is God but also fully human when on earth. The bible demonstrates his "hunger", his excruciating pain and death as paradoxical as it is – to present the humanness of God as well as his "divine" redemption. In the African context, it would be crucial for people to connect also with the humanity of Christ through the tangible actions of Christians in the world. The missiologists should be critical of this and promote, therefore, such spirituality of "incarnation".

CONCLUSION

There is not an extensive body of knowledge related to missiological research and the 4IR context in a post-apartheid South Africa. Therefore, this contribution explores the critical questions that missiologists should pose since the work of David J. Bosch (1991:349-519) and his proposal on a Relevant Missiology for the twentieth century and beyond. The author uses the praxis cycle as a method, but also as a means of structuring the article and to pose the relevant questions that missiologists should ask in a post-apartheid context. The praxis cycle as a tool for missiologists is still appropriate within the 4IR context, and it unearths the grave inequalities, the dire conditions of the poor in South Africa. It is apparent that the 4IR will be challenged by the historical injustice by the apartheid government and that mission should reflect critically on its effects and its challenge that it posed towards transformation in society.

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THE GOSPEL AND NATION-BUILDING IN EMERGENT NATIONS: AN EVANGELICAL AGENDA¹

HWA YUNG

INTRODUCTION

Many concerned Christians living in the Non-western or Majority World can see clearly that things are not right within their respective countries. At the same time, thinking that there is little that they can do to change things, they are often overwhelmed by a deep sense of helplessness and despair. For example, Malaysia has just had its 13th General Election on 5th May 2013. As many expected, it turned out to be the most hard-fought and dirtiest election the country has ever had. The opposition alliance won 50.3% of the popular vote but secured only 89 (40%) seats in parliament, while the ruling coalition's share was of only 46.8% of the vote gave it 133 (59.9%) parliamentary seats. Charges by the opposition and independent observers of irregularities and fraud have been reported in the international media.¹⁶² These charges, together with the usual gerrymandering by the ruling party and a deeply distrusted Electoral Commission, have left the present government with little credibility and moral authority in the nation. Furthermore, many feel that the policies and practices of the ruling coalition have led increasingly to divisions within the nation along ethnic, religious and class lines, as well as growing corruption in the country. No wonder that World Bank reports that some one million plus have left the country, with at least one third of them skilled and highly skilled.¹⁶³ Many who have stayed behind are wondering what future there is for the nation!

This sense of utter frustration is unfortunately found in many countries in the Majority World. In a discussion with an elitist group of Christian university students

¹⁶² For independent reports, see, e.g., Al Jazeera and CNN respectively at <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2013/05/201357734274202.html>, <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/05/02/world/asia/malaysia-election-preview> & https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=KouzWrakky4 (accessed 23 May 2013).

¹⁶³ *Malaysia Economic Monitor: Brain Drain* (The World Bank, April 2011); http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2011/05/02/000356161_20110502023920/Rendered/PDF/614830WP0malay10Box358348B01PUBLIC1.pdf (accessed 23 May 2013).

in Uganda a few years ago, one of them blurted out: “I am so fed up with the corruption and inefficiency here that I just want to graduate and get out of the country as soon as I can!” Similar remarks can easily be heard in many other places, from China to many parts of Asia and the south Pacific, through to Eastern Europe, Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

From a Christian perspective, the pertinent question surely is, does the gospel have any relevance to such matters? Over the past few decades there has been much discussion over the nature of and agenda for mission. These have ranged from the evangelisation-humanisation debates to the arguments over exclusivist, inclusivist or pluralist positions, and the like. What I would like to suggest is that one of the most pressing issue in mission agenda is the need for a theology of nation-building for emergent nations in the Africa, Asia, Eurasia and Latin America. I do not presume here to formulate a particular Christian political theory or Christian approach to politics.¹⁶⁴ Rather, in the context of much of what I see in my own country and in many other emergent nations, I write as a pastor for many who feel a sense of real frustration about what can be done in face of the immensity of the socio-political and economic challenges before them.

1. Nation-building

Allow me to clarify what I mean by nation-building here. In the modern western world, the concept of the nation-state gradually emerged after AD1500, even though it may have existed in some pre-modern forms in other civilizations. I am not concerned here with philosophical and theoretical discussions on what is a nation or nation-state. Some have suggested that the concept as we have it today is a social construct. In many parts of the Majority world, they are creations or accidents of colonial history. Here I am using the term nation in nation-building in the sense of its givenness, as we have it in the modern world today. And the concern being addressed is how do we build nations which are communities marked by justice and freedom, respect for human rights and genuine mutuality, good governance and integrity, economic growth and general welfare, and a sense of belonging in the hearts of all citizens? This is no easy task, especially when past colonial history has left many emergent nations with a convoluted mix of ethnicities or tribes, languages, religions and cultures, with very little shared history holding the diverse and, sometimes, deeply divided peoples together.¹⁶⁵ What

¹⁶⁴ For this see, e.g. Sandra F. Joireman, ed., *Church, State, and Citizen: Christian Approaches to Political Engagement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁶⁵ Two of the best examples of such complex mixes are Nigeria and India.

contribution can the gospel of Christ make to the “healing of the nations” (Rev 22:2)?

Christians are called to be the “salt” and “light” in the world. Further, as Abraham was called to be a “blessing to the nations” (Gen 12: 1-3; 18: 18), we who are his spiritual heirs are called to do the same. But the tragedy is that many Christians feel overwhelmed and paralysed by the immensity of the problems before them and feel that they cannot do a thing. The only alternatives seem to be either to “join the crowd” and buy into the surrounding immorality and corruption like everyone else, or to quit and emigrate! These are exactly the sort of responses we find all over the Majority World. What I propose to do here is to suggest a multi-level Christian approach to nation-building in which Christians at different levels of society can participate. This may seem foolhardy and simplistic to some but I dare believe that it will give hope and direction to others.

As much of the Majority World emerges into the twenty-first century, many of the nations remain mired in poverty, corruption, totalitarianism, watered-down democracies, and denial of human rights and freedoms. Some countries, especially those in East Asia, have begun to attain great economic success. But one key question that continues to confront the Majority World as a whole is how is it possible to succeed in nation-building that incorporates all the blessings of modernization and economic growth, together with social justice, democracy, civil society, political stability and peace. Does the Christian message have anything to say here?

To put it more starkly, let me to state the matter in another way. Christianity has grown rapidly throughout the Majority World, especially since the end of the Second World War. Yet its social and political impact on the nations does not appear to be commensurate with the numerical growth of the church. In many countries where Christians are in the majority, socio-political and economic growth continues to languish and remain relatively “underdeveloped.”

For example, in Africa, the Christian percentages of the population in 2010 in the following countries, according to *Operation World*, are: Rwanda, 89.1%; Uganda, 84.7%; and Zimbabwe, 78.0%.¹⁶⁶ In fact, south of the Sahara, Africa is a predominantly Christian continent. Yet the ethnically-driven genocide of 1994 saw over 800,000 people killed in Rwanda out of a population of seven million in a

¹⁶⁶ Jason Mandryk (ed.), *Operation World*, 7th ed. (Colorado Springs, CO, & Secunderabad, A. P.: Biblica Publishing, 2010), pp. 719, 841 & 897.

space of three months. Despite being overwhelmingly Christian and impacted strongly by the East African Revival, Uganda ranks a lowly 130 out of 174 countries listed on the 2012 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index.¹⁶⁷ When asked why this is the case, the answer was that good Christians are usually discouraged from getting into politics! And Zimbabwe, a country which had such a promising start more than thirty years ago, remains a political mess with its economy only saved from total collapse by the adoption of the American dollar as its currency!

In Asia, Philippines, which is 92.3% Christian¹⁶⁸ and supposedly the most Christianised country in the continent, ranks a lowly 105 on the Corruption Perception Index.¹⁶⁹ And despite the rapid economic growth of East Asian economies in recent decades, it remains one of the laggards in the region. Similarly, Latin American nations, despite the predominance of Roman Catholicism and the Pentecostal growth of the last few decades, are not exactly models of good governance, civil liberties and economic growth.

In a recent set of studies on evangelical participation in politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America,¹⁷⁰ some interesting observations emerged. In his review of these studies, Joel Carpenter¹⁷¹ noted the following concerns amongst others. First, evangelicals are increasingly getting involved in politics and public life in recent years, as opposed to an earlier reticence. Secondly, although they can mobilise their followers quickly for action at special critical moments, evangelicals are not good at sustaining political involvement long-term. Thirdly, evangelicals, once in power, are no more immune to bribery and cronyism than others. Fourthly, although there are growing signs of political maturation amongst evangelicals, in general their greatest weakness in their efforts at electoral politics is the lack of any serious political thought, based on clear principles and long-term goals. As Carpenter puts it, evangelical “activism often work against their valuing intellectual

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2012/results>

¹⁶⁸ Mandryk, *Operation World*, p. 683.

¹⁶⁹ See fn.6.

¹⁷⁰ Paul Freston (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); David H. Lumsdaine (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Terence O. Ranger, ed., *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹⁷¹ Joel Carpenter, ‘Now What? Revivalist Christianity and Global South Politics,’ *Books and Culture* (Mar/Apr 2009), pp. 26-28.

work, engaging traditions of Christian social and political thought, and developing principle-driven, long-term strategies.”¹⁷²

To sum up, revival and personal conversion do not necessarily lead to social transformation. Moreover, evangelicals are often naïve about long-term strategy in electoral politics. Even worse, they often get sucked into the quagmire of corruption and power abuse, thus not only ending their public usefulness but discrediting the gospel at the same time.

Where do we go from here?

2. Some Basic Elements of an Evangelical Theology of Nation-building

I believe that an evangelical theology of nation-building has to take a multi-level approach. We begin with evangelism and mind-set change.

2.1 Evangelism and mindset change

In his book, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*, Stephen Mott suggests five paths to justice, beginning with evangelism.¹⁷³ The emphasis on personal conversion has always been central in evangelical theology, and its being a precondition to lasting positive social change is often a given in Christian history. That this sometimes has been naively stated as “You change the individual, you change the world” is not to be denied, even though it can easily be argued that a substantial degree of truth is contained therein! Nevertheless, the best statement of the importance to evangelism to social change that I have read recently has come, not from a Christian, but from a professing atheist!

Matthew Parris, a journalist and sometime British Conservative MP, wrote a piece in *The Times* recently, titled “As an atheist, I truly believe Africa needs God.”¹⁷⁴ In it he reflects on a visit to Malawi where he had grown up as a missionary kid. He confesses that the visit challenged his present ideological beliefs and “has embarrassed my growing belief that there is no God.” He goes on to write:

Now a confirmed atheist, I've become convinced of the enormous contribution that Christian evangelism makes in Africa: sharply distinct from

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁷³ Stephen Charles Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 109-208. The other four are: the church living as counter-community, strategic noncooperation, creative political reforms, and armed revolution as a last resort.

¹⁷⁴ Matthew Parris, ‘As an atheist, I truly believe Africa needs God,’ *The Times* (Dec 27, 2008).

the work of secular NGOs, government projects and international aid efforts. These alone will not do. Education and training alone will not do. In Africa Christianity changes people's hearts. It brings a spiritual transformation. The rebirth is real. The change is good.

He goes on to say that he used to think that the practical effect of the missions was good, and wish that the faith aspect could somehow be set aside. But he came to admit that this did not fit the facts as he saw it. "Faith does more than support the missionary; it is also transferred to his flock. This is the effect that matters so immensely, and which I cannot help observing." He saw that Christianity was necessary to effect changes in the mind-set and culture. That alone could set Africans free from the suppressed individuality that encouraged servile subservience to the "big man," the fear that stunts curiosity and hold back initiative of all kinds, and prevents them forever from asking the "Why." His concludes his short piece with the following:

Those who want Africa to walk tall amid 21st-century global competition must not kid themselves that providing the material means or even the knowhow that accompanies what we call development will make the change. A whole belief system must first be supplanted And I'm afraid it has to be supplanted by another. Removing Christian evangelism from the African equation may leave the continent at the mercy of a malign fusion of Nike, the witch doctor, the mobile phone and the machete.

I doubt I can express it better. For that is exactly what Jesus meant when he said, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8: 31b, 32).

Faith in Christ transforms our worldviews and value systems, empowers us to overcome sin and evil in personal and corporate life, and gives us a vision of what an alternative society can be. This brings us to the subject of "social lift" often been seen in church history.

2.2 Social lift and the alleviation of poverty

A much debated issue in modern church history has been the question of the impact of the eighteenth century Methodist revival on English society. Whatever our conclusions, we probably have to agree with what one Methodist scholar, Ronald Stone, concludes about primitive Methodism's impact on the poor. He argues that "the Wesleyan-organized cell movements provided the discipline, hope, organization, learning, and networks that lifted many of the early Methodists out of poverty. Religiously inspired communities of economic, ethical orientation, and education may still be one of the greatest antidotes to poverty for many

societies.”¹⁷⁵ This has been referred to as “social lift” or “betterment” by the British sociologist, David Martin. Indeed, Martin has argued that Pentecostal growth among the poor in Latin America in the past generation has produced essentially similar socio-economic results as Methodism did amongst the eighteenth century poor in England.¹⁷⁶ Thus Pentecostalism is reshaping the social landscape of Latin America from the margins.¹⁷⁷

Similar observations and conclusions have been noted elsewhere. One of the debates in Indian missiology concerns what is the best way to help the Dalit or Untouchable communities. Is it humanisation or evangelisation that will effect genuine transformation for them? Some scholars have argued that Christian conversion has failed to awaken the Dalits’ consciousness and is, therefore, unnecessary and unhelpful. Such versions of Dalit theologies seek to affirm Dalit identity before Christian identity, and focus on humanisation as the primary goal of mission. Conscientisation, not evangelisation, is what is needed.

This position has been challenged by other scholars such as Stephen Neill and others. Building on such earlier work, the Indian scholar, Samuel Jayakumar,¹⁷⁸ studied closely the history of the development of two Dalit communities, the Nadars and the Paraiyas in Tirunelveli District in Tamilnadu State, India. His study furnishes clear evidence in support of Neill and others who have argued that it was the conversion of the Dalits to Christianity that paved the way for their social advancement.

Against a religious background in which the oppression of and contempt for Dalits were given religious sanction and legitimised over millenia, Jayakumar demonstrated that Christian conversion led to a new identity in Christ, and impacted the Dalits in a number of significant ways.

It led first to the emergence of a new alternative Christian community which countered the existing oppressive Brahminical Hindu social order. Secondly, access to vernacular and western education transformed the minds of the Dalits. Thirdly, training given by the missionaries to the Dalit communities led to the emergence of indigenous leadership and proper management of their own affairs, both in church

¹⁷⁵ Ronald Stone, *John Wesley’s Life and Ethics* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2001), p. 226.

¹⁷⁶ E.g. David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp. 27-46.

¹⁷⁷ David Martin, *Forbidden Revolutions: Pentecostalism in Latin America and Catholicism in Eastern Europe* (London: SPCK, 1996), pp. 1-65.

¹⁷⁸ Samuel Jayakumar, *Dalit Consciousness and Christian Conversion: Historical Resources for a Contemporary Debate* (Oxford: Regnum & Delhi: ISPCK, 1999).

and in the wider society. Fourthly, missionaries also strongly stressed character formation as a means of social transformation. Fifthly, the introduction of science and modern medicine removed the traditional fear of demonic powers, and thereby set them free from their past religious bondage. This further contributed to their physical health and overall well-being.¹⁷⁹ Jayakumar sums the evidence up as follows:

Hence, contrary to the contention of Dalit theologians, the study has demonstrated that the Dalits' conversion to the Gospel of Christ began to release them from centuries of despair and bondage when there had been no escape from their situation.¹⁸⁰

Similar stories are found all over the Majority World. One of the most dramatic that I personally know of concerns a tribal group called the Lun Bawang in East Malaysia. Like other tribal groups, they were originally among the head-hunters of Borneo. Following the prohibition of head-hunting by the British colonial authorities, the men ended up spending much of their time drinking. By the 1930s, it was said of this tribe that they were drunk a hundred days in a year, including the children. Only the dogs were sober! The British colonial authorities were so disgusted that they did not allow the missionaries to go to this people. They wanted them to die out so that other tribes would not be similarly influenced.

But God had other plans. Somehow the gospel reached them and, through the prayers and dogged efforts of Australian missionaries, a miracle took place, with the whole tribe saved from extinction. Today, some eighty years later, the Lun Bawang community is one of the key pillars of the Borneo Evangelical Church (*Sidang Injil Borneo*), the largest Protestant Church in Malaysia,¹⁸¹ with many socially successful professionals and businessmen amongst them. That is the living proof of the power of the gospel.

Interestingly, the abundance of evidence for Christian conversion leading to social lift in the past few centuries has led the sociologist, Peter L. Berger, to argue in favour of the so-called prosperity gospel!¹⁸² Never mind what left-wingers and cynics say about the poor being duped by a capitalist ideology. The truth is that, on

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 151-288.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹⁸¹ Shirley Lees, *Drunk Before Dawn* (Sevenoaks, Kent: OMF, 1979); Jin Huat Tan, *Planting an Indigenous Church: The Case of the Borneo Evangelical Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2011), pp. 92-98, 214-243.

¹⁸² Peter L. Berger, "You can do it!" Two Cheers for the Prosperity Gospel, *Books & Culture: A Christian Review* (Sept 1, 2008), <http://www.ctlibrary.com/60698> (accessed 12 Sept 2013).

the basis of evidence garnered from his and David Martin's work on Pentecostals in South Africa and Latin America respectively, many poor are being helped. Pentecostal preachers are telling the flock that God does not want them to be poor and that they can do something about it. No one should argue with that message.

Berger is not unaware of the theological criticisms against the prosperity gospel. But he responds by asking what is good for the poor? "And, as far as the prosperity gospel is concerned, what one can say about it sociologically is quite different from what one can say theologically."¹⁸³ He notes that present-day Pentecostals are actually practising what Max Weber termed "the Protestant ethic" of hard work, thrift and a disciplined lifestyle. Upward economic mobility results! In other words, whereas Protestants were unintentional Weberians, Berger suggests that prosperity gospel preachers are intentional Weberians!

This is not the place to enter into a full discussion of the prosperity gospel. Sociologically, Peter Berger's argument would be difficult to fault. Where his argument is weak however is that he fails to distinguish between the different socio-economic contexts of purveyors of the prosperity gospel in middle-class societies in the rich world and Pentecostal preachers in the slums and shanty towns of the developing world!

To illustrate this point, I refer to the work of the Korean Pentecostal, David Yonggi Cho. He has been sometimes been accused of preaching a Korean version of the American prosperity gospel.¹⁸⁴ But he has always denied that. He argues that his teaching should be understood against the aftermath of the Korean War in the 1950s when his flock was dirt poor. What is the gospel if God cannot give hope and new life to the starving masses? Consequently he refers to his own teachings as a "gospel of need" in contrast to the middle-class American version, which is a "gospel of greed"!

He has further suggested that given the economic success of Korea today, in contrast to its earlier poverty, much more emphasis should now be given to sacrifice than to seeking material blessings.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁸⁴ See e.g. David Yonggi Cho, *Salvation, Health and Prosperity: Our Threefold Blessings in Christ* (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1987).

¹⁸⁵ I have discussed this in detail in my paper, 'The Missiological Challenge of David Yonggi Cho's Theology,' *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, 7/1 (January 2004): pp. 57-77, esp. pp. 70-74. However it needs to be pointed out that subsequent reports on Cho's ministry seem to indicate that he may not be entirely consistent on this.

Nevertheless, the above comment on David Yonggi Cho's teachings does not invalidate the point that Peter Berger makes. What is needed is to subject the so-called prosperity gospel to a proper biblical and theological critique to draw out the promises and blessings of God to those who call on Him in their need, without allowing it to slide into what Cho calls a "gospel of greed"!

I believe that this constitutes a fundamental missiological challenge to us. Properly carried out, this will help the church to release the saving power of the gospel of Christ to bring about a powerful transformation in many situations of extreme poverty in the world today.

2.3 Moral reformation and reconciliation, the answers to two intractable problems

Two of the most intractable problems in nation-building in developing countries are corruption and ethnic conflict. The first is certainly one of the biggest obstacles to economic growth in most emergent nations around the world, and the second one of the greatest hindrance to the emergence of civil society and national unity. What answers does the gospel have to these?

2.3.1 Moral reformation and corruption

Commentators, especially from the west, have repeatedly noted that corruption, together with crony capitalism and nepotism which usually link political power with economic dominance, are the banes of most developing nations. Despite all the laws enacted in many countries against such practices, the reality is that these are often ineffective simply because the prevailing culture and underlying values work against them.

A small number of the newer nations have been successful in dealing with this, such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Barbados. But usually this is the result of the confluence of several saving factors.

The first is the provision of laws and institutions which provides for transparency, and checks and balances of power, many of which were put in place by ex-colonial powers. Second, the existence of good and strong political leadership is vital. Third, it helps if the country is small because things are much more easily monitored. And finally, corruption is less likely where higher levels of education and average national income are obtained. But not many countries have been so blessed.¹⁸⁶ And

¹⁸⁶ But the eradication of corruption goes beyond good governance and an effective legal framework. The latter may ensure that citizens learn to stay within the law where it applies, but do not necessarily bring about

so corruption remains a cancer eating away at the vast majority of emergent nations' social and economic development, from the large and relatively wealthy foursome BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries to much smaller and dirt poor ones.¹⁸⁷

One cannot pretend that the answer to this is easily found. But interestingly there is a substantial group of intellectuals in China, known as “cultural Christians,”¹⁸⁸ who are openly arguing that the answer to the needed changes in values is to be found in Christianity. Many of these are not believers themselves, but they see Christianity as providing the necessary moral framework for nation-building.

One such is Zhao Xiao, a former government economist and now a professor at the University of Science and Technology, Beijing. He is well known for his views that for the sake of China's economic growth, the market economy as practised in the country must be imbued with integrity and built on a firm Christian moral foundation. He first came to prominence arguing this in an article titled “Market Economies with Churches and Market Economies without Churches”, written in 2002 and widely circulated online since.¹⁸⁹

In an interview with America's Public Broadcasting Service, he spoke of America's early Puritan foundations in comparison with China as follows:

I discovered that there is a foundation of morality behind the American market economy. In China, on the other hand, we have concentrated a lot on economic reforms but have not paid much attention to that moral foundation. We still need a transition in the area of morality. Only then can this kind of organic transformation be a thorough reform.¹⁹⁰

internal moral transformation. For example, reports on what businesses from Hong Kong and Singapore do outside their home countries are not always flattering.

¹⁸⁷ The best place to begin to look at the problem of corruption worldwide is Transparency International's website: <http://www.transparency.org/>

¹⁸⁸ For an introduction to and critique of 'Chinese Cultural Christianity' see Cun-fu Chen & Edwin Hui, 'The Phenomenon of "Cultural Christians": An Overview and Evaluation,' in *Chinese Intellectuals and the Gospel*, eds., Samuel Ling and Stacey Bieler (Vancouver: China Horizon & Horizon Ministries, 1999), pp. 83-136; and Ka Lun Leung, 'Cultural Christians And Christianity In China,' *China Rights Forum*, 4 (2003), pp. 28-31, http://www.hrichina.org/sites/default/files/oldsite/PDFs/CRF.4.2003/a2_christians4.2003.pdf (accessed 24 May 2013).

¹⁸⁹ Zhao Xiao, 'Market Economies with Churches and Market Economies without Churches' (2002); http://www.danwei.org/business/churches_and_the_market_econom.php (accessed on 24 May 2013).

¹⁹⁰ 'Extended Interview: Zhao Xiao,' http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/china_705/interview/xiao.html (accessed 24 May 2013).

But it is one thing to talk about Christianity providing the moral foundation for a society, it is another for those values to be properly emplaced within that culture. And as noted earlier, conversion to Christianity, even of the vast majority of a nation, does not ensure that this happens! In many western societies, Christianity has had centuries of history and culture has slowly evolved. But for many emergent nations, we do not have the luxury of such vast stretches of time. The Christian church, if she is faithful to the gospel call, cannot simply sit around and wait for such an evolution to take place. Are there models for cultural transformation from which something can be learned?

What follows is a brief excursus into British church history which I suggest has a powerful relevance to our discussion. Other examples no doubt can also be found. But this is highlighted because it demonstrates that corruption can be consciously challenged and overcome.

In a study on *Corruption in Developing Countries*, Ronald Wraith and Edgar Simpkins pointed out that Britain in the eighteenth century was “as corrupt as any”¹⁹¹ of the emergent nations Africa and Asia in the 1960s. Yet something happened and by mid-nineteenth century, things had completely turned around! Victorian England was not only known for integrity and virtues, but also became probably the most powerful nation on earth. In describing this change, Professor Harold Perkins asserted that, “between 1780 and 1850 the English ceased to be one of the most aggressive, brutal, rowdy, outspoken, riotous, cruel and bloodthirsty nations in the world and became one of the most inhibited, polite, orderly, tender-minded, prudish and hypocritical.”¹⁹² Leaving aside Perkins’ touch of cynicism, the point is that something fundamental had changed.

Wraith and Simpkins in their study examined various political and economic reasons why corruption declined in England. At the same time, they also highlighted more elusive factors such as the growth of “the personal integrity of individuals” and “the puritanical thread in the fabric of Victorian England” which ran right through British society.¹⁹³ Where did these come from?

Historians have noted two keys Christian influences that acted together with others to bring this about. The first was the eighteenth century evangelical revival under John Wesley. This revival, which began around 1740, impacted largely the poor.

¹⁹¹ Ronald Wraith and Edgar Simpkins, *Corruption in Developing Countries* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1963; reprinted by Routledge, 2010), p. 9.

¹⁹² Harold Perkins, *The Origins of Modern English Society*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 280.

¹⁹³ Wraith and Simpkins, *Corruption*, p. 62.

Wesley's stated goal was, "To reform the nation, especially the church, and to spread scriptural holiness over the land."¹⁹⁴ Thus the emphasis on holiness and moral living lay at the heart of Wesley's pastoral concern, and the class meetings was the means by which the revival "spread scriptural holiness over the land."

Wraith and Simpkins described the results as follows: "The Methodist movement and its aftermath coincided with the industrial revolution, and was more largely responsible than any other influence for the integrity ... of a large section of the working class." And it was this that gave to the emerging labour movement in the nineteenth century Britain "its stability, its thrift and its incorruptibility."¹⁹⁵

The other great Christian influence came from William Wilberforce and his friends in the Clapham Sect in the following generation.¹⁹⁶ They were Anglicans who had been touched by the Wesleyan revival and strongly influenced the upper classes. Wilberforce, in 1787, wrote in his journal: "God Almighty has set before me two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners."¹⁹⁷

Over the next generation, both objectives were brilliantly accomplished, through a carefully orchestrated strategy and the use of innovative tactics to awaken the national conscience and reshape public opinion. Not only was slavery abolished throughout the British Empire after an epic parliamentary battle of 46 years, but upper class morality was profoundly reformed.

In summing up the impact of Wesley and Wilberforce, which coalesced with the efforts of the Benthamite Utilitarians, Wraith and Simpkins concluded: "Had not these religious currents flowed so strongly under the surface of national life during the nineteenth century, it is questionable whether corruption would have been virtually destroyed by the century's end."¹⁹⁸

If the above analysis is correct, it would appear that the battle against corruption can be won if there is a committed group in any society working towards culture change.

¹⁹⁴ From 'Large Minutes'; cited in Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), p. 214.

¹⁹⁵ Wraith and Simpkins, *Corruption*, p. 179f.

¹⁹⁶ See, e.g., Ian Bradley, *The Call to Seriousness: The Evangelical Impact on the Victorians* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976); Stephen Tomkins, *The Clapham Sect: How Wilberforce's Circle Changed Britain* (Oxford, Lion: 2010).

¹⁹⁷ Cited in Bradley, *The Call*, p. 94.

¹⁹⁸ Wraith and Simpkins, *Corruption*, p. 182.

For Christians, the missiological challenge to reshape a culture's moral values would require three things. First, as Matthew Parris had noted earlier, one of the key means is through conversion to Christ that leads to mind-set change. But this in itself will not be sufficient. As Wesley and the early Methodists clearly demonstrate, converts needed to be imbued with Christian values through the deliberate cultivation of holy living. This was done through proper biblical teaching and the effective use of classes and bands which provided pastoral oversight and mutual accountability, all of which are absolutely necessary ingredients for inculcating holiness. These are precisely what are lacking in many churches in the Majority World today.¹⁹⁹ Thirdly, like Wilberforce and his friends, those who have been thus transformed must then consciously reach out to reshape public opinion and bring social reform.

2.3.2 Reconciliation and ethnic conflict

The other major hindrance to nation-building is that of ethnic conflict, which in many situations have been further aggravated by religious and cultural differences. The history of the 20th century shows all too clearly that this is not a problem that can be addressed by modernisation and education alone. The 1990s alone saw violent ethnic conflicts in numerous places such as Bosnia, Chechnya, Rwanda, Sudan, India and Myanmar. Elsewhere, in many other places, including in my own country, Malaysia, ethnic tensions continues to lie simmering beneath the surface, always ready to erupt when sufficient pressure builds up.

The gospel calls us to “strive for peace with everyone” (Heb 12: 14) and to exercise “the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5: 18). Space does not allow for a detail discussion of how this can be done in practice in our divided world today. But the example of Christians in post-apartheid South Africa has much to teach us.

When apartheid ended in 1994, many wondered how old scores would be settled with thousands upon thousands having been murdered or unjustly killed, and millions of lives economically devastated and socially dislocated. Yet as a Christian, Nelson Mandela knew that without reconciliation, his country had no future. Thus upon his election as the new President, he invited his jailer to join him on the inauguration platform. He then set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission under the leadership of Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

¹⁹⁹ For a clear introduction to John Wesley's pastoral methodology, see D. Michael Henderson, *A Model for Making Disciples: John Wesley's Class Meeting* (Nappanee, IN: Francis Asbury Press, 1997).

Over the next two and half years, all (especially whites) who came forward to confess publicly crimes against people of other races under the old apartheid regime at the Commission's hearings received full pardons. Many rightly complained about the injustice of the whole exercise. But Mandela knew that the nation needed grace more than justice, and forgiveness more than revenge. As a result, healing and reconciliation followed.

The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is well-known. But less well-known, but no less critical to South Africa, was the work of some Christians whose efforts made the first democratic elections possible. Space does not allow the whole story to be told, but only its climactic moments at the end.²⁰⁰

After decades of apartheid rule, the country was preparing for free elections for the first time ever. Yet everything was not well, with racial tensions, having built up for centuries, finally ready to explode into a massive civil war! The three main political groups, the National Party, Inkatha Freedom Party and the African National Congress, representing the Afrikaans, the Zulus, and the majority of the blacks in the country respectively, could not agree to a formula for the transitional government. To find a way forward for reconciliation in the nation, two of the world's most highly respected negotiators were brought in, namely Henry Kissinger and Lord Carrington. But by 14 April, the talks had completely collapsed and the international negotiators flown off. South Africa was on the verge of imploding, with thousands or even millions of lives at stake!

But some Christian leaders who had been working hard in the reconciliation process refused to give up. Instead, they called on the whole country to prayer. Then three days later the vital breakthrough came. Leaders from all three parties suddenly could agree on a carefully worked out formula, thus ensuring that the first ever free elections for a new government could proceed on 27 April, and a bloody civil war averted. All these happened in the VIP room of the King's Park Stadium, Durban, where 25,000 Christians had been praying for hours for national reconciliation at a Jesus Peace Rally. When news of the breakthrough was finally flashed throughout the world, the word that summed up headlines everywhere was MIRACLE! The church, through persistent believing prayer, had become God's instrument of healing for a deeply divided nation. The world would only grasp the full significance of that miracle when it later learnt that just two thousand kilometres away in Rwanda, at almost the same time, a civil war had begun on 6 April which went on to claim 800,000 lives!

²⁰⁰ For details, see Michael Cassidy, *A Witness For Ever* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995).

The above shows that what are often seen as intractable may be surmountable after all. But will Christians in emergent nations take seriously such lessons of history?

2.4 A Christian political vision of freedom and democracy

We come finally to the fourth prong of Christian action in nation-building. Earlier we had noted that evangelicals in the Majority World, whilst having begun to take political engagements seriously, in general lack serious political thought, based on clear principles and long-term goals. What is often found is that, like others, evangelicals will also fight for freedom, justice, human rights, and other principles of modern democracy. But they often have no idea of where these great principles come from. At most they may refer to the eighteenth century French and American revolutions, or to some vague secular idea of “self-evident rights” of humanity. Or, they may refer to their national constitutions, drawn up under the influence of outgoing colonial powers or occupiers, which provide the legal and moral framework for democracy in their countries. Few Christian politicians in emergent nations have a clear and firm grasp of the fact that much of the best of what western democracies have in their laws and national constitutions are the result of two thousand years of Christian history.

Without going into details, what appears almost certain is that the foundational ideas, upon which the modern western liberal vision or the idea of civil society is based, had gradually emerged over the past two thousand years, largely as a result of its Christian experience. Many of these ideas are theologically rooted in the Christian understanding of God and humanity, and were increasingly brought together from the Reformation period onwards. For example, the right of everyone to vote derives from the Christian understanding of each person having a dignity premised on being created in God's image. As one writer in *The Economist* puts it:

Democracy is the child of the Reformation ... The Reformation declared that every individual was responsible before God for the way he lived his life. Priests might say what they thought God wanted, but in the end it was the individual who decided It took almost three centuries for that proposition to work its way through into the realm of politics, but when it did the result was, literally, revolutionary ... It was the people themselves who would decide. Each man and woman would have an equal voice in making the people's decision. That is democracy.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ 'Islam and the West: A Survey,' *The Economist* (Aug 6, 1994), pp. 1-18, here p. 13.

Similarly, the idea of having checks and balances in government is rooted in the Christian doctrine of sin which asserts that no person, however good, can be trusted with absolute powers. The importance of the need for countervailing institutions to check the power of the government is so firmly held in John Calvin's Switzerland, for example, that to this day, although the administrative capital is in Berne, the Supreme Court is located elsewhere in Lausanne!

Again, the late American legal scholar and former Harvard professor, Harold J. Berman, has argued that it was people like the Calvinistic Puritans of the seventeenth century, who carried forward the Lutheran concept of the sanctity of the individual conscience and thereby helped lay the foundations of the English and American laws of civil rights and liberties.²⁰² In the history of the evolution and life of western society, law and religion were simply inseparable. As Berman notes, the great principles of the Western legal tradition were largely created by the impact of western civilization's Christian history. These include

the principle of civil disobedience, the principle of law reform in the direction of greater humanity, the principle of the coexistence of diverse legal systems, the principle of the conformity of law to a system of morals, the principle of the sanctity of property and contract rights based on intent, the principle of freedom of conscience, the principle of legal limitations on the power of rulers, the principle of the responsibility of the legislature to public opinion, the principle of predictability of the legal consequences of social and economic actions, as well as newer socialist principles of the priority of state interests and of public welfare.²⁰³

He goes on to argue that,

These principles may appear to some to be self-evident truths, and to others they may appear to be utilitarian policies, but for Western man as a whole they are, above all, historical achievements created mainly out of the experience of the Christian church in the various stages of its life ... *These successive ages of the church have created the psychological basis, and many of the values, upon which the legal systems of democracy and socialism rest* (my italics).²⁰⁴

²⁰² Harold J. Berman, *The Interaction of Law and Religion* (London: SCM, 1974), pp. 66f.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.72; see also Harold J. Berman, *Faith and Order: The Reconciliation of Law and Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 35-53.

²⁰⁴ Berman, *Interaction*, pp. 72f.

More recently, Rodney Stark has argued along similar lines in his book, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success*.²⁰⁵ He attributes the rise of capitalism in Europe that led to its great leap forward in modernization to Christianity, because it taught the primacy of reason. "Christianity alone embraced reason and logic as the primary guide to religious truth... (F)rom early days, the church fathers taught that reason was the supreme gift from God and the means to *progressively increase* their understanding of scripture and revelation."²⁰⁶ This paved the way for the victory of reason over ignorance, leading to the development of a rational theology, cultural, scientific and technical innovations beginning in medieval monastic communities, and the emergence of political freedom and modern capitalism.

More specifically, he argues that the concept of freedom comes from the development of the ideas of individualism and human rights in the Christian tradition, which in turn is rooted in the New Testament emphasis on moral responsibility and sin. Indeed, Augustine's emphasis on free will fully anticipated Descartes' "I think, therefore I am,"²⁰⁷ the bedrock of modernity's idea of autonomous individualism. Similarly, the New Testament teaching on the equality of all humankind in the eyes of God, regardless of social status, ethnicity or gender laid the foundation for the moral equality of all before the law. This in turn led to property rights and limitations on the powers of kings and the state. From these came the democratic state, with its safeguards of freedom, equality and rights, out of which capitalism emerged.

Admittedly, some of these ideas have also emerged in fragmented forms throughout history in various societies, not all of which were Christian. Further, within western civilization itself, after the Reformation, these ideas were further shaped by secular and other forces. But what is beyond doubt is that no other culture or society, built upon a non-Christian basis, has ever evolved the same comprehensive vision in and of itself. Its emergence in the modern world, undergirded by a strong legal framework which was developed to protect it from being compromised, presupposes the whole experience of the history of western civilization, which was strongly impacted and undeniably shaped by Christianity. Yet, few Christians in politics in the Majority World are familiar with the above arguments and ideas. Consequently, often most function without a clearly thought-

²⁰⁵ Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success* (New York: Random House, 2005).

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. x.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-26.

out political philosophy and with no clear vision of what constitutes freedom, justice and good governance from a Christian perspective. Two things need to be done to address this deplorable situation. First, we must find means to make the historical resources on the development of these foundational ideas of democracy readily available to those engaged in the political process in the Majority World. Much of the materials are presently found in disparate sources which are not easily accessible, and usually written in academic language which most busy politicians finds incomprehensible.²⁰⁸

Secondly, Christians in the Majority World must engage with non-Christians thinkers on what these foundational ideas would imply in politics and government in their respective societies. We must not assume that non-Christians understand and accept ideas like freedom, human rights, and so forth in the same way that we do. For example, can an unreformed Hinduism accept the idea of universal franchise, when its fundamental beliefs are wrapped up inseparably with the caste system wherein people of different castes are fundamentally unequal? Again, can an Islam which does not allow its followers to go back beyond the classical *Sha'riah* laws to the primary source of the *Qu'ran* through *ijtihad* (reinterpretation) fully allow for the religious freedom of non-Muslim minorities in Muslim majority lands?²⁰⁹ Or, can a secularism cut off from its original Christian foundations continue to maintain the equality of all humanity?²¹⁰

Yet, if we believe that nation-building is a Christian missiological imperative, this may well be a most opportune time in history to engage in such a dialogue, particularly with Islam. All over the Islamic world, there is an on-going intellectual ferment as Muslims seeks to engage with an increasingly globalised world. For example, in response to the changes that the Arab Spring brought to Egypt, Al-Azhar, the leading Sunni intellectual centre in the Islamic world issued a statement, now known as the Al-Azhar Document,²¹¹ and this was followed by a Bill of Rights.²¹²

²⁰⁸ For a good introduction to this subject, written in simple language, see Ronald J. Sider, *The Scandal of Evangelical Politics: Why are Christians Missing the Chance to Really Change the World?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008).

²⁰⁹ In no Muslim majority nation today do non-Muslims have same religious freedom as Muslims themselves enjoy.

²¹⁰ This was precisely the problem with Nazi Germany, the Marxist Soviet Union and the former satellite states in Eastern Europe during the Cold War era.

²¹¹ **Al-Azhar and a group of Egyptian Educated elite, 'Al-Azhar Document: Statement about the future of Egypt,'** <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Story.aspx?sid=56424> (accessed 24 May 2013).

²¹² Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar, Dr. Ahmed El-Tayyeb, 'Al-Azhar's "Bill of Rights",' (8 Jan 2012; authorised translation, 3 Sept 2012); <http://freespeechdebate.com/en/discuss/al-azhars-bill-of-rights/> (accessed 24 May 2013).

The first was explicitly concerned that Egyptians will have “the rights in freedom, dignity, equality and social justice.” More importantly, the Bill of Rights affirmed unambiguously the principles of freedom of religion, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of scientific research, and lastly the freedom of creativity and to practice arts. In particular, the section on freedom of religion, states:

Freedom of belief and the associated right to full citizenship for all based on full equality of rights and duties is considered a cornerstone of modern community building. It is guaranteed by the unchanging peremptory religious text and explicit constitutional and legal principles. As God Almighty says, “There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong,” adding, “So whomever wills – let him believe; and whomever wills – let him disbelieve.” These verses legitimise the criminalisation of any appearance of coercion, persecution or discrimination in religion. Every individual in the community can embrace ideas as he pleases without affecting the right of the society to maintain monotheistic beliefs. The three Abrahamic faiths have held on to their sense of holiness, and their followers should retain the freedom to observe their rituals without facing aggression directed at their feelings or violations on their religions sanctity, and without breaching public order.

It has to be said that these are revolutionary statements within the Egyptian context, as well as in many other Islamic societies where conservative understandings of the Shariah prevail. These kinds of expressed openness amongst Muslim leaders and intellectuals may provide precisely the opportunities which the church must take hold of, so as to engage in a dialogue that would bring mutual respect, genuine religious freedoms and general welfare to all.

Only by wrestling through these and other related issues can we begin to develop a clearly thought-out political philosophy and vision that is contextually relevant in different parts of the Majority World. This is one piece of homework which cannot be neglected if we are to contribute significantly to nation-building in emergent nations in the coming generation.

To sum up, with respect to the multi-level approach to nation-building that is needed, the above discussion is certainly far from exhaustive. Other crucial elements come easily to mind. These include the need to build healthy and strong public institutions such as the government, law courts, civil service, police and armed forces. A second important area is the need to inculcate a spirit of volunteerism in all citizens which is indispensable for any civil and compassionate society. Another would be the choice of an economic model which best helps to reduce poverty and enhance economic growth at particular stages of a nation’s

growth. But these and other areas will take us beyond the limited space available here.

Nevertheless, it is hope that enough has been said above to deliver concerned Christians from the paralysis of despair.

CONCLUSION

This essay has been written out of a personal pilgrimage in the context of seeking pastoral and theological answers to what I believe is one the most pressing missiological questions today. Multitudes are turning to Christ for answers, not just for eternity, but also their temporal well-being. But the answers provided by the churches thus far in the many emergent nations have been slow in forthcoming, and by and large often inadequate. If we continue to fail, the danger is that the gospel will end up discredited—because it will appear that Christ has answers only for Peter Pan’s “Never-Never-Land”!

But adequate answers to nation-building in emergent nations cannot be found by merely importing them from some alien sources, whether from the Left, in the form some version of Marxist liberation theology or an unsustainable welfare state, or from the Right, as some middle-class version of the prosperity gospel or unrestrained free market economics. What is needed is a willingness to learn from Christian history, especially that of western civilisation, to find out where the gospel has given so much to human civilisation. Having done so, we must then do the necessary homework for our own societies and proceed to formulate a clear Christian philosophy and vision of nation-building for our own particular context. To facilitate this process, more South-South dialogue would also help greatly.

Finally, this essay also alerts us against one possible pitfall. In their concern to make a difference to their respective societies, many Christians in emergent nations are jumping on the political band-wagon as if political action is the ultimate answer. Enough is said here to suggest that that is naïve. Political engagement is a necessary but not sufficient condition for social and cultural change. It is an essential component of Christian action, but one which can only be effectual when exercised together with other forms of engagements, including prayer, disciple-making that brings about deep-rooted changes in mind-set and moral values, and the existence of a vibrant Christian community committed to God’s righteousness and justice for everyone. As much as humans do not live by bread alone, human communities cannot survive on politics alone!

DISCIPLESHIP AS THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS FOR THE CHURCH

DAVID RUIZ

INTRODUCTION

In these days the church in the Global South finds itself in the midst of a tension. Because of the advances of materialism and individualism in the dominant cultures, the use of the mass media to present and promote individual ministries as successful and the battle to conquer a place in the mind of the global church, the church is being pressed by the ambitions of worldly success. Recently the churches frame their success in materialistic measures that is in terms of monthly turnovers, high salaries of ministers and experts to keep that ministry in the prime time in the television program or a big and demanding structure to keep it functioning like a Swiss Clock are needed. For an ordinary pastor this is a time of a lot of tension too. They often need to invest a considerable amount of money for travelling and attending congresses or the latest program seminar or, have a new opportunity to learn for the successful pastors and churches how to become successful or, at least to buy the latest book that presents the key for success.

A considerable amount of time and money are invested in sending a group of a church's leaders with cameras to duplicate certain programs within a particular church or organisation. In this paper, I argue that the Bible has the answer for the situation, as been described above. Therefore I will address the following key questions: What is church's success? What is the measure of success for the Church? And how can we become successful in our ministry? This paper is going to examine the teaching of Jesus Christ about the church in Matthew's Gospel, focusing in his teachings about discipleship in chapters 16 and, especially the "Great Commission" at the end of the Gospel. David Bosch argued that "is to be understood as the key for Matthew's understanding of the mission and the ministry of Jesus"²¹³ and talking about discipleship, he said: "The theme of discipleship is central to Matthew's gospel and to Matthew's understanding of the church and mission"²¹⁴ and, to take advantage on the Matthean interest to solve the identity crisis in his community, Bosch also wrote: "Matthew desires his community no longer to regard itself as a sectarian group, but boldly and consciously as the church of Christ."²¹⁵

²¹³ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 1991:60

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 73

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 59

1. The Great Commission: an exegetical key for church and discipleship

The final scene of the ministry of Jesus Christ as it is presented in the Gospel of Matthew is unexpected and tell us all that we need to know about the measure of success for the Church. We want to follow the suggestion presented by Edgar Krentz of reading back the gospel from its end. He said,

Critics recently have emphasized that the end of a document often is a key to its meaning. We shall therefore read Matthew back from his conclusion in Matt 28:16-20. This mode of reading is significant, because the Gospel ends with Jesus sending disciples (not apostles!) out to make other disciples, i.e., to replicate themselves ...²¹⁶

As we read in Matthew 28:7,10 the risen Lord invites his disciples to gather in Galilee, as he had been designated prior his death (26:32), the disciples arrived at the mount with a mixture of feelings and with more questions than answers. To understand better what is happening in the mind of the disciples and, especially to know more about the situation in which they received the Great Commission, we need to reflect upon the context of the pericope of the Great Commission of Jesus Christ for his disciples and his church.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the main background of the Great commission's passage. As we read in Romans 1:4-5: and who through the Spirit was declared with power to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ is our Lord. Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. The Lord is risen!

Emerged like an affirmation of his Lordship and as a powerful declaration that empowers his disciples to be ready to receive the Great Commission. Resurrection is also an affirmation of the fulfilment of the Scriptures as we read in Luke 24:45-46: Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "this is what is written: The Christ will suffer and be raised from the dead the third day and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations ... All those three elements are present in the Matthean pericope to present this moment as the climax of the Gospel.

In the closing scenes of Matthew's Gospel the various threads of his narrative reach their resolution.²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Krentz, Edgar. "Make Disciples" in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33/1 2006:23

²¹⁷ Achtemeier, *Introducing the New Testament*, 2001:115

Fear is another part of the background of the Great Commission passage in Matthew. Following the verses in this entire chapter, we can “smell fear” everywhere. The guards were so afraid ... and became like a dead men (28:4). Women were afraid too because of the earthquake and, specially, due to what they saw when they arrived: an angel who was at the tomb and Jesus’ body wasn’t there where they had put it. The first words from the angel to them, as well as Jesus’ first words were: Do not be afraid (28:5, 10).

And, finally, doubt is the other but most important part of this background. In the same verse and in almost the same action, the disciples are pictured wavering between worship and doubt. As the text says, “When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted” (Matt. 28:17), probably they doubted because this meeting at the mountain of Galilee was celebrated with a sense of failure. As this passage affirms, just eleven arrived to attend the meeting. One who betrayed him, was dead, and counted as part of the eleven, others who denied him and all who abandoned him, were there too. As Carson expressed: “Several solutions have been proposed, none of them convincing”²¹⁸ but it was true, some of the disciples doubted. Matthey’s point of view about the disciples’ doubt is preferred here:

The Great Commission is not only addressed to those who have overcome their doubt. Christians are called to mission as people who confess Jesus as Son of God and King, but who also experience crisis in their faith.²¹⁹

Yet, it didn’t help us to understand what the reason of the hesitation of the disciples is. Matthew is the only writer of the synoptic gospel writers that provides a detailed account of this meeting on the mount of Galilee and placed it chronologically, after Jesus’ resurrection (Matt 28:7, 10); the disciples’ arrival at the mountain highlights both his authority and their obedience. When Jesus appears on the mountain, he claims “all authority” (exousia, 28:18), and the disciples “worship” him (proshuneō, 28:17).²²⁰ Matthew describes in a very remarkable way the emotions of the disciples, their hesitation between worship and doubts and their expectation about Jesus’ last words. It’s probably that those doubts in the disciples emerged from their understanding about the meaning of that very important moment they are living. Jesus, who had fulfilled his ministry on earth, is ready to ascend to heaven. They understood that he is going to leave them alone with the challenge to continue his work to establish the Kingdom of God in the world. The question that emerged in their mind is: Are we capable to carry on this task? Could this insignificant group of disciples drive this divine endeavour to be witnesses of the risen Lord and messenger of the good news? Kentz describe this

²¹⁸ Carson D. A. in Gaebelin, Frank E., ed. *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 1984:593

²¹⁹ Matthey, J., *The Great Commission According to Matthew*. *International Review of Mission*, 1980:165

²²⁰ Harvey in *Mission in the New Testament* 1999:129

moment in a very vibrant way “Unsure of what to do, these disciples tended to do nothing”²²¹ and Harvey affirm in a touching phrase “Jesus responded to their doubts by “approaching” them (28:18).²²²

It is in that very moment that we hear the powerful word of the so-called “Great Commission of Jesus Christ” in Matthew 28:18-20: Then Jesus came to them and said,

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Edgar Krentz made a translation by his own from this verses as follow that help us to understand the meaningful commission of Jesus to his disciples: “All authority in heaven and upon the earth has been given to me [by God]. Therefore, as you go your way make disciples of all the [gentile?] nations by baptizing them into the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, by teaching them to observe [carry out] all the things that I commanded to you. And look [mark well], I am with you for all the days until the bringing of this *aion* to its goal.”²²³

The command of “make disciples” in 28:19 offer a useful summary of what Matthew understands discipleship to involve²²⁴ and outlines the plan for establishing Christ’s church by a discipleship process.

Looking at this pericope France “unpacked” the term disciple in two clauses that is very helpful to understand what it means in Matthew’s gospel. A disciple, he said, “is one who is ‘baptised’ into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and one whose responsibility it is to ‘observe all that Jesus has commanded’.”²²⁵ The future and the success of the church depends on that the church keeps this process of reproducing disciples functioning effectively and, specifically, that everyone of those disciples are committed to the observance of Jesus’ commandments.

The church must be involved in three activities: going (28:19), baptizing (28:19) and teaching (28:20).²²⁶ As Bosch clarifies: “the two participles, “baptizing” and “teaching”, are clearly subordinate to “make disciples”. The form the disciple-making is to take and add the overall “aim of the mission”: “the winning of all people to the status of being

²²¹ Krentz, , 2006:23

²²² Harvey, 1999:131

²²³ Krenz Idem:23

²²⁴ France, Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher 1989:261

²²⁵ *ibid.*

²²⁶ Harvey, 1999:132

true Christians”²²⁷ and as a result the church is established in “all nations” with meaningful success.

In the words of Luz and his concept of “transparency”, the measure of success of the church constitutes “... that the disciples become transparent and are models of what it means to be a Christian”.²²⁸

2. The church and discipleship in Matthew 16

To have a better understanding of this commandment and its impact into the eleven disciples’ lives and for the evangelisation process, we need to think about the church and the disciples as Matthew presented in the second part of his gospel. Let us read Matthew 16:13, as Krentz suggests, where the teaching of Jesus for his disciples become more focused on the church and the discipleship, that is the beginning of a new and important teachings of the Lord to his disciples; they need to know what the church is all about, what is their role in the process of initiating the church and how they can measure their success too.

The church is mentioned in chapter 16 and 18 in Matthew’s Gospel in a very significant way, in those chapters the noun *ἐκκλησία* appears (16:18;18:17). This term had been used in the Old Testament in the LXX with the meaning of the people of God²²⁹ with reference to the people of Israel. However, in these passages the meaning is revisited by Jesus to be more inclusive. France has a good explanation about this when he said:

But by the time Matthew included this term in his record of Jesus’ teaching it had come to have for him and his readers more developed meaning, in that they were conscious of belonging to *ἐκκλησῖαι* which were typically composed of both Jews and Gentiles, and which were by this stage self-consciously distinct from “their synagogues”. In the retention of so emotive a word from the Old Testament, but now defined as the *ἐκκλησία of Jesus* (16:18), he surely intends to indicate that the Christian church now fills the role of the Old Testament congregation of God’s people.²³⁰

2.1 *The Gentile Bias of the Church*

The geographical place where the teaching in chapter 16 takes place is very important, “The confession of Jesus’ messianic identity at Caesarea Philippi is clearly an important transition in the gospel story”,²³¹ “a key turning point in the whole narrative”²³² as

²²⁷ Trilling quoted in Bosch, *Transforming Mission* 1991: 73

²²⁸ Luz, in *The interpretation of Matthew* 1983:105

²²⁹ Goldsmith, *Matthew and Missions*, 2001:131

²³⁰ France, 1989:211

²³¹ Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew* 1997: 138

Goldsmith said. Caesarea Philippi was built by Herod Philip, the Tetrarch. It was part of the province of Decapolis and as some commentaries mentioned: “The inhabitants were largely Gentile[s]”²³³ and “it continued to be a pagan city”.²³⁴ In Matthew’s Gospel this information is connected with his presentation of the “Gentile bias”²³⁵ in the whole Gospel, especially in this part where he is going to define the church, the importance of the Gentiles is a key element. As we have been reading in the development of Matthew’s gospel Gentiles have an important role. For example, in Matthew 4:13-16 Jesus went and live in Capernaum and affirm that it is the fulfilment of the prophesy in Isaiah 9:1, 2 and his almost immediate proclamation, *repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near*, was made to Jews as well as to the Gentiles. In Matthew 8:10 as a result of the faith observed in a roman centurion, he expressed, *I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith* and he added: *I said to you that many will come from the east and the west and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth* (Matt 8:10-12). This is mentioned by France as “An important passage for understanding Matthew’s theology of Israel and the church”.²³⁶

Here in this place Jesus asks for his disciples the important question: *Who do people say the Son of Man is?* (Matt 16:13)

It seems that the disciples have not too much of a problem to answer this first question with affirmations that they probably hear from the followers of Jesus during the long working journeys.

But then Jesus restated the question in a different way: *Who do you say I am?* (Matt 16:15)

This important question opens the way for the disciples to begin to understand what the church looks like in the mind of Jesus. The first step is the affirmation of Peter when he answered: *You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God* (Matt 16:16). Taking this powerful affirmation as a basis, Jesus proclaim the advent of the church and in the following verses he made a complete description of the church, who are invited to be part of this new assembly, what is its basic purpose and what is their work among those who are called disciples.

²³² Goldsmith, 2001:128

²³³ Goldsmith, 2001:128

²³⁴ Filson, A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew.1960: 185

²³⁵ Bosch, 1991:60

²³⁶ France, 1989:212

2.2 To clarify and understand Jesus Christ

The first thing that the Lord Jesus Christ had made is to confirm the affirmation of Peter, as a “Christological Synthesis”. Meier affirms, “No other two verses in Matthew’s gospel contain such a dense concentration of Christological thought as do 16:13 and 16”²³⁷ as Jesus said, this was revealed by the Father in Heaven. It is not possible for Peter to understand in a complete way the whole idea of Christ in these two definitions that present Jesus in a combination of messianic and kingly role “This Son of Man is the royal Anointed One, the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy, the son of David who was destined to sit upon the throne of Israel in the last days” and conclude “a more powerful earthly king, a man who is adopted as a son of God at his enthronement”.²³⁸ This confession is a very important point in Jesus’ teachings about the church, not only because the importance of this confession itself but, especially because Peter’s confession would demonstrate, “... that the disciples have reached a stage at which he can begin to teach them what lies ahead”,²³⁹ and that is exactly what Jesus continues to do in the following verses, presenting to the disciples a clear picture about the church.

The next thing that happened is Jesus’ affirmation about the establishment of his church in 16:18 – *And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the Hades will not overcome it.* This first mention of the noun *ἐκκλησία* in Matthew presents a universal view of the church “in 16:18 its scope is apparently broader, envisaging a single *ἐκκλησία* resulting from Jesus’ ministry, and daringly describing it as *his* rather than God’s *ἐκκλησία*”.²⁴⁰ In Matthew 16:18, there are two affirmations of Jesus that help us to understand the conceptualisation of the church. The one, *I will build my church* (16:18) and the other, *the gates of Hades will not overcome it.* Both of these affirmations present the second step to understand how the church looks like in the mind of Jesus. The church is Jesus’ church. There is no option to have a geographical approach like the Guatemala’s church or an ethnic approach, for instance the “Quiche’s church”. There is only one church and it belongs to Jesus Christ who gives his life for her. This affirmation begin to solve the identity crisis that the Matthean community where facing.²⁴¹ This affirmation give a sense of belonging as well a clear understanding that all that the church need, will be provided by Jesus Christ who have the plans and the commitment to build his own Church.

The next affirmation that Jesus made in his definition of the church is *the gates of Hades*

²³⁷ Meier, 1979:110

²³⁸ Ibid. 109

²³⁹ Filson, *The gospel According to St. Matthew*, 1960: 186

²⁴⁰ France, 1989:243

²⁴¹ Bosch, 1991:59

will not overcome it. At the same time that Jesus confirms his ownership over his church,²⁴² he defines the church as a successful body because it is victorious over the Hades,

“this congregation will not fail ... Jesus will rise from the death and the Church will go forward under its living Lord.”²⁴³

The church of Jesus Christ has to be working to be successful but in the right way, struggle against the gates of Hades that will not prevail against the church. The church of Jesus Christ is established as a successful body to struggle and destroy the door of *Hades* and let the captives of the Evil one free by Christ’s sacrifice. Robertson rightfully states: “Christ’s church will prevail and survive because He will burst the gates of Hades and come forth as a conqueror”²⁴⁴ (16:21) and became part of his universal body called the church by making them disciples.

2.3 The church as a universal call for all people from all nations

When we see those affirmations in context we see that they represent a universal call of Jesus for all humankind. He is calling all people from all nations, Jews as well as gentiles, to become part of his universal body that he calls *my church*. He had made a clear statement for the future of generations: all people and all nations are equals at the eyes of God because he sent his son to redeem all of those who believe in him.

Now the most important human right is initiated: every people everywhere have the right agreed by God to hear at least once in the life, a clear explanation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in his own language and in a cultural sensible way, that make him able to understand it and take a personal decision about his salvation. That is what Church is all about; that is because the church was established by Jesus Christ as a victorious assembly of the people of God.

2.4 A call to make the Gospel available to everyone, everywhere

In the next verse, we read Jesus’ affirmation to Peter:

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (16:19).

There exists ample material to define Peter’s role in the establishment of the church of Jesus. France presented a very balanced way to understand this saying of Jesus –

²⁴² Goldsmith, *Matthew and Mission*, 2001: 131

²⁴³ Filson, 1960:187

²⁴⁴ Robertson, *World Pictures in the New Testament*, 1930:133

France states,

The special authority which was appropriate for Peter to exercise in a personal capacity in the process of the initial development of the Jesus movement was one which was not in principle his alone, but exercised by him on behalf of the community as a whole, and equally capable of being exercised by the community corporately.²⁴⁵

Nevertheless, it is preferred than what Meier said:

Peter is to be the supreme rabbi for the new people of God, and his teaching will have the authority of Jewish magisterium lacked.²⁴⁶

After considering the interpretation of several scholars, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, Senior conclude in this issue:

The notion of a developing Petrine tradition suggests that the apostle's role in the gospel is not reducible to that of representative disciple or mere "salvation-history primacy" but may indeed stand as a symbol and model of developing functions of pastoral leadership in Matthew's church.²⁴⁷

We can hear in this verse (16:19) a second calling of Jesus Christ to his church. He is calling all the Christians represented by Peter to take an active role in opening the gates of the church for everyone in every place. This universal call is the third step in the process of Jesus Christ to present his church among his disciples. As we can see in the passages of Acts relating with the establishment of the Church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:38) Peter takes the leading role to respond to the question what does this mean? (Acts 2:12) with a powerful message that we read in the following verses. The role of Peter is very consistent with what is the context of presentation of the role of the disciples in Matthew. Luz states in this regard:

At only one point Matthew is consistent: discipleship is always related to the teaching of the historical Jesus. The disciples are hearers of that teaching and understand it.²⁴⁸

Following the book of Acts, we see the ministry of Peter in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1, 14, 17). In those verses, we can see a new dimension of discipleship especially when we read: *Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went* (8:4). A clear understanding that, discipleship making is not a privilege or responsibility of the church's leadership, as we most of the time misunderstood, however, every Christian must be involved in discipleship. Finally, when we see Peter's ministry among the

²⁴⁵ France, 1989:246

²⁴⁶ Meier, 1979: 114

²⁴⁷ Senior, What are they saying about Matthew? 1996: 99

²⁴⁸ Luz in The Interpretation of Matthew, 1983:105

gentiles (Acts 10:44) it show that the preaching of the gospel and discipleship making progress is not just for Jewish but for gentiles, too, as Peter addresses it in the first council of Jerusalem. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith (Acts 15:9). Peter played a key role in the advancement of the church, especially to open the door of the church for all people. This is precisely what Jesus is calling his church to be involved in – to perform an active role to make the Gospel available for everyone everywhere.

The following verses presented:

The paradox that the same rock on which the εκκλησια is to be built, can also prove a few verses later to be a σκανδαλος, provides a uniquely Matthean focus in the complexity of the role of Peter. The holder of the keys of the kingdom of heaven is no superman, but rather one who in his fallibility provides a warning and a model for other fallible disciples.²⁴⁹

The disciples oscillating between doubts and worship (Matt 14:31-33 and 28:17) are called to take his responsibility in the establishment of the church of Jesus Christ among all people and all places. Jesus is calling his church, comprising of fallible people to be transformed in His successful church and to make the gospel available for every people.

2.5 The church as a call for a personal transformation

The third call that we can hear from Jesus Christ is addressed to everyone of those who become members of the church to be transformed in *real committed Christians*. I have to state here that the church in our times is facing an identity crisis in terms of what discipleship mean, in the real sense, every Christian must be a disciple. It was what it means in Acts 11:26 *The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch*. Unfortunately it's not the same today, as Dallas Willard clearly said: "it is almost universally conceded today that you can be a Christian without being a disciple"²⁵⁰ and as Peter Wagner recognised, most of the time the definition of "disciple" is in "reference to the members of the "visible church" and he add that "Such circumstances as these in the German Lutheran Church, for example, challenged Dietrich Bonhoeffer to write his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*".²⁵¹ In our times, to become a disciple seems to be as easy like following 13 discipleship sessions with a teacher or to be included in the official list of the church. We had lost the essence of discipleship that Matthew wants to clarify for his community. This misunderstanding is what Jesus wants to clarify in his fourth step in the process of presenting his church among his disciples.

²⁴⁹ France, *Matthew*, 1989:245

²⁵⁰ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 1998:309

²⁵¹ Wagner, what is "Making Disciples"? EMQ 1973: 287-288

Following the point that Jesus is making in this chapter, there is a need for him to define the real meaning of a follower of him to his “so called” disciples, as we read in Matthew 16:24: “Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’” A third call is addressed to everyone who became part of the church to understand that he/she must be transformed in a radical way to become a radical follower of Jesus – a *real committed Christian*. The doors of the church must be open for everyone but those who become part of the Jesus’ Church have to be committed in a process of personal transformation to become a committed Christian. The only opportunity for the church to become successful in the process of transformation in the world depends on the effective transformation of everyone of his members in disciples of Christ. We can see in Matthew 16:24 that the evangelist is presenting an ongoing process of discipleship, “In contrast with the preceding aorist imperatives, this verb is in the present tense, suggesting the ongoing practices ...”²⁵² Bosch stated: “being a disciple of Jesus does not signify that one has, as it were arrived ... The call to constant vigilance is certainly intended as a warning against any possibility of self-exaltation, but also as a motivation to an eager engagement in mission”.²⁵³ Following Jesus is a daily commitment of those that are called disciples. This verse presents a threefold picture of the discipleship everyone of those three parts is important and must be practiced in the daily experience of the disciple. It is not presented as a process or program, as we usually do in the church today but as the aim that the follower of Jesus must strive.

Disciples of Jesus *must deny themselves* which is the first perspective of the disciple’s picture and present a call for every disciple to die to a life ruled by his feelings, his thoughts and especially by his own desires. He is inviting his followers to become part of those who forgive themselves and decides to submit their whole experience of life under the Lordship of Jesus. It is to die to himself but to let Christ emerge in every disciple, as we read in Philippians 2:3: *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit ...*

The condition of discipleship is therefore the breaking of every link which ties a man to himself.²⁵⁴

In the related passage of Matthew 10:37-39 that “correspond closely to verses 24-25”²⁵⁵ presented the same demand with more emphasis, a commentary said about it “The absolutism of the Semitic idiom (Luke 14:26) is rightly interpreted by Matthew: a man

²⁵² Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 1995:483

²⁵³ Bosch, 1991:76

²⁵⁴ Davies and Allison “The Gospel According Saint Matthew” in Emerton and Cranfield, eds., *The International Critical Commentary*, 1991: 670

²⁵⁵ Hagner, Matthew 14-28 in *Word Biblical Commentary* Hubbard and Glenn eds., 1995:482

must love his wife, family, friends, and even his enemies; but he must love Jesus supremely (v. 37).²⁵⁶ It is more than a prerequisite to become a disciple as Luke intended to say but is what discipleship is all about.²⁵⁷ “The appeal is no to gloom but to discipleship.”²⁵⁸ This appeal is to transform our character because our discipleship, the real committed Christian, must “be what his master wants him to be”, that is the invitation of Jesus for those who became members of the church and must be transformed in disciples under these conditions.

2.6 A call for transformation of disciple's deeds

A disciple of Jesus *must take up their cross*. This is the second perspective of a disciple's picture and it presents a call for every disciple to be obedient. At the moment when disciples hear this for the first time, Jesus is inviting his disciples to remind them of those who were condemned to die on a cross, a unfortunately and very common scene in Palestine in those times: “the man condemned to crucifixion was often forced to carry part of his own cross – a burden and a sign of death.”²⁵⁹

This exhibition of the reasons of his death and the consequences of his conduct before the community is what Jesus is calling for as an example of the cost of discipleship presented to his disciples in this pericope.

This appeal is to transform the disciples' way of living by a radical transformation of their daily life. The Lukan addition of “daily” (Luke 9:23) may clarify the challenge, that a follower of Jesus must be identified by his daily living as one that had been decided to die and to live in the consequences with that decision “putting one's life on the line, and taking up one's cross”.²⁶⁰ The disciple of Jesus Christ must “do what his master wants him to do” as a matter of obedience.

Harvey pointed out, “For Matthew, obedience is the key quality in a disciple who is in mission. This theme may be seen throughout Matthew's gospel”.²⁶¹

Most of the time, commentaries make us see a “post resurrection” interpretation of this pericope and probably is useful to see how the disciples were impacted with this saying when they reflected on his sufferings as we read in Carson “the impact of this saying must have multiplied after Golgotha”.²⁶² Nonetheless, we need to reflect on the impact

²⁵⁶ Carson D. A. in Gaebelin, Frank E., ed. *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 1984:257

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 379

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 257

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 379

²⁶⁰ Hagner, , Matthew 14-28 in *Word Biblical Commentary* Hubbard and Glenn eds., 1995:483

²⁶¹ Harvey in *Mission in the New Testament* 1998:133

²⁶² Carson D. A. in Gaebelin, Frank E., ed. *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 1984: 379

of this saying when Jesus teaches it to his disciples in the context of the establishment of his church.

2.7 A call for transformation of a disciple's lordship

The third perspective of the discipleship's picture is that a disciple of Jesus *must follow* Presenting "Peter as model of every disciple" – Meier wrote: "Every disciple must hear from the Messiah and Son of God the call to follow him on the way to the cross (v. 24). Discipleship is a personal commitment to Jesus which can even lead to death."²⁶³ Bosch expressed this third perspective in powerful words: "Jesus' teaching is an appeal to his listeners' will, not primarily to their intellect; it is a call for a concrete decision to follow him and to submit to God's will."²⁶⁴ This appeal is to commit our life to Jesus' will to follow him wherever his will is leading us, no matter if it is a geographical calling, sending us to a place to serve him and continue the dynamic process to establish the church or a call to a particular circumstance that challenged us to be tested and presented as his committed follower. The disciples of Jesus Christ must "go wherever his master wants him to go" it includes the last part of the earth and the last consequences.

3. Latin American Application

In the last thirty years the Evangelical Church in Latin America had been experiencing a singular growth. At least five countries have more than twenty percent of their population as Christian evangelicals as Patrick Johnson recognises. The participation of the Latin American Church in the Global Christendom between 1960 and 2000 had been growing spectacularly achieving 232% according with World Evangelical Reporter (May 2000). Most of the countries in Latin America are experiencing growth of the church in a non traditional way, as we can see the emergence of New Charismatic churches in most of the cities that represent a new kind of Christianity so far from the traditional church.

The manners to establish the church and to keep the church functioning are changing rapidly in Latin America, the growing effectiveness in the use of mass media to promote the church. The more contemporary presentation of the church is to invite new members to attend their worship services. In such a way they are breaking from the traditional pattern of thinking of the Latin American average Christian and the very dynamic way to plan and to present the worship services. It is evident that a growing number of churches are transforming the traditional shape of the Christianity. For an average Christian in any Latin American country every day is facing a challenge to understand the church and to get assurance of his faith but especially to belong in the

²⁶³ Meier 1978: 118-119

²⁶⁴ Frankemölle quoted in Bosch, *Transforming Missions*, 1991: 66

right church. Because the influence of the new charismatic churches' expression in worship that present that feelings are more important than thinking and emotional are more important than a lot of members of the church in Latin America who are involved in a constant quest for the suitable church but not in the right terms. They are searching a sense of satisfaction to keep them attending to this or that church.

Looking at this issue since the perspective of the church, the pastoral and leadership teams of the church are, most of the time deeply involved in a constantly search for the most effective ways to present the church and to capture and keep this kind of Christian that, everyday represent a growing number. A sort of strategies are been applied in the church with the interest to keep it responding to the growing expectation of the, everyday and more sophisticated kind of Christians. A profuse use of mass media in the worship services is observed with the intention to present the worship service in a memorable and renewed way and to present it as a distinctive church.

The application of the marketing principles to promote the church into their 'target group' and to capture the mind of regular Christians or to present the pastor of the church or its programs as the most effective and successful one is a common reality in most churches. A number of them are Neo-Pentecostal churches, but they have been imitated by traditional churches in an intent to be part of these select group of churches that are capturing the attention and the attendance of the growing number of "church searchers" who are looking for the "perfect church".

All of those issues are provoking a change in the mentality of the common Christian that began to be challenged due to the pressures of this kind of church promotion. They began to struggle with the idea of the 'perfect church' or at least of the right church. For a regular churchgoer in a traditional, middle size church in Latin America, he/she faces a lot of pressure to see those churches with just a few years of existence growing every Sunday, building new temples and organising a lot of spectacular programs and performing very creative programs, while their church is stressed every time with their budget or the payroll of their staff and, especially to retain their regular attendance. Survival for those churches is a daily struggle in the midst of successful churches. This is the reality that demands for the church and for the Christian community in Latin America to make a deep review of the discipleship as a measure of success of the church. For so many reasons, including those that we mentioned in this chapter, the church in Latin America is in the midst of an identity crisis, the mass media, the "marketing gurus" and the successful pastors are redefining the church's image, the church's measure of success and the meaning of discipleship. There is an urgent need for the church in Latin America to get back to the Biblical foundation of the church and to recover and rediscover the image of the church glimpsed by the influence of the worldly

success. The church in Latin America needs to become more biblical in his approach. The first challenge that this chapter presents for the church in Latin America is to review his Christology. We need to review our practical confession of our Lordship, we need to recover the Christological synthesis of Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16. The church in Latin America must ask who is the Jesus they are following. Peter clarified it for us, Jesus, in Peter's confession, is a combination of Messiah and King, the anointed one who came to provide salvation to all people, but the king who came to establish his kingdom into the people of God. The Latin American Church must be transformed and present Christ as the only way to be saved and make the announcement of the gospel his principled task as well as to present the serious demands of Christ for his followers in a clear and not compromised way. Every churchgoer must know that there is no salvation apart for Jesus Christ, and that he needs to commit himself to be obedient to the Word and committed with Jesus' cause.

The Latin American Church must be aware of the universality of the church that Matthew present, the church in Matthew's gospel represent a universal invitation made for all the people in all the world to become part of the Jesus Christ' Church under the Christological confession made by Peter, we must to recover our missionary bios of the church, the constant advance of the church and the commitment to keep their doors open for everyone in everywhere. The church in Latin America needs to be aware about the right expansion of the church, which is that those who lead the church should fulfil the great commission of Jesus Christ.

The next challenge clearly presented by the teaching of Matthew that we examined in this chapter is that the fulfilment of the Great Commission of Jesus Christ is a responsibility of the whole church, not only of a small group of experts, called the mission committee or of quite a few group of committed members called missionaries but from all members of the church. We need to rethink the idea of the church when every member understands that Jesus Christ is calling all Christians to take an active role in opening the gates of the church for everyone in every place. We have to break the worldly concept of specialisation that influenced the church since the industrial revolution. There is no difference between lay and clergy but a universal priesthood. In the world more than 60% of the church is self defined as a regular member involved in a secular work and wrongly understand that his involvement in the great commission is just attending the church services and the mission conferences, pray and give support to missionaries, but they forgot Matthew 16:19 that is calling them to be involved in an active way in opening the door of the church for all the people, their neighbours, their co-workers, members of the family and all of those who are part of the so called

“Jerusalem” of the church. Evangelisation of that Jerusalem is their responsibility and not a church program.

But the most important challenge for the Latin American Church is to recover the distinctiveness of a disciple. We need to understand that when we accepted Christ’s invitation for salvation we accept to be faithful to the three demands of discipleship. Firstly, every Christian in Latin America must be committed to deny himself on a daily basis, to reject a life by feelings or by experience, and to live forgetting ourselves to let the image of Christ emerge in our lives, to die to ourselves and to rebirth in Christ. We need to transform our character by a daily experience with God to finally “be what the Lord wants us to be” instead of the constantly searching for self satisfaction or self exaltation. Secondly, every Christian in Latin American church must understand that we live to obey him, not to satisfy our personal interest and expectation or a pastor’s sayings or demands. The measure of our discipleship is in direct relation with our obedience to God’s will. We must be recognised as people of God because we “do what the Lord wants me to do”. And thirdly, we as Latin American Christians must be prepared to follow Jesus to the uttermost part of the earth, as well as to the last consequences. It doesn’t mean that everyone has to be send out but, that everyone has to hear a calling of the Lord to be part of the Great commission. In his home place as well as every other place, as a missionary as well as a clerk or a businessman or a shoemaker or a blacksmith, every place everywhere is a place to be light and to respond to the call of the master to be his disciple maker and servant.

The measure of success of the church as it is presented in Matthew’s gospel is presented in terms of discipleship, at the end of the day the question of the Lord of the Church for success will not be made to ask for buildings, budgets, big number of people attending the church, astonishing programs or a big name of the pastor, the question of Jesus for the church will be stated in Matthew’s terms asking how much of the churchgoers had been transformed for the ministry of the church in *real committed Christians*, and how much disciples the church are making in its Jerusalem as well as its Samaria and at the ends of the earth.

The church is not a worldly structure; it is Jesus Christ’s body that represents his image, growing in everyone of its members, that is moving in the direction of those who need to hear the gospel and be a blessing for the fulfilment of the most important human right and to be ready to be tested in committed obedience of the Lord. That is the successful church of Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

In Matthew 16 we can learn in a very systematic way that Jesus' Church is, first of all a community of those who confess Jesus as Messiah and the Son of God. Those people who recognise him as the fulfilment of the promises of the Old Testament and consequently they understand that they are the legitimate continuers of Israel²⁶⁵ not the substitute of them, but those who recognise Jesus as the Son of God and King who deserve all the glory and worship but, especially our committed obedience. Jesus' Church is formed by real committed Christians as a continuous process to be more like his masters' model, committed to deny himself/herself in order to "be what their master wants them to be". Disciples that are ready to take up their cross every day in a clear commitment to "do what their master wants them to do" and Christians, in the whole meaning of the word that are ready to follow him and to "go wherever their master wants them to go".

Going back to the great commission passage at the end of the Gospel of Matthew where we initiated our journey we can see the "Great Commission" as the most important mandate for the church in every time and in every place, not just as an affirmation of their mission but as a definition of the church measure of success: disciples.

A successful church is a community of Christians that are committed in a personal transformation to become real committed Christians and consequently everyone of them are involved in a everyday life process of making disciples as an experience of life instead of a program or initiative of a group of the members of the church but, Jesus' Church is a community that understand that the most important human right must be respected: *every people everywhere have the right agreed by God to hear at least once in the life, a clear explanation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in his own language and in a cultural sensible way that make him able to understand it and take a personal decision about his salvation.*

That is what Church is all about, that is because the church was establish by Jesus Christ as a victorious assembly of the people of God.

²⁶⁵ Krentz, 2006:23

RE-EVANGELISATION OF THE WEST AND NORTH AMERICA

KRISHNASAMY RAJENDRAN

INTRODUCTION

There were many missional movements in the history of the church and missional movements to carry the Gospel in almost every century. We will want to particularly look at the movements in the past three centuries in the Protestant missionary era. According to Ralph Winter there were eras of Protestant Missional Movements, such as Coastal Land, Inland, and Unreached peoples' eras.¹

In the 1800s, it was Missional Movements initiatives that came from Europe, such as Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Plutschau [Tranquebar Mission], William Carey, Hudson Taylor & others. In the 1900s, it was Americans who led the thinking of missions like Cameron Townsend [Wycliffe – Bible in heart languages], Donald McGavran [HUP], Ralph Winter [USCWM – Unreached people groups], Francis Schaeffer [L'abri], Wascom Pickett, Stanley Jones, Paul Hiebert & others.

L'Abri Fellowship began in Switzerland in 1955 when Francis and Edith Schaeffer decided in faith to open their home to be a place where people might find satisfying answers to their questions and practical demonstration of Christian care ... [in] the pressures of a relentlessly secular 20th century. As time went by, so many people came that others were called to join the Schaeffers ...²

In the latter half of the 21st Century, it became apparent that the two third world Christians have increased. Most of the Western nations began to decline in Christian Followers. Indigenous missions' associations and denomination began to guide the Christian increase in the Second and Third World. The Global South Nations are grateful for the movement, particularly the American Movements, to establish believers in the Gospel before it became apparent that the believers in the Global South have become more than the Western nations of the world.

1. Old mission practices and the fantasies carried over

The Second and Third World Christian movements continue in the same paths of the Western Protestant Missions movements till today, consciously or perhaps unconsciously. Because of the Second and Third World, Christians missions and the leaders think, the authenticity comes from the Western Mission Leaders, our

predecessors. During the colonial periods *some of the missionaries* were mixed up with different mottos. Here are some examples.

1.1 Missionaries in the time of Western Colonialism

The nationals were not able to differentiate them from the Colonial Lords. Some missionaries who collaborated with the business-minded colonialists were called the “political *Padri*”.⁷ Given this stigma some people concluded that Christianity was foreign, or more precisely Western, and much more precisely British.⁸ Devlal, the former Deputy Prime minister of India, said that all Christians should leave India.⁹ Richard wrote, “missionaries were often accused of bribing Hindus to change religion, an accusation difficult to prove.”¹⁰ In this way missionaries were criticised for the good work they did. “Hindus considered that missionaries, united with the colonial Government, desired at any cost to make India Christian”¹¹ – it is true of many Second and Third World countries, which held such misgivings about the missionaries.

1.2 Replanted churches and forms where the missionaries originated from

Even though many countries in the Global South Christian leaders began “indigenous” missions¹², their models, ethos, modus operandi, worldviews, communication and the styles were from their Western predecessors. Most Global South mission leaders did not have much time to think for themselves about what is best for the nation and how to go about in influencing the whole nation with the Gospel. Many mission organisations and churches just accepted the status quo and the mission’s ethos from the past, which was practiced by the Protestant Western missionaries and the established denominational churches.

There were hardly any indigenous churches in the country, which has had attracted Global South non-Christians to Christ in large numbers except pockets of people from the downtrodden or tribal communities who came to Christ for both spiritual salvation and for relief from human oppression.¹³ There are not many churches established by 2/3rd world mission organisations, churches and leaders with the exception of people like Brother Bakth Singh of India¹⁴, Watchman Nee of China¹⁵ and in other Global South nations. After visiting Bakth Singh and some of his churches, Norman Grubb, missionary statesman, author and teacher said thus, “In all my missionary experience I think these churches on their New Testament foundations are the nearest I have seen to a replica of the early church and a pattern for the birth and growth of the young churches in all the countries which we used to talk about as mission fields.”¹⁶ Therefore, the 2/3rd world mission organisations’ and church denominations’ whole approach of the Gospel communication was filled with foreign ideas, terminologies, languages and literature.¹⁷ Some of these ideas were/are good and some of them needed to be changed for every Global

South National culture and situations. This needs to be sorted clearly for the message of Christ to take a deep root in this nation. This has to be done without the biases of the past. Suppose if one of the Korean emperors had become a Follower of Christ and prepared 100 Korean missionaries in Korea and sent them to Europe and other parts of the world in the early centuries of Christianity, how would the Church have looked like in Europe? If the Church and the message of Christ did not come through Jews, Europeans or Americans; how would the church have looked like in the world today?

1.3 Fantasy of the "unreached peoples"

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. [Apostle Paul in Romans 1: 16]. In reaching the unreached peoples many missionaries from the affluent countries struggled to differentiate between evangelism and civilising people. There was a fantasy of equating "unreached" peoples to the tribal and the underdeveloped peoples in the jungles and in the rural areas of the world. In this situation there was tension and confusion between civilising people and also sharing Christ. The prime example will be Don Richardson in Irian Jaya, Indonesia.¹⁸

1.4 Mixed up with the idea of "Civilisation and Communicating the Gospel!"

The missions equated "evangelism" to "civilisation" and poverty, which is not just today's struggle.¹⁹ In reflection consider the following quotes. "Many untutored non-Aryan tribes are awakening to the call of Western civilisation and are beginning to listen responsively to the Gospel message."²⁰ "Over three fourth of the area of the habitable globe is under the control of 'civilised powers'... in which the backward and 'uncivilised' races are not being influenced by the ideas of the more advanced nations."²¹ "The unoccupied fields, both in Asia and Africa are generally backward as regards all economic progress, save in so far as they have come in touch with Western civilisation."²²

Samuel Zwemer, the Secretary of the "Student Volunteer Movement", himself struggled with this dilemma in 1911 even in the height of the Protestant missionary period. He said,

There is no hope in the shallow and mistaken cry, "civilisation first and Christianity afterwards". Civilisation, without evangelisation introduces more evils into the non-Christian world than existed before its arrival. The Gospel is the only hope of social salvation, not to speak of its moral and spiritual power.²³

Similar struggling thoughts of "civilising" and "evangelism" have been carried over by the Indian missions, which is why over 60 to 70 percent of all Indian missionaries work among the ten percent of the Indian population, who are tribal.²⁴ When it comes to

missions, there are two aspects associated with Christian religion. Till today “Christians” struggle in separating the message of Christ and the practice of Christianity, high-lighted in Indian missions. One it is “cross-cultural” and the second is “tribal and the poor”. This has much to do with the conflicting ethos of “civilising” and “Christianizing” people. If this thought is not predominant in the minds of Christians, then the whole of Indian population would be confronted with the Gospel and not just tribal and the poor alone who might look the neediest but spiritually every person outside of Christ is in greatest need of God. George David laments,

When we view the task of the mission of God in India, we see that the citadel of Hinduism has not really been penetrated by the Christian church.²⁵

Some general thought patterns which the missionaries of the pre-fifties had which were carried on by the Emerging missions from 1970s. Some of these thought patterns need to be re-examined. The following are some of the mission concepts which perhaps were considered as “normal” during those days but need to be re-examined for the present mission scenario.

The Western missionaries were often, mistakenly, considered part of the colonial exploitation.

Missionary work was always considered as cross-cultural & cross-geographical.²⁶

All peoples were boldly considered by the missionaries as “pagans”/“heathens” [without being sensitive].

All good and bad customs in the host society were discarded as pagan. No indigenous encouragements to retain the good cultural issues of the local cultures.

Extracted new believers from the communities – mission compounds were established.

There was more emphasis on “preaching” & “holiness” vs. contextualisation.

Kushwant Singh, an Indian writer, observed the following about the new Christians:

... many Christians continued bearing high sounding English names; their women wore a comical mixture of European and Indian dress. Their hymns translated sung to outlandish tunes [which] evoked more derision than reverence.²⁷

It is strange, but significant, that Christian missionaries seldom talk of propagation of their religion except in terms of war. “Winning for Christ,” “warring against heathendom,” “fighting for the cross” – these are but a few of the sanguinary figures of Christian speech. It is indeed ironical that the cause of the Prince of Peace, as Jesus is often claimed to be, has to be espoused by such militaristic missionaries.

Even Christian hymnology has not been proof against the ravages of the bug of militarism, and otherwise sweet-tempered young women and inoffensive old ladies are

heard not infrequently bawling out lustily: “Onward Christian soldiers, marching on to war” and so on and so forth.²⁸

2. Shifting from evangelisation to social uplifting

In America the social gospel movement developed at the end of the nineteenth century. Thus, the whole emphasis in evangelisation was shifting from the traditional eschatological understanding of the kingdom to the horizontal earthly kingdom attainable here and now, through purely secular means.

During the twentieth century, the liberal orthodox controversy over the Scriptures has greatly affected the way evangelicals understand the relationship between evangelism and social concerns. Both the western model of the liberal social gospel and the model of the evangelical soul saving of the twentieth century have been copied in the third world.²⁹ It was eventually justified as “holistic gospel”. Even though the Christians believed in meeting the “felt needs” of their hosts, it has become lopsided, creating a parallel local government schemes, instead of working with the local governments.

This will need some discussion in the future.

3. Indian workers as “agents” in the background of Colonial set up

Most missionaries treated their workers and evangelists well. However, the term used for the workers was “agents”.³⁰ Graham Houghton describes four kinds of native agents. Readers with little training conducted services in small congregations. Catechists, who did some evangelism, nurtured and taught new believers. Pastors or Ministers were placed in charge of large congregations with pastoral oversight. And Native Missionaries shouldered responsibilities along with foreign missionaries, in some cases responsible on the same basis as their foreign counterparts.³¹

Some agents did not take good care of the new converts. Reports said some agents were mere hirelings, whose objectives were monthly pay and pleasing their European masters.³²

William Goudie told a story of an agent who stole a watch from his room. He was caught by the police and brought a bad reputation to Christianity.³³

With such information missionaries justified their presence and the leadership roles, and gathered around themselves dependent agents, who merely fulfilled their expectations.³⁴

These illustrations could be applied in almost every nation in the Global South.

4. Why not the 6th Type of Global Leader in the Global South?

There could be the category of Global Leader from the Global South. Just because people from the Global North are able to raise funds, they automatically think that they are global leaders and coaches. This proves the point of Stephen Neil. "Though many missionaries were good to these workers, according to Stephen Neill,

Missionaries in the nineteenth century had to some extent yielded to the colonial complex ... Western man was the leader, and would remain so for a very long time, perhaps for ever.³⁵

Graham Houghton attributed this to "the presupposition fashioned in large measure by Englishmen in the service of the British Raj, that their Indian workers were an inferior order of beings, not fit for positions of trust and responsibility."³⁶ The display of a sense of superiority on the part of the missionaries strengthened the belief of Hindus that Christianity was the religious side of the propagation of colonial power.

Houghton summarised the attitudes of some of these missionaries as "officialism", with a sense of a master to his employee; a spirit of "masterfulness" with a relationship of superior to inferior and; some missionaries were more "self-seeking" than their calling allowed for.³⁷ Richard comments, "missionary history in India is inextricably tied to colonialism, a stigma that mars the work of Christ to this day".³⁸ Winslow, who struggled with superiority and identification said,

I must become an Indian to the Indians.³⁹

Because of his right attitude he was a tremendous blessing. His Indian colleagues accepted him because of his humility and identification with his Indian counterparts.⁴⁰ Treating locals as less mature or less than equal still occurs among the Global South missionaries and the church leaders. Ralph Winter advises four stages of a missionary – the pioneer, the parent, the partner and the participation stage.⁴¹ Present missionaries must practise all these four stages for the Church to grow.

Global South Leaders must have the dignity, original thinking and strategical leadership instead of giving into financial pressure of the Global North. No wonder often Global South Leaders implement the plans of Global North Leaders, because of the attached funds that come with it. No wonder that 90% of the Christian books are written by the Global North Leaders. Thus, the Global South Leaders need to raise Global thinkers, writers and leaders. Slowly there are Global South leaders who are recruited to lead some International Organisations, especially those who are trained by the Global North or Global South spouses!

5. Strategic thinking to re-evangelise the West [Global North] – the future

5.1 Global South tipped in Christian Population.

- It raised many questions by the researchers.⁴²
- Number of Christians have tipped to Global South.⁴³
- Much of the growth came by freak models.⁴⁴
- Some growth came from the traditional Mission compound /denominational models & others from popular Christianity.⁴⁵
- From now onwards, the theology will be interpreted more from the Global South.⁴⁶

5.2 Recognising the world is changed, colonies ended & globalised

The world has changed from the colonial Europeans' dominance, into the Independent world. Because of the changed world of independent nations from the colonial West, the following changes have taken place: national pride, self-dignity, self-reliance, revival of their culture and religion, reaction to keep away from the colonial reminders – Christianity and oppression and the result is persecution of Christians in different countries of the Global South.⁴⁷

5.3 Redefining Unreached Peoples. The Engel scale⁴⁸ & Unreached Peoples

Engel Scale⁴⁹ redefines the unreached peoples, including Europe and North America, not just the Global South. It cancels the idea of the Gospel to the poor, down-trodden, developing world, uncivilised nations and so on. It opens up the idea of influencing people who have impact in the nations. It helps us to have a new look at the harvest fields and the kind of workers we need to prepare. It even redefines the traditional understanding of the mission fields and the missionaries – a strategic way to place missionaries in the modern society and perhaps challenges the old paradigms and the theology connected with this.

The goal of every believer are to move people from one understanding of Christ to other positively till they believe, follow Christ and disciples to be a missional thinker and witness in the society where they live. The problem is that most Christians, missionaries and mission movements tend to work among the -2 to +3 categories. Very few missions are working to move people from -7 to 0. James Engel redefines Unreached peoples, till all people become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.⁵⁰

6. Re-orientating our philosophies of unoccupied fields

Unoccupied Fields⁵¹, Resistant Belt⁵² eventually became the 10/40 window.⁵³ In the concept of 10/40 window, Europe and the Americas are excluded, contrary to John 3:16.⁵⁴

The following factors made the 10/40 window popular: genuine belief in theological⁵⁵, strategic thinking at that time⁵⁶ and marketing⁵⁷ in the churches of the West. They genuinely believe[d] the theory of “Unreached people/Least Evangelised peoples”.⁵⁸ This is an “old paradigm”. However, it leads to think in the “new paradigm” in the globalised and equality mindset in the contemporary world.

The term “Unreached Peoples” and the “10/40 window” have been discussed much by the enlightened missional thinking practitioners. Eventually the term “unreached peoples” was replaced by “unengaged peoples”, referring to the remote area missionaries who were at times called “the Frontier Missionaries” by Ralph Winter and the USCWM. Since the world is globalized and the diaspora peoples are in our midst, just talking about the 10/40 window, does not make sense – we will need Korean missionaries in USA; the Nigerians in UK, the Indians and the Filipinos in the Gulf and the Chinese in Africa, and so on.

7. Declining Christian population makes us to re-evangelise the West

- Europe’s empty churches go on sale: Hundreds of churches have closed or are threatened by plunging membership, posing the question: What to do with unused buildings? Arnhem, Netherlands.⁵⁹
- Churches in England are being converted to bars.⁶⁰
- In the USA, Gallup International indicates that 41% of American citizens report they regularly attend religious services, compared to 15% of French citizens, 10% of UK citizens, and 7.5% of Australian citizens.⁶¹

The declining population of Christians in the West, calls Global South and North to a revising a workable plan to bring the Gospel to the West. While the traditional missionaries were not allowed in the new independent nations, God brought up different kinds of missionary endeavours in the form of new movements, such as IVP, CLC, YFC, EHC, CCC, OM, YWAM, Navigators, AFC and others in the mid-50s, which gave a wild faith to keep the faith alive and mobilise the church and missions across the world, especially in the Third World. From the 1970s till now, the OM Ships were/are continuing to mobilise people across the world to spread the Gospel. One such person is Daniel Chae, a Korean, training Britons to reach out in their own country. Thus, Ralph Winter

said, “While the missionary endeavour was dwindling, God raised YWAM, OM and others to mobilise the world”.⁶²

8. The nations are changing in demography

“The ‘Diaspora’ Nations are on our doorsteps”!⁶³ The Western Church must make use of them to reach people at their doorsteps and to reach their own people. (Nigerian pastors in London, Sri Lankan Tamils in different parts of the country.)

The nations⁶⁴ are being displaced by a refugee crisis, student movements,⁶⁵ migration for jobs and better opportunities, ethnic persecution and just preference of people. What an opportunity the Indian Church has been gifted with, to share the Gospel to the nations of the world!

- In San Francisco [USA] YWAM devised a plan of identifying the Diaspora population from around the world to bring the Gospel to them.
- Relate that to migrants in Europe/Sweden/USA/Canada.⁶⁶

The triumphs & turmoils of white Protestants where the most visible religious drama in the United States throughout the 19th century ... It marked a period of new beginnings for America’s black Christians. It also happened to stand just at the start of major migration from Europe that introduced large numbers of adherents of an ancient form of Christianity ... Increasingly as the 19th century gave way into the 20th, the prominence of white Protestants faded irreversibly.⁶⁷

According to informal statistics there are 100,000 overseas students in India. The cities of Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Delhi and other Indian cities are brimming with international students. Here is a unique opportunity for the Indian Church and missions to reach the world!

According to the IMO, there are currently about 200 million migrants in the world. Chinese migrants amount to 39.5 million and are scattered across 130 countries. Asian migration, both domestic and international, is the largest globally. China and India account for 35% of migrants in the world: more than 70 million people. Therefore, the amount of international migration is heavily dependent on these two countries (Gómez Díaz, 2012).⁶⁸

Koreans living in the United States have generated an increase of about 15 to 20 percent in trade between the United States and Korea. This is one of the surprising conclusions reached in this special report, which, upon the 100th anniversary of the migration of Koreans from their homeland, looks at the impact of the 6 to 7 million people, who make up this diaspora on both South Korean and overseas economies. No country in history

has ever succeeded in building a developed and high-income economy without participating in the global economy; globalization is imperative for economic success. And one of the largest elements of globalization, in addition to international trade and investment, is migration. In *Korean Diaspora in the World Economy*, experts hold up South Korea as one of the most dramatic examples of that experience, having gone from being a poor, underdeveloped country fewer than 40 years ago, to becoming a post-war economic success story. This report also looks at South Korea's role as a regional trading partner and its present and future relations with North Korea.⁶⁹

More than thirty million Indians are dispersed around the world. Some control the economies of certain nations. Many are open to the Gospel in foreign lands. People like Bakth Singh, who became a follower of Christ in Canada, eventually was used by the Lord to establish literally thousands of worshipping groups.⁷⁰

9. Tent-making models ("Filipino Model")

Tent-making models have to be encouraged in the Second and Third World churches and missions, as the church in the developing world cannot afford to pay the missionaries to the developed world.

Once we were discussing the missionary issues in Budapest; we happened to discuss that the Philippine Mission Association is trying to send 200,000 tentmakers across the world. They are very effective in leading people to Christ as ordinary followers of Christ, self-supporting. The Hungary leaders heard this and picked up the "Filipino Model" as their strategic way forward, as the church was not able to support missionaries as in the traditional model of "Support Raising".⁷² Thus the full-time models will eventually disappear as the missionaries will be involved in the daily life of communities.

Nadiad Great Commission Movement Model⁷³ – If you want to be a missionary/pastor/plant churches, you have to get a job in the community. The community has to see you as part of the followers of Christ; as one of them, not just employed by a "foreign church". Finding a job in the community will ensure the missionary to survive both financially and live as one of the community members, as a follower of Christ. The Nadiad congregations are thriving and growing.

10. New concepts and and new experiments

The Christian ministries are to think pragmatically, practice and experiment new partnerships, redefinition of a missionary, the support system, the tent-making issues, the concepts like the Business as Missions [BAM], JClub movements⁷⁴, contextualized Jesus following congregations and other experiments need to be done to influence people to think positively about Christ.

11. Global South and Global North: terms and reworking of roles

Global South and North both have become sending and receiving missionaries as Ethne to Ethne – Peoples to Peoples. These issues are worth researching to be strategically thinking for the future. However, the mono-cultural perceptions need to change in working with people both from the global South and the Global North. We must commit ourselves to local leaders and not make the same mistakes made by the colonial missionaries and others in the past. We tend to copy and to do everything the missionaries did in the past, even if it is not relevant. We need to change to be relevant.

There are 8 or more ways to engage in a society. Every follower of Christ must be trained in several of the following areas of Arts, Business, Church, Media, Education, Family, Government and in Humanitarian work. The right wing Hindu organisation called *Sangh Parivar* [meaning *United Family*, organised both as political and religious organisations] follow the strategy of planting people in all the following communities. The *Sangh Parivar* said, “The belief is governments cannot change the nation; only creating a committed cadre in various spheres will ensure the success of the *Sangh's* vision for India.”⁷⁵ Thus, the men of the *Sangh Parivar* have been conveniently placed in different sections of the society and government organizations such as in **Armed Forces** (*Sainik Seva Parishad*), **Educational institutions** (*Vidya Bharati*), **Intelligence Agencies**, **Farmers** (*Bharatiya Kisan Sangh*), **Scientists** (*Vigyan Bharati*), **Lawyers** (*Akhil Bharatiya Adhivakta Parishad*), **Tribals** (*Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram*), **Women** (*Rashtra Sevika Samiti*), **Foreign Affairs** (*Videsh Vibhag*), **Social Work** (*Seva Bharati*), **Labour** (*Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh*) and **Media**. They very much subscribe to the hard-core ethos of the *Parivar*.⁷⁶ “RSS has been in the forefront in this”.⁷⁷ Thus the organisation was meticulous and complete. Therefore, every theological institution must plan its courses according to how they can place committed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ effectively among the community of peoples and build groups of Jesus Followers.⁷⁸ Unfortunately, the Bible colleges only tend to prepare pastors and evangelists in the “mission compound” model of ministry which was relevant about 50 to 100 years back.

There has to be revolution in theological and missiological training. It is sad that we have very few leaders who will lead the way for the future. There is a need to create models and experimentations to break into communities as followers of Christ. The Gospel, the Good News have to be applied for life and lifestyle as each believe in Christ and imply the Gospel for every situation and ethos in life. The living Christ is experienced and applies solutions for every human problem. The spirit filled transformation becomes very strong and becomes Indian in lifestyle, worship and witness. In the mission world, there has been a social emphasis on caring for mission leaders, missionaries, mission families,

missionary children and welfare of the missionaries. This care issues have to go hand in hand with evangelisation or else we will have many casualties in witnessing and building people of God.

CONCLUSION

If we want to reach Europe, Christian missions and churches should continue to evolve and adapt to the society with the same unchanging Jesus and the Gospel. Therefore, we have to create innovative ways of taking the Gospel to the world which is continuously reinventing itself. There is a great need for a severe paradigm shift among all Christians across the world in the matter of the Gospel to all people and not just for those who seemingly need “justice” and “civilisation”. May the paradigm shift begin among the Global South & North Christians. This will eventually affect the whole world. Korean Christians need to be thinking originally to apply and take the Gospel in innovative ways to Koreans and others across the world.

So those who welcomed his message were baptized. That day about 3,000 people were added to their number. The believers continued to devote themselves to what the apostles were teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to times of prayer. A sense of fear came over everyone, and many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All the believers were united and shared everything with one another. They made it their practice to sell their possessions and goods and to distribute the proceeds to anyone who was in need. United in purpose, they went to the Temple every day, ate at each other's homes, and shared their food with glad and humble hearts. They were praising God and enjoying the good will of all the people. Every day the Lord was adding to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2:41-47 ISV – Bible).

ENDNOTES

ENDNOTES

¹ Ralph Winter, "Three Mission Eras" Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader (Perspectives), by Ralph D. Winter, Steven C. Hawthorne (Editors et al) (Pasadena, CA, William Carey Library, 2009 – 4th Edition) pp. 263-278.

² <http://www.labri.org/history.html>

³ Paul Pearson, illustrated by K. Rajendran

⁴ Christian Distribution by Continents 1970-2010. Source – Todd M Johnson, Centre for Christianity, Boston. Illustrated by K. Rajendran.

⁵ Illustrated by K. Rajendran.

⁶ Global South is called in different names such as Developing world, 2/3rd world, majority world, 3rd world etc. Global South used to be the "missionary receiving nations" before the Christian population began to be more than the Western Nations. Global North is also called in different names such as Developed World, First World etc. They usually the "missionary sending nations" till the 2/3rd world countries became independent nations since 1950s from the European powers. Apart from the majority Christians in the 2/3rd world, the West continues to dominate the churches in the Global South because of the funding and receiving nature of the Christian minorities in many 2/3rd world nations.

⁷ [n.a.], "Missionaries in India: Focus on Madhya Pradesh", in [n.a.], Christianity in India, (Madras: Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan, 1979), p. 182. Excerpts from "Report of the Christian Missionary Activities Enquiry Committee, Madhya Pradesh". Published by All India Arya (Hindu) Dharma Sewa Sangh, PO Sewa Sanga, Sabzi Mandi, Delhi.

⁸ Stephen Neill, Colonialism and Christian Missions (London: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 98.

⁹ Graham Houghton, asked concerning Devial in a Lecture in 1995. Should a statement of this nature be pronounced by responsible Minister like Devi Lal? Would this kind of comment bring unity to the nation? Who, in reality, are the nation-builders in this country?

¹⁰ Richard, Narayan Vaman Tilak. p. 64.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 67.

¹² Some missions were and are the Global South branches of International missions, but almost all of them were manned and managed by Indian personnel. In this sense, there have been many different types of "indigenous" missions.

¹³ Freedom from the oppression and classification of being higher strata in the society.

¹⁴ Our tribute to Brother Bakht Singh as he went to be with the Lord in September 2000 at Hyderabad. Thank God for the way the Lord has used him in establishing 1000s of indigenous congregations with accepted cultural practices in the indigenous congregations. He was a friend of Watchman Nee or Ni Tuosheng of China. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bakht_Singh; J. Edwin Orr, Evangelical Awakenings in Southern Asia (Minnesota: Bethany Fellowship Inc, 1975), pp 167-179.

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watchman_Nee

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bakht_Singh;

¹⁷ Even though originally the Christian teaching and ethos was from the Middle East, yet by the time it has come to the 2/3rd World, especially with the Protestant Western missionaries, the Gospel and the practices of Christianity was coated with both Judaism and Europeanism. Translating the ideas of the Gospel and the practices of Christianity was more mixed up and became rigid for Global South nations and communities, in general, to accept. Thus, the Global South brethren were

presented not only the Gospel but also the paraphernalia of what it means to belong to Christian religion! Till today “Christians” struggle in separating the message of Christ and the practice of Christianity.

¹⁸ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Richardson_\(missionary\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Richardson_(missionary)); <http://missionsbox.org/missionary-bio/don-richardson/#.WcMNDcgjHDc>;

¹⁹ Just look at the 10/40 window concept. Even though the nations in 10/40 windows were least reached nations with the Gospel, yet it was also considered the poorest nations. Poverty is equaled to being non-Christians and somewhat assumed uncivilized! Uncivilized to whose standards and on what basis?

²⁰ John R. Mott, *The Deceive Hour of Christian Missions* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1911) p. 224.

²¹ John R. Mott, *The Present World Situation*, p. 98. [On what basis nations are recognized advanced?]

²² Samuel M. Zwemer, *The Unoccupied Mission fields of Africa and Asia* (New York: Laymen's Missionary Movement, 1911) p. 100. [Even the title of the book, *The Unoccupied Mission fields* sounds bad especially in a time when the Europeans colonized – occupied the different parts of the world!]

²³ Zwemer, *The Unoccupied Mission fields*, p. 120.

²⁴ K. Rajendran, *Which Way Forward Indian Missions*, P. 45.

²⁵ George David, *Communicating Christ Among Hindu Peoples* (Chennai: CBMTM Publications, 1998), p. 2.

²⁶ In the present globalized world, all Christians must be mobilised as the world is at our door steps. The nations have come to each city and country in the world. Therefore, the cross-geographical missiology has to be changed.

²⁷ Khushwant Singh, *India: an Introduction* (New Delhi: Vision Books), 1992, p. 76.

²⁸ Vijayawardhana, *The Revolt in the Temple* (Colombo: Sinha Publications, 1953), p. 297 – Cited in John T. Seamands, *Tell It Well- Communicating the Gospel across Cultures* (Chennai: Mission Educational Books, 2000), p. 28.

²⁹ Bong Rin Ro, “The Perspectives of Church History”, Bruce J. Nicholls [Ed.], *In Word and Deed*, pp. 31-34.]

³⁰ Lewis J, William Goudie. (London: Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 1923) p. 48.

³¹ John Murdoch, *Indian Missionary Manual: Hints to Young Missionaries in India* (London: Seelay, Jackson, & Halliday, 1870 2nd edition), p. 298. Quoted Graham Houghton, *The Impoverishment of Dependency* (Madras: CLS 1983), pp. 30-31.

³² Graham Houghton, *The Impoverishment of Dependency* (Madras: CLS 1983), p. 163.

³³ Lewis, William Goudie. p. 48.

³⁴ Houghton, *Dependency*, p. 246.

³⁵ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 220.

³⁶ Houghton, *Dependency*, p. 246.

³⁷ Houghton, *Dependency*, pp. 220-221.

³⁸ Richard, Christ-Bhakti, p. 12.

³⁹ Winslow, *The Eyelids of the Dawn*. pp. 74-75.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 74.

⁴¹ Ralph D. Winter, "The Long Look: Eras of Missions History." in Ralph Winter, Steve Hawthorne et al (Eds.),

Perspectives on the World Christian Movement – A Reader. (California: William Carey library, 1981.) pp 170-171.

⁴² Illustrated by K. Rajendran.

⁴³ [Todd Johnson, Patrick Johnstone, Jason Mandryk & others]

⁴⁴ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (London: Oxford Press, 2007)

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ K. Rajendran, "Applying the Great Commission: Intentionally becoming a Transformed Missional Congregation for Today", Union Biblical Seminary, For Mission Annual Consultation 15th – 17th December, 2014.

⁴⁸ Engel Scale – Illustrated by K. Rajendran in the diagram.

⁴⁹ Edward R. Dayton, "To Reach the Unreached", *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader (Perspectives)*, by Ralph D. Winter, Steven C. Hawthorne (Editors et al) (Pasadena, CA, William Carey Library, 1981 – 1st Edition) pp. 590-592.

⁵⁰ Conversion is a loaded term in several counties of the world. To be politically & religiously sensitive, the new missionaries inter changeably use the terminology like changed ideology, change of minds, Jesus Followers and other terms as in the beginning of the church movement till they were called "Christians" in Antioch and subsequent times. [Acts11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16]. Conversion to new ideology of Christ, the Gospel and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, following Christ Values.

⁵¹ Samuel M. Zwemer, *The Unoccupied Mission Fields of Africa and Asia*. (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1911). p. 260; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/10/40_Window.

⁵² Patrick Johnstone & Jason Mandryk [Eds.], *Operation World* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster USA, 2001), p. 17. 53 AD 2000 Movement popularised the theory of 10/40 Window. Now it is every mission tongue. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/10/40_Window.

⁵⁴ John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." [ESV]

⁵⁵ The theology of "Full time Missionaries", "Cross-cultural" mission as "Go or Send". Mission as crossing cultures and geography.

⁵⁶ In 18-20th centuries, apart from the European colonial masters moved people from the 2/3rd world to the colony occupied world as "labourers" [modern slaves], as examples Indians to Granada, Carabine Islands, the Africans to the United States and Europe etc. In 21st century, the Globalisation became phenomena and political changes which made possible for the 2/3rd world peoples as equals to the Westerners.

⁵⁷ Genuinely moving the majority Christians in Global North [Europe & North America] to carry the Gospel across the world. It perhaps neglected their own regions.

⁵⁸ "Unreached people / Least Evangelised peoples". It was popularised by Samuel M. Zwemer [SVM], Patrick Johnstone [WEC / OM], Luis Bush [AD 2000], Ethne movement [WEA MC & Lausanne]. The Global South follows that theory. "The Resistant belt" is an ideological war between Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and animism as in the form of mental crusade!

⁵⁹ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/europes-empty-churches-go-on-sale-1420245359>

⁶⁰ <http://www.businessinsider.com/churches-in-england-are-being-converted-to-bars-photos-2014-3?IR=T> [March 31 2014].

⁶¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_the_United_States;

⁶² Rajendran's Personal Interview with Ralph Winter at Great Commission Round Table [GCR] meeting Jan 12, 2004 Dolarosa, California.

⁶³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_diasporas

⁶⁴ "ta Ethne" – peoples – people groups – the true meaning of a nation.

⁶⁵ The second largest income in Australia is through foreign students studying in Australia. Similar cases in USA, Europe and in many other parts of the world. There are 100,000 plus foreign students in India especially in the cities of Bangalore, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai et.

⁶⁶ Patrick Johnstone & Jason Mandryk [Eds.], Operation World, p. 55.

⁶⁷ Mark A. Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada [Grand Rapids – Eerdmans Publishing Company), p.336.

⁶⁸ <http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/index.php?chinese-diaspora>

⁶⁹ The Korean Diaspora in the World Economy Special Report 15 Contributors: Taeho Bark * C. Fred Bergsten * Inbom Choi * Young Rok Cheong * Kihwan Kim * Si Joong Kim * Byong Hyon Kwon * Marcus Noland * Il SaKong * Toshiyuki Tamura * Jang Hee Yoo * Soogil Young. <http://bookstore.piie.com/bookstore/365.html>

⁷⁰ K. Rajendran, "Applying the Great Commission: Intentionally becoming a Transformed missional Congregation for Today." A Paper presented in the 21st Annual Consultation of Centre for Mission Studies at the Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, India on 15th – 17th December, 2014

⁷¹ <http://pewresearch.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=434f5d1199912232d416897e4&id=dbbadd3ed2&e=a13c18b9b2>

⁷² EFCA Meet at Budapest – Oct 20 2012.

⁷³ Nadiad in Gujarat, India.

⁷⁴ JClubs – New Jesus worshipping people in congregations among the middle class population in house set up not bigger than 20 people. Continue to split and grow in different communities. It would be led by normal peoples. It is an experiment.

⁷⁵ Ajit Pillai, Ishan Joshi, K. S. Narayan, Bhavdeep Kang, Lekha Rattanani and As his Biswas, "The Tree, The Branches", Outlook April 27, (1998) 16.

⁷⁶ Ibid. pp. 16-22.

⁷⁷ C. V. Matthew, Neo – Hinduism: A missionary Religion (Madras: CGRC, 1987), pp. 34-35.

In attempting to unite all the major Hindus forces RSS has done a priceless service. It is one of the most disciplined forces in India and a major political force as well. On the other hand the hatred, intolerance and aggressive militancy of the RSS is oppressive and offensive to a secular state.

⁷⁸ Jesus Followers or the Followers of Christ is interchangeably used to the term "church". The term "church" has many negative connotations which has become a stumbling block for many to truly follow Christ in these kinds of settings.

- Richard, H. L (2011) The Christian Society for the study of Hinduism 1940-1956: inter-religious engagement in mid-twentieth century India, (Unpublished paper for doctoral desertion), Pretoria, University of South Africa.
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CHRISTIANITY MISSIONS TO ISLAM: AN ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

BEN ABRAHAM²⁶⁶

INTRODUCTION

Sundown on November 19, 1979, marked the beginning of the 15th century of the Muslim calendar. To Muslims, this is extremely significant. The past century of their calendar has been perceived as a century of humiliation, marked especially by western colonialism, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the overall general weakness of the Islamic states and societies. With the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, many see the 15th century as the Islamic Century which will be marked by the reconstruction of Islamic thought and the return of the Islamic Messiah.

Whether we agree with this or not, the past few decades have seen Islamic movements increasingly capturing the headlines around the world. These include the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and her withdrawal in 1989, the 9/11 attacks in America, the rise of the ISIS in the Middle-East after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the many terrorist attacks all over the world in the past few years, and the millions of refugees streaming out of Iraq, Syria and various other places. Side by side with these are reports of persecutions and even killings of non-Muslim minorities in many parts of the Muslim world, from Africa, to various countries; the Middle East, to Pakistan, and all the way to Indonesia. To those outside Islam all these horrific incidents sound rather grim, and serve as a sharp reminder of the menacing character of the Islamic extremism.

Yet, beneath the headlines, something else is also happening that has escaped the attention of the international media. Muslims are turning to Christ in a historically unprecedented manner. In his book, *A Wind in the House of Islam*, published just two years ago, David Garrison has documented that in more than 70 separate locations in 29 nations, major movements of Muslims are turning to Christ today.²⁶⁷ Each of these movements represent either at least 1000 baptisms or 100 new churches established over a 20 year period. Garrison has also carefully checked various mission histories and found that before the 19th centuries, there were no records of any such movement

²⁶⁶ Pseudonym

²⁶⁷ David Garrison, *A Wind in the House of Islam – How God is Drawing Muslims Around the World to Faith in Jesus Christ* (Monument, CO: Wigtake, 2014), p. 5.

whatsoever. In the 19th century there were two and in the 20th century there were eleven. But in the first twelve years of the 21st century, there have been 69 movements found.²⁶⁸ Some of these movements number tens or hundreds of thousands, or even more. Something clearly is happening in the eternal purposes of God!

1. Past encounters between Christianity and Islam

Historically, past encounters between Christianity and Islam have often been marked with tension, war and distrust. This has made Christian missionary efforts to the Muslim doubly difficult. What have complicated things further are the attempts by western secularists and liberals, as well as by Muslims themselves, to misrepresent this history as one in which the faults are found mainly on the Christian side, especially with respect to the Crusades and the later western colonial expansion. This however is not the whole story.

1.1 From 7th century to 20th century

The beginning of the Muslim calendar is marked by the *Hijrah* in AD 622 when Muhammad and his followers fled from Mecca to Medina to escape persecution. From that time onwards, Islam expanded outwards from the Arabian Peninsula into what is now the Middle-East and North Africa, which was originally predominantly Christian. The Islamic armies continued to push into Europe on various fronts including Spain, Sicily and Italy. However, in AD 732 a Muslim army was decisively defeated at Tours in the very heart of France. In Asia Minor, they were held in check by the Byzantine Empire until their conquest of Constantinople in 1453. The Muslim advance into Europe only came to an end with the decisive defeat of the Ottoman army at the Battle of Vienna in 1683.

The First Crusade was proclaimed on November 27, 1095, and culminated with the capture of Jerusalem in 1099. The loss of the last crusader stronghold of Acre in 1291 probably marked the end of the crusading period, although crusading tendencies continued long after that. Stephen Neill has argued that the crusades have “left an almost indelible stain on Christian history”²⁶⁹ in three ways. They caused permanent damage to the relationship between the Eastern and Western churches, embittered Christian-Muslim relationships down to this day, and contributed to a lowering of moral standards among Christian nations of their time.²⁷⁰ Neill is correct on all three points. Nevertheless, as Jonathan Riley-Smith of Cambridge, the foremost historian of the

²⁶⁸ Garrison, p. 230.

²⁶⁹ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 2nd ed., rev. by Owen Chadwick (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 97.

²⁷⁰ Neill, pp. 97f.

subject today, has asserted, “the original justification for crusading was Muslim aggression ... The development of crusading was in part a response to a huge loss of Christian territory in the east.”²⁷¹ Others have also noted that the harassment faced by Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land was a contributory factor. Thus, despite what liberal and Muslim historians have asserted, the motivation for the crusades was primarily religious and not unprovoked aggression or imperial ambitions. And as for atrocities committed by Christians and Muslims armies, Riley-Smith’s conclusion is that “the two sides were about even.”²⁷²

Fast forward two centuries, we come to the dawn of the modern western colonial era. Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and reached India in 1497. From thence the Portuguese expanded their influence into the South-East Asia, beginning with the capture of the Muslim sultanate of Malacca in 1511. Here again, as with the crusades, the blame often has been placed on the Christian side. For example, it is sometimes stated that Islam came to South-East Asia peacefully through the trade, but Christianity came violently through the gunboats of western colonial powers. But this totally ignores the fact that only a few decades earlier in 1453, Muslim aggression in Asia Minor had finally led to their capture of Constantinople after numerous attempts. Moreover, the Ottomans went on to lay siege to Vienna in 1529, but failed to capture it. Had they succeeded, one can only guess how far the Muslim armies would have penetrated into Europe. Both these efforts were continuous with Islamic expansion out of Arabia since the 7th century. The Portuguese expansion to the east via the sea was therefore a direct response to Islamic aggression in Europe. Moreover, because the Turks controlled the western end of the Silk Road and the routes through which spices and other goods must come from China, India and other parts of Asia, the seaward expansion was the only way to break the Muslim monopoly on trade with Asia!²⁷³

The foregoing discussion shows that, without denying the rights and wrongs of the crusades and western colonialism, nevertheless any one-sided apportionment of blame for the Christian-Muslim tensions in history must be treated as being too simplistic. Much of the continual tensions in the last few centuries until the end of 1st World War are also reflections of the struggle for power between the Muslim Ottomans and

²⁷¹ Jonathan Riley-Smith, “Reinterpreting the Crusades,” *The Economist* (Dec 23, 1995 – Jan 5, 1996), pp. 71-75; here. P. 71 & 75. His detail treatment of the subject is found in *The Crusades – A History*, 3rd ed., (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

²⁷² Riley-Smith (1995), p. 71.

²⁷³ Robert E. Frykenberg, *Christianity in India – From the Beginnings to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 120.

western powers. Thus any objective assessment of history would have to conclude that both sides have to carry their share of the blame. This important point has to be made because in recent years some liberal intellectuals and Christian leaders from the west have got into the habit of asking Christians to apologize to Muslims for all the wrongs the former has done to the latter in history. Whilst there is a proper place for such efforts in our concern for better Christian-Muslim relationships, one scholar has rightly asked: Who is going to ask the Muslims to apologize in return? But more importantly, Muslims have often used these misguided western efforts, based on a one-sided reading of history, as propaganda fodder against Christians in many countries in Africa and Asia. As a result, Christians are unnecessarily and unfairly forced into a position of moral disadvantage in their daily engagements with Muslims, including in the sharing of the gospel.

1.2 Missionary Efforts

From the very beginning of the Muslim era, the Muslim conquerors made it a law that the non-Muslims, called *dhimmi* (meaning “protected people”), are not allowed to preach to Muslims. But this does not mean that no attempts were made. Perhaps the most notable attempts were that of John of Damascus (ca. 675-749). Both his grandfather and father had been the “controller of finance,” the highest civil post outside the military under the Muslim conquerors in the province. On his father’s death-bed he had been appointed the Caliph’s secretary. But for reasons unknown, he withdrew from public life and entered the monastery around 726. His major work was *The Fount of Knowledge*, a massive synthesis of Greek theology up till his time. His judgment on Islam is found in Part II, Chapter 101, and begins with the strong statement: “There is also the superstition of the Ishmaelites which to this day prevails and keeps people in error, being a forerunner of the Antichrist.”²⁷⁴ He goes on to make the point that “the crucial difference is this: the God of the Muslims is not the Christian God, Allah had no son. John’s God is the Father of Jesus Christ.”²⁷⁵ To his credit, John of Damascus, demonstrated great evangelistic courage in his writings because, even while he was still working on *The Fount of Knowledge*, a nearby bishop had been executed for preaching against Islam.²⁷⁶

Nevertheless, down the years the records show scant efforts or success in reaching Muslims for Christ. In the 13th century, with Muslim domination in Spain broken after

²⁷⁴ For the text of Chapter 101, see John of Damascus, *Writings*, trans. F. H. Chase, Jr., Vol. 37, *The Fathers of the Church* (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1956), pp. 153-160; cited in Samuel H. Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia, Vol. 1: Beginnings to 1500* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), p. 343.

²⁷⁵ Moffett, p. 343.

²⁷⁶ Moffett, pp. 341-343.

almost 500 years, there was some renewed missionary interest. There is the inspirational story in 1219 of Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) walking across the battle lines in Egypt to preach to the Sultan. But the most significant person in this period was Raymond Lull (1235-1313), whom Stephen Neill describes as “one of the greatest missionaries in the history of the church.”²⁷⁷ Converted at 30, he spent the next 50 years of his life and ministry focused primarily on the Muslim world. For Lull, to reach the Saracens (as Muslims in his time was called), three things were necessary.²⁷⁸ First, the languages of the Muslim world must be learnt and mastered. Thus at his urging, the church set up five colleges at the most famous universities—Rome, Bologna, Paris, Oxford and Salamanca—of the time to teach Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac and Greek. Second, he was challenged by a Grand Mufti in Tunis, “If you hold that the law of Christ is true and that of Muhammad false, you must prove it with the necessary reasons.” Thus he felt the need for such a book of rational apologetics against Islam. Thirdly, faithful witness to Saracens would necessarily incur suffering and martyrdom. Lull made various extended trips to North Africa and Cyprus in his zeal to reach the Muslims, suffering imprisonments and deportations in the process. According to tradition, he eventually died a martyr stoned to death in Bugia, Tunis.

Down the centuries many other heroic missionaries have gone to the Islamic world. They included Henry Martyn (1781-1812), the brilliant Cambridge scholar, who had topped his class in Mathematics and then won the Latin prize the next year. In six years of work in India he completed the translation of the New Testament into Urdu, Arabic and Persian, before dying prematurely in Persia on his way home to England. Another was Samuel M. Zwemer (1867-1952) who labored in Arabia and Egypt for most of 38 years, and also founded the journal, *The Moslem World*. Closer to us in Asia, William G. Shellabear (1862-1947), a Methodist missionary, actively sought to reach Malays in Malaya and also translated the Bible into Malay. We should include the late Dr. Chae-Ok Chun (1938-2016), the first Korean woman missionary and also the first Asian woman missionary to the Pakistan people, serving from 1961-1974.²⁷⁹

Despite the efforts of these and other faithful and gifted workers, available evidence in

²⁷⁷ Neill, pp. 114f.

²⁷⁸ Neill, pp. 116f.

²⁷⁹ Biographical articles of all those named, except for Chae-Ok Chun, together with more detail references are found in Gerald H. Anderson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (New York: Simon & Schuster MacMillan, 1998). In addition, for Henry Martyn, see David Bentley-Taylor, *My Love Must Wait* (London: Inter-Varsity, 1975), and Clinton Bennett, “In Dialogue with Truth: A Critical Biography of Henry Martyn,” in *Approaches, Foundations, Issues and Models of Interfaith Relations*, eds. David E. Singh & Robert E. Schick (Delhi: ISPCK, & Hyderabad: HMI, 2001), pp. 195-239.

history shows that their ministries resulted in no major turnings to Christ within a 20-year period as defined by John Garrison, except for the few breakthroughs in the 19th and 20th centuries. We will now examine some of these.

2. What is God doing in our day?

What is God doing in the world today? I would like to begin with what John Garrison has documented in his book, before moving to look at some relevant developments in the wider geopolitical scene.

2.1 John Garrison and Major Movements to Christ

As noted earlier, for his study, Garrison set the bar for a major movement as being characterized by at least 1000 baptisms or 100 churches planted within a 20-year period. For the 19th century, he found only two, both led by converts from Islam, also called Muslim Background Believers (MBBs). The first is found in Java, now part of Indonesia. Radin Abas Sadrach Surapranata (ca. 1835-1924) is remembered today as “Sadrach, The Apostle of Java.”²⁸⁰ He was baptised into the Dutch Reformed Church in Java in 1867 at the age of 32. He learnt from two other Javanese mentors that being a Christian does not necessitate rejection of one’s own culture. But when both his mentors went too far and compromised the gospel, he broke with them. Soon using the newly translated Javanese Bible, aggressive apologetics and public debates with local Muslim leaders, he won many converts. He gathered his converts into contextualised communities of Javanese Christians, rather than joined them up with the local Dutch Christian churches. As an example of his contextual approach, he took Muslim *shahada*, “There is God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet,” and adapted it into “There is no God but God, and Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God, Whose power is over everything.”²⁸¹ By the time he died in 1924, he had won between 10,000-20,000 Christians to faith.

The other major movement in the 19th century took place in Ethiopia. A Muslim, Shaikh Zakaryas (1845-1920), began having dreams in 1892 which led him to start reading the Bible obtained from Swedish missionaries in Asmara, now in Eritrea. Initially he tried preaching for the reform from within Islam but was eventually rejected by the Muslim community. Only after having brought seventy five Muslim clerics to faith did he get himself baptised in 1910. When he died in 1920, his Christian community numbered some seven thousand believers.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ Garrison, p. 13, 47-50.

²⁸¹ Garrison, pp. 49f, p. 268, fn.5.

²⁸² Garrison, p. 15.

The above were the only two large movements to Christ that occurred in the 19th century. Garrison also noted that there was a move among the Kabyle Berbers in Algeria, initiated by the White Fathers, a Roman Catholic French mission, which resulted in baptisms beginning in 1887.²⁸³ But the numbers never reached the bar he set in his book for a “movement,” and thus discounted in his study. Nevertheless, Garrison goes on to state that in the 20th century there were eleven movements, and in the first twelve years of the 21st century, at least sixty nine movements that have been documented. These movements are spread all over the “House of Islam” (*Dar al-Islam*) or the Islamic world, which he subdivides into nine geo-cultural clusters or “rooms”: (1) West Africa, (2) North Africa, (3) East Africa, (4) The Arab World, (5) The Persian World, (6) Turkestan, (7) Western South Asia, (8) Eastern South Asia, and (9) Indo-Malaysia. Each room is clustered together through geography and similarities in histories, cultures and languages. Although the number of movements in each “room” is not given, Garrison states that there is at least one movement in each and multiple movements in some of them.²⁸⁴ For the sake of objectivity, it should be stated that some of Garrison’s research on the subject has been corroborated with documentation from other sources. Briefly, I will touch on three of these.

The most widely known turning in the 20th century is that associated with the Indonesian revival that followed the abortive coup d’état of 1965. Some 2.5 million Muslims were swept into the church over the next few years, many of them in Java. Whilst large numbers of the converts were actually nominal Muslims, many others came from genuine Muslim background.²⁸⁵ The latest reports received show that the movement in Indonesia is on-going.

A second place where widespread turnings have been taking place is, of all places, Iran, the first Islamic republic of our modern world. The strong repression experienced by the Iranian people on the one hand and the courageous stand of the church on the other have contributed to a massive growth of the underground church there. Given the circumstances, exact numbers are uncertain. But estimates have ranged from the most conservative of more than 100,000 MBBs to several millions.²⁸⁶

²⁸³ Garrison, p. 14f.

²⁸⁴ Garrison, pp.23-25.

²⁸⁵ Garrison, pp. 54-64; cf. David B. Barratt, et. al., eds., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 374.

²⁸⁶ Garrison, pp. 123-159; cf. Gilbert Hovsepian and Krikor Markarian, “The Awakening of the Persian Church,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement—A Reader*, 4th Ed., eds., Ralph D. Winter & Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 2009), pp. 712-715.

The last example comes from Algeria in North Africa where some of the worst fighting has taken place in the second half of the 20th century, first during the Algerian Revolution from 1945-1962 and then in the internecine wars between different Muslims factions within the country. Against this background a movement is taking place and a number of churches, mostly unofficial, have sprung up among the Berbers and the Arabs.²⁸⁷ A few years ago, one of the leaders of one of the churches, when threatened with arrest for himself and his members, respectfully but firmly told that police: "It is too late. There are now 80,000 of us! You don't have enough prisons to hold all of us."²⁸⁸

The above are only three out of the sixty nine movements that are stated to have taken place in the first twelve years of the 21st century. What about the rest of the sixty nine? And are there places in which God is at work among Muslims that Garrison is unaware of? The question, therefore, is what is God doing in our time? To answer this more fully we need to look at some geopolitical developments around us.

2.2 Some Geopolitical Developments

Christian missions to Islam in the coming years will invariably be tied up with geopolitical developments within the Islamic world. In particular, because the resurgence of Islam in various forms worldwide has been invariably driven by oil money, what happens in the Middle East will be crucial. And there are some highly significant developments which point to increasing destabilisation in the region in the years ahead.

First, it is a known fact that there already exists much instability within the sociopolitical structures of the Middle East region as a whole, as well as within many of the countries there. Second, oil prices have dropped drastically in the past two years. The likelihood of it ever recovering is an open question and seems unlikely. Other sources of oil exports and alternative sources of energy are increasingly coming online, with the use of solar energy in particular growing exponentially year by year. This certainly will lead to further destabilisations within oil exporting countries in the region. Thirdly, since the formation of Iran as a Shi'ite republic, the age-old Sunni-Shi'ite tensions have exploded anew throughout the region, first in the Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988), then within Iraq itself after Saddam Hussein's removal, and now in the on-going Syrian and Yemen civil wars. Fourthly, against the background of all these instability, there is the continuing problem of ISIS terrorism. The last is perhaps the ultimate expression of Islam's desperate struggles to come to terms with the modern world!

²⁸⁷ Garrison, pp. 83-100.

²⁸⁸ From personal conversation with a Christian worker who knows the Algerian pastor concerned.

Given the complexities before us, it would take an Old Testament prophet such as Isaiah or Jeremiah to be able to help us fit all these pieces together into a clear picture of what God's purposes in the world are for our time. But two things at least seem clear. Missiologically, God is doing something among Muslims never before seen in history. Geopolitically, God is stirring things up in the very heart of the Islamic world in a way which will have immense ramifications for Christian missions to Islam. Is the church seeing the signs of the times and are we preparing ourselves to work alongside the Lord of the Harvest in bringing men and women to salvation in Christ?

3. The Challenge to Asian Churches

Where do all these take us? In our concern to obey our Lord Jesus's command to "make discipleships of all nations" (Mat 28:19), how do we move forward with respect to Islam? I would like to put forward some proposals.

3.1 Muslim Dawah and Christian Mission?

First, many Christians, especially those of more liberal leanings, are saying to the church that we should not seek to convert Muslims but, instead, should enter into theological dialogue with them. This position is driven by two concerns. The first is that they believe that Christian-Muslim relationships are bad enough as they are because of our past history, and that any missionary effort to Muslims will make it worse. Secondly, often behind the first assertion is the fact that many liberal Christians are either universalists (believe all are saved even if they do not accept Jesus), or religious pluralists (believe all religions are the same), or both. But Christians who take the command of Christ seriously will never be happy with such an approach. Of course, we need to engage Muslims in dialogue for the common good of all humanity, and to do this always with gentleness and mutual respect. But we cannot apologise for our concern to share the message of Christ's salvation with the Muslim. Christians who urge us not to evangelise the Muslim, forget one simple thing. The Muslim is bound by his faith convictions to carry out *dawah* (literally "call" or "invitation") towards all non-Muslims. Not to practice *dawah* would make a Muslim less than a Muslim. In the same manner, to refrain from preaching the gospel would make a Christian less than a Christian. As the Apostle Paul puts it, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" (1 Cor 9:16)!

If therefore we are concerned about obeying Christ in the task of world missions, the churches in Asia will have to take seriously the challenge of the Islamic world. We noted earlier that despite sacrificial and committed efforts in the past, there has been hardly any breakthrough up to the beginning of the 19th century. But what David Garrison has documented so clearly ought to be a source of real encouragement and, therefore, a

powerful challenge to the whole church worldwide. God's time for the Muslim world has indeed come.

3.2 Training and Research Centers

If we are to take seriously the challenge of the Muslim world, then our churches and workers need to be properly prepared. Apart from the general spiritual and theological preparation of the worker, he or she must know and understand Islam. Here the Asian church is faced with a huge deficiency. If we are to check the faculty lists of all the seminaries in Asia, from India eastward, we will not find more than a tiny number of scholars who have a real understanding of Islam, including the ability to read Arabic and other languages of Muslim communities in the world. This is the first real obstacle we will face when it comes to reaching Muslims. We need to train up a whole new generation of scholars who can read and exegete the Quran in Arabic, and know in depth Islam, its history, theology, philosophy, cultures and laws, as well as its concern for *dawa*, which is its strategy to Islamize the whole world!

As well as training up a whole generation of Islamic scholars, we need to do two things. We will need to staff many of our seminaries with scholars of Islam and/or at least specialists in world religions to help our pastors and churches better understand the world in which we live in Asia. But we need to go one step further to set up specialised research and training centers on Islam and for mission to Muslims. In the past, there were some good research centers established for training missionaries but most have shifted their focus to dialogue and other concerns. Robert C. Douglas, in a 1989 survey of "Research and Training Centers," refers to a list of some ten known Islamic study centers, drawn up earlier by Roland Miller. He writes: "Most, if not all, of the centers listed are more committed to a dialectical approach toward Islam than to the evangelisation of Muslims. In 1978 no research center committed to Muslim evangelisation was identified."²⁸⁹ One such example is the Duncan Black MacDonald Centre, which was part of the Kennedy School of Missions at Hartford Seminary in the US. It was set up specifically for research and to train missionaries for Muslim work.

Today it has completely given up its original purpose of mission and, instead, focuses largely on dialogue, as well as functions as a training center for Muslim chaplains.

²⁸⁹ Robert C. Douglas, "Research and Training Centers," in *Muslims and Christians on Emmaus Road*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989), pp. 339-358; here p. 343. See also Roland Miller, "Building the Network of Research Centers," in *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, ed. Don M. McCurry (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979), pp. 457-474.

What is needed is a network of a few good mission researchers and training centers around the world, each staffed by a few qualified Islamic scholars with PhDs and with an excellent library. As far as I know, there is only one such Protestant center today, the Zwemer Center for Islamic Studies,²⁹⁰ now part of Columbia International University in the US. But if the Asian church is serious about missions to Muslims, a major center is needed. But such a center needs to be back by a national church with adequate spiritual, intellectual and financial resources and located in a relatively secure place. I believe that this is one key missiological agenda in which the Korean church must prayerfully take the lead.

3.3 Helping Persecuted Christians and Churches

It is a well-known fact that traditionally Muslim societies do not tolerate conversions out of Islam. Furthermore, almost all governments in Muslim-majority nations deny real and full religious freedom to non-Muslim citizens. At times, persecution and attacks reach extreme proportions. Christians in some Muslim countries regularly faced martyrdom and injustice of various kinds.

But this issue is now confronted in its most urgent and acute form in places where radical Islam holds sway, especially since the emergence of Al Qaeda and ISIS in the last few years. But the general perception is that western governments are too preoccupied with their own confused agenda to care. Habib Malik (son of Charles Malik) comments on the Christian situation in Middle East as follows: “Fundamentally, United States policies in the Middle East have never placed a significant priority on the conditions of indigenous Christians or the threat they have been up against just for being Christian ... These beleaguered Christian communities have been marginalized in America strategic thinking and hence expendable next to larger and more pressing economic, political, and security interests For their part these native Christians, whether *dhimmi* or free, have lost confidence in the West generally and in the United States in particular.”²⁹¹ What Malik says of the US appears to be true of the West as a whole. One unnamed scholar on Middle-Eastern Christianity, teaching in Washington, told a friend of mine in a private conversation that for the past eight hundred years, the West has always prioritised its political, security and economic interests above the plight of churches there. As for the churches in the West today, they are generally too weak to have much influence on their governments or to do anything substantial themselves. Where then does this leave the

²⁹⁰ See <http://www.zwemercenter.com/>, and also <https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-zwemer-center-for-muslim-studies>; accessed 8 Aug 2016.

²⁹¹ Habib C. Malik, *Islamism and the Future of the Christians of the Middle East* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institute Press, 2010), pp. 54f.

persecuted church today? In the context of what has been happening in the Middle East and North Africa, especially in Iraq and Syria, the Syrian church leaders are now saying to us, “Martyrdom we can accept, but not genocide!”²⁹²

This certainly is one of the burning missiological questions of the day in relationship to the Muslim world. What can churches in Asia do to help persecuted Christians and Christian communities in Muslim-majority countries? How can we get our governments and international bodies to help bring greater justice to all?

3.4 A Spirit of Servanthood and Self-giving Love

All who are serious about missions to Muslims are aware of the tremendous pain that afflicts Christian-Muslim relationships over the last fourteen centuries. As noted earlier, both sides must accept and bear their share of guilt and blame. But how do we move forward? In reading Paul again, we are challenged again by his missionary attitude to the Corinthian church, with which he did not have a very good relationship. He writes:

We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise (2 Cor 6:3-8).

If we are to reach the heart of the Muslim, we will have to go in the same spirit of love and servanthood. Again, story after story of conversions to Christ refers to the love that the convert experienced at some point in his or her life from a Christian neighbour, friend, teacher, pastor, and the like.

The great challenge to the Asian church is to produce a generation of missionaries or, more likely, “tentmakers,” who will go to the Muslim world with hearts of servants bearing the love of Christ!²⁹³

²⁹² On this, see paper by Hwa Yung, “Martyrdom we can accept, but not genocide!” which urges the church to relook at the question of how Christians should face the issue of persecution in contexts where persecution takes on extreme genocidal proportions as seen, for example, in the rise of ISIS and other extremist Islamist movements in recent years. For the English version see: <https://en.ifesjournal.org/martyrdom-we-can-accept-but-not-genocide-69863890cc2b>; (accessed 22 August 2017). Also available on the same site in French and Spanish.

²⁹³ Keung-Chul Jeong’s article on “Comparative Study of Poverty Alleviation in Islam and Christianity: A Case Study in Pakistan,” in *Case Studies on Poverty Alleviation and Social Economy*, by Chung Sik Yoo, et. al. (Seoul: CMPress, 2015), pp. 217-297, points in a similar direction to the point I am making.

4. Prayer and dependence of the Holy Spirit

Finally, it is important to note that, whilst missionaries and their labours have all been important and significant in the church's effort to reach the Muslim world throughout history, again and again it appears that much of the breakthroughs in the last hundred years have come through the direct work of the Holy Spirit Himself. Reading the accounts of the conversion of many MBBs, one cannot fail to note that often the turning point came through "signs and wonders," as seen in healings, deliverance from demonic powers, miracles, dreams and visions, and the like. Moreover, more often than not, the immediate human agency that the Spirit has used is not the missionary but some MBB! As the church in Asia prepares itself to take on the challenge of the Muslim world, we would be wise to keep both these things in mind. Without the powerful work of the Spirit, and our prayerful dependence on Him, we will miss God's timing!

"When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth" (Luke 18:8)?

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I reflected on the role that Christian Mission should play in the evangelisation of Muslims. It is left to Christians to dialogue with their Muslim brothers and sisters, but also to be unashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore Christians need to discern the time and the season of God and bring about a new interest in the evangelisation of Muslims.

