



## Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World

### THE TWO THIRDS WORLD CHURCH

#### Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 44

Produced by the Issue Group on this topic at the  
2004 Forum for World Evangelization hosted by the

Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

In Pattaya, Thailand, September 29 to October 5, 2004

#### *“A New Vision, a New Heart, a Renewed Call”*

In encouraging the publication and study of the Occasional Papers, the Lausanne  
Committee for World Evangelization does not necessarily endorse every  
viewpoint expressed in these papers.

Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization  
[info@lausanne.org](mailto:info@lausanne.org)  
[www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org)

Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) No. 44  
This Issue Group on the Two Thirds World Church was Issue Group No. 15  
(there were 31 Issue Groups at the Forum)

Series Editor for the 2004 Forum Occasional Papers (commencing with LOP 30):  
David Claydon

This Occasional Paper was prepared by the whole Issue Group and  
edited by David D. Ruiz, with the assistance of  
the editorial committee: J. Ismael Ramírez P., Mayra Urizar de Ramírez, Norberto Saracco

The full list of participants is at the end of this Paper

Copyright © 2005  
Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization  
and its National Committees around the world  
[info@lausanne.org](mailto:info@lausanne.org)  
[www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org)

## The context for the production of the Lausanne Occasional Papers

The Lausanne Movement is an international movement committed to energising  
“**the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.**”

With roots going back to the historical conferences in Edinburgh (1910) and Berlin (1966), the Lausanne Movement was born out of the First International Congress on World Evangelization called by evangelist Billy Graham held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in July 1974. The landmark outcome of this Congress was the **Lausanne Covenant** supported by the 2,430 participants from 150 nations. The covenant proclaims the substance of the Christian faith as historically declared in the creeds and adds a clear missional dimension to our faith. Many activities have emerged from the Lausanne Congress and from the second congress held in Manila in 1989. The Covenant (in a number of languages), and details about the many regional events and specialised conferences which have been undertaken in the name of Lausanne, may be examined online at [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org).

The Lausanne International Committee believed it was led by the Holy Spirit to hold another conference which would bring together Christian leaders from around the world. This time the Committee planned to have younger emerging leaders involved and sought funds to enable it to bring a significant contingent from those parts of the world where the church is rapidly growing today. It decided to call the conference a **Forum**. As a Forum its structure would allow people to come and participate if they had something to contribute to one of 31 issues (around which were formed Issue Groups). These issues were chosen through a global research programme seeking to identify the most significant issues in the world today which are of concern in our task to take the *good news* to the world.

This Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) is the report that has emerged from one of these Issue Groups. LOPs have been produced for each of the Issue Groups and information on these and other publications may be obtained online at [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org).

The theme of the Forum for World Evangelization held in 2004 was “**A new vision, a new heart, a renewed call.**” This Forum was held in Pattaya, Thailand from September 29 to October 5, 2004. 1,530 participants came from 130 countries to work in one of the 31 Issue Groups.

The Affirmations at the conclusion of the Forum stated:

“There has been a spirit of working together in serious dialogue and prayerful reflection. Representatives from a wide spectrum of cultures and virtually all parts of the world have come together to learn from one another and to seek new direction from the Holy Spirit for world evangelization. They committed themselves to joint action under divine guidance.

The dramatic change in the political and economic landscape in recent years has raised new challenges in evangelization for the church. The polarization between east and west makes it imperative that the church seek God’s direction for the appropriate responses to the present challenges.

In the 31 Issue Groups these new realities were taken into consideration, including the HIV pandemic, terrorism, globalization, the global role of media, poverty, persecution of Christians, fragmented families, political and religious nationalism, post-modern mind set, oppression of children, urbanization, neglect of the disabled and others.

Great progress was made in these groups as they grappled for solutions to the key challenges of world evangelization. As these groups focused on making specific recommendations, larger strategic themes came to the forefront.

There was affirmation that major efforts of the church must be directed toward those who have no access to the gospel. The commitment to help establish self sustaining churches within 6,000 remaining unreached people groups remains a central priority.

Secondly, the words of our Lord call us to love our neighbour as ourselves. In this we have failed greatly. We renew our commitment to reach out in love and compassion to those who are marginalised because of disabilities or who have different lifestyles and spiritual perspectives. We commit to reach out to children and young people who constitute

a majority of the world's population, many of whom are being abused, forced into slavery, armies and child labour.

A third stream of a strategic nature acknowledges that the growth of the church is now accelerating outside of the western world. Through the participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America, we recognise the dynamic nature and rapid growth of the church in the *South*. Church leaders from the *South* are increasingly providing exemplary leadership in world evangelization.

Fourthly, we acknowledge the reality that much of the world is made up of oral learners who understand best when information comes to them by means of stories. A large proportion of the world's populations are either unable to or unwilling to absorb information through written communications. Therefore, a need exists to share the "Good News" and to disciple new Christians in story form and parables.

Fifthly, we call on the church to use media to effectively engage the culture in ways that draw non-believers toward spiritual truth and to proclaim Jesus Christ in culturally relevant ways.

Finally, we affirm the priesthood of all believers and call on the church to equip, encourage and empower women, men and youth to fulfil their calling as witnesses and co-labourers in the world wide task of evangelization.

Transformation was a theme which emerged from the working groups. We acknowledge our own need to be continually transformed, to continue to open ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit, to the challenges of God's word and to grow in Christ together with fellow Christians in ways that result in social and economic transformation. We acknowledge that the scope of the gospel and building the Kingdom of God involves, body, mind, soul and spirit. Therefore we call for increasing integration of service to society and proclamation of the gospel.

We pray for those around the world who are being persecuted for their faith and for those who live in constant fear of their lives. We uphold our brothers and sisters who are suffering. We recognize that the reality of the persecuted church needs to be increasingly on the agenda of the whole Body of Christ. At the same time, we also acknowledge the importance of loving and doing good to our enemies while we fight for the right of freedom of conscience everywhere.

We are deeply moved by the onslaught of the HIV/AIDS pandemic – the greatest human emergency in history. The Lausanne movement calls all churches everywhere to prayer and holistic response to this plague.

"9/11," the war in Iraq, the war on terror and its reprisals compel us to state that we must not allow the gospel or the Christian faith to be captive to any one geo-political entity. We affirm that the Christian faith is above all political entities.

We are concerned and mourn the death and destruction caused by all conflicts, terrorism and war. We call for Christians to pray for peace, to be proactively involved in reconciliation and avoid all attempts to turn any conflict into a religious war. Christian mission in this context lies in becoming peacemakers.

We pray for peace and reconciliation and God's guidance in how to bring about peace through our work of evangelization. We pray for God to work in the affairs of nations to open doors of opportunity for the gospel. We call on the church to mobilize every believer to focus specific consistent prayer for the evangelization of their communities and the world.

In this Forum we have experienced the partnership of men and women working together. We call on the church around the world to work towards full partnership of men and women in the work of world evangelism by maximising the gifts of all.

We also recognize the need for greater intentionality in developing future leaders. We call on the church to find creative ways to release emerging leaders to serve effectively."

Numerous practical recommendations for local churches to consider were offered. These will be available on the Lausanne website and in the Lausanne Occasional Papers. It is our prayer that these many case studies and action plans will be used of God to mobilise the church to share a clear and relevant message using a variety of methods to reach the most neglected or resistant groups so that everyone will have the opportunity to hear the gospel message and be able to respond to this good news in faith.

We express our gratitude to the Thai Church which has hosted us and to their welcoming presentation to the Forum. We are profoundly gratefully to God for the privilege of being able to gather here from the four corners of the earth. We have developed new partnerships, made new friends and encouraged one another in our various ministries. Not withstanding the resistance to the gospel in many places and the richness of an inherited religious and cultural tradition we here at the Forum have accepted afresh the renewed call to be obedient to the mandate of Christ. We commit ourselves to making His saving love known so that the whole world may have opportunity to accept God's gift of salvation through Christ."

These affirmations indicate the response of the participants to the Forum outcomes and their longing that the whole church may be motivated by the outcomes of the Forum to strengthen its determination to be obedient to God's calling.

May the case studies and the practical suggestions in this and the other LOPs be of great help to you and your church as you seek to find new ways and a renewed call to proclaim the saving love of Jesus Christ

*David Claydon*

## CONTENTS

1. Introduction  
The Two Thirds World Church and Evangelization
2. Guidelines for discussion  
Responses to the Guidelines
  - (A) Redefining Missions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
*By Howard Brant*  
Response *by Bertil Ekström*
  - (B) The Perspective of the Two Thirds World Churches  
for World Missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
*By Makito Yoshimoto*
  - (C) Case Study from Latin America  
*By Ronald Vásquez*
  - (D) Case study form Nigeria – discipleship  
*By Tokunbo Salami*
3. Regional Reports  
Conclusions on the subject of Cooperation  
Recommendations
4. Additional Contribution from IG Participants  
Challenges for church leaders in Africa  
*By Dr. Francis Bola Akin John*
5. Participants

# 1. Introduction

The following document describes a very important step in the process of better understanding the church in the majority world, in order to open opportunities to strengthen it through corporative effort among the various regions included.

From the beginning of the process, the convenor tried to keep together a balanced participation among three main areas: Latin America which included Spanish speaking countries as well as Portuguese speaking countries like Brazil. In the process of convening participants from Asia, we realised that it is a huge continent with various and different countries to include it as an area. In Africa, we basically convened people from Sub Sahara nations and we faced the language problem that Africans are facing themselves.

As an important part of the process of evaluation, we had a group of participants from other parts of the world, including participants from the USA and Europe, whose contribution was to see ministry in our Third World countries from a different perspective.

To describe the process in three steps, the first one was to get to know each other better during the preliminary work as well as during issue group meetings. We invited all regional groups to discuss and work gathering information and to produce a regional document that helped us to understand the strengths, hindrances and weaknesses, effectiveness and opportunities of cooperation among them. The second step was to understand our similarities and differences. Every regional group had a time to present a regional document to create an exchange atmosphere that helped each other to self-evaluate their region and to identify some lessons to learn from the other regions. The third step was to provide opportunities for cooperation, through sharing personal knowledge and through discussions. We looked for opportunities to learn from the each other about our various regions.

It was very encouraging to see when we arrived at the Forum that among the documents we received was the paper, "Evangelicals in the World of the 21st Century", written by Dr. Peter Brierley. This is a tremendous presentation of the Two Thirds World in the Christian world today. Each Forum participant, not only those who came to our Issue Group, received a clear understanding of the need for an evaluation of the Two Thirds World church to take seriously the growth of the church in this part of the world. Peter Brierley invited us to reflect on Third World evangelicalism in a brilliant way. He closed his document with the following paragraph:

*Careful, wise and strategic leadership is required to take advantage of the opportunities evangelicalism is generating, especially in the Third World, accompanied by a humility to allow the Lord of the Harvest to guide as He wishes. First World structures or thinking must not be imposed on or be allowed to hinder or thwart the wind of the Spirit in the decades ahead.*

Participants of this Issue Group received, first of all, a visual impact of the reality of the Two Thirds World, with a mixture of races, colours, languages and acts that belong to each one of the represented areas; but looking at them, working together, was a wonderful experience for everyone. From the beginning, we established some guidelines to keep this dialogue focused.

*David D. Ruiz*

## The Two-Thirds World Church and Evangelization

The Forum focused on the work of 31 Issue Groups. One of these groups, under the name of The Two Thirds World Church, dealt with the following issues and came to some conclusions.

During the last century, one of the most significant changes in the map of world Christianity has taken place. While one hundred years ago 95% of Christians lived in the western world, nowadays 70% of believers live in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The most dynamic and growing churches are in this part of the world, with a liturgy, organisation and ministry style that attracts hundreds of people. For example, the churches in Africa have grown faster during the last twenty years than ever before. Out of the 700 million people who live in Africa, 397 million are Christian believers. Of course, there are visible differences among Korean churches, African churches and Latin American churches, but it is also true that they have the same signs of vitality and development.

This situation makes us wonder why this change has taken place and also presents new challenges to the church's missionary strategy.

After reflecting on these issues, and discussing on how to describe better the church in these regions of the world, our Issue Group unanimously decided that we should use the expression "Majority World Church" instead of Two Thirds World Church.

As it is the case in any social or religious phenomenon, the causes for this expansion and development are several and perhaps we will never get to know some of them. However, we have agreed to highlight some of them:

1. Above all ecclesiological, missiological or sociological considerations, it is clear that there has been divine intervention. In His sovereignty, God has moved in this part of the world bringing salvation to millions.
2. The Majority World Church has been open to the work of the Spirit, looking very intensely for God's powerful manifestations and being willing to be an instrument of His grace.
3. In this context of openness and searching, intercessory prayer has been crucial.
4. The out pouring of the Holy Spirit has enabled evangelism to be carried out with signs and miracles, confirming the preached message and meeting physical, emotional and spiritual needs.
5. We understand that it has also been a time for harvest, that is, we are reaping the fruits that others sowed in the past.
6. The openness to the spiritual world and to extraordinary manifestations coincided, and in some way, got ahead to the contemporary post-modern mentality. Such religiosity would have been unacceptable fifty years ago.
7. The emerging of a strong national leadership, committed to the mission of the church, has allowed the presentation of a more contextual and relevant message.
8. The church has involved all its members in its mobilising strategy. The active participation in the different church ministries is high, especially in evangelistic activities.
9. The significant use of the media, though people in these regions are not professional enough to use them, has contributed to a massive presence in society.
10. As regards to church unity, not all the countries have advanced at the same level with their unity process. This issue is one of the most relevant in several contexts.

As we recognise the achievements and strengths, we also share our concern for some weaknesses that present a great danger to the church's health and mission in our regions.

1. We see some spiritual superficiality showed in lack of commitment to the demands and values of the Kingdom of God.
2. The gospel is affecting the emotional and spiritual areas of people's lives, but not the totality of them.
3. The status of the church and success of the ministry is evaluated by numerical growth, leaving aside other dimensions of growth that are characteristic of a mature church.

4. Pastoral leadership is frequently lacking in theological preparation, which diminishes its discernment of God's truth.
5. An emotional, superficial, unreflective evangelical "religiosity" is being built.
6. There has been emphasis on "doing" rather than on "being" and people are valued for what they do instead of what they are.

These weaknesses perhaps explain why the Majority World Church has not been able to transform society nor to affect its structures, in spite of the fact that it is growing and developing. Having in mind this concern, we propose:

1. To deepen the work in discipleship and the formation of Christian character.
2. To look for consistency between what we preach and what we do.
3. To re-orientate the emphasis of the church in the transformation processes and not only in numerical growth.
4. To prepare believers to be agents of transformation.

The growth of the Majority World Church and its vitality have transformed it into a new missionary force. For example, The Nigeria Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA), founded in 1982, is formed by 90 missionary agencies and denominations and has more than 3800 missionaries in 38 countries. Indian Mission Association is connecting almost 200 national agencies and COMIBAM in Latin America is connecting 26 different countries in a mission movement. These agencies and churches today have some contributions to offer to the contemporary mission of the church.

1. The missiology of these churches is based more in the local church. The relationship between the missionary and the sending church is more direct.
2. Most of the Majority World missionaries focus on planting churches and evangelism.
3. The commitment to the missionary work is for lifetime, people do not think of it as short periods of mission.
4. The new missionary force of the Majority World is growing, while in the West, the missionary force is declining.
5. In the South-South relationship, there is a bigger ideological proximity.

We have recognised that we have weaknesses to address.

1. Financial support to missionaries frequently is not long term.
2. Many missionaries go to the field with a harvest mentality, like in their own country and they become frustrated if they only have to sow.
3. There are few candidates for ministries with a less "visible" success, like Bible translation or cultural interpretation.
4. There is a tendency to send missionaries where the same language is spoken.

Partnership opportunities are also opened.

1. Today, it is more acceptable to have a Latin American, African or Asian missionary in Muslim countries.
2. Africa has a lot to teach to help the world church understand animistic religions.
3. African churches can give us an understanding of Islam not biased by western or Arab ideologies.

The challenges and possibilities are huge.

1. The sending of missionaries and the support of South-South ministries.
2. Evangelisation of Islamic immigrants in Europe as a door to get to their own countries.
3. The sending of professionals to Europe to countries where they are needed (Scandinavia), as a mission strategy to the re-evangelisation of Europe.
4. The sending of qualified workers to Europe as a mission strategy.

## 2. Guidelines for Discussion

During the preliminary work, both the convener and the facilitator of our Issue Group prepared the guidelines to encourage the participants to produce prior to our gathering at Pattaya, papers and articles which would trigger the discussion process. These guidelines were as follows.

### **The Purpose**

How we can describe our work together: *“We are going to have an introspective look in order to update the reality of the Two Thirds World Church, which will give us a basis for a cooperation among regions”*. To fulfil this objective, we need to identify:

- (a). Who we are and what we are: We need to have an “updated photography” of the church in the different areas/regions in the Two Thirds World.
- (b) What are the similarities and differences: We need to make a comparative chart for a better understanding of the Two Thirds World, evaluating similarities and differences.
- (c). Common areas to work: We need to establish in what areas the different regions are working in order to evaluate ways to cooperate.
- (d) Particular areas to work: We need to highlight areas of work that are singular for every region and susceptible to produce synergy in cooperative work in the Two Thirds world.

### **Basic Considerations**

We have two main considerations that we have to keep in mind during the process and the final meeting of our issue group.

- (a). To keep the focus in global evangelization.
- (b) To evaluate the church as an institution.

### **Thought Provoking Issues**

1. What is God doing in the Two Thirds World Church?  
Given the growth of the church in Latin America, Africa and Asia, we will explore the following issues:
  - (a) What are the reasons for growth and the hindrances to the advance of the gospel in these regions?
  - (b) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the churches in these regions?
2. How can these churches be more effective in the following areas?
  - (a) The task for evangelism, especially among those who are not Christians?
  - (b) The process of discipleship which includes knowing how to appropriate the message of the Bible in their respective contexts, in order that Christians may grow mature and know how to live for Christ?
3. What is the role of the Two Thirds World churches in the world today?
  - (a) What is their contribution to global Christianity today, especially in the ongoing task of world mission?
  - (b) What contribution can they make to the renewal of Western Christianity?
  - (c) How can Two Thirds World churches contribute to the re-evangelization of the West, especially Europe?
4. In what ways can the churches in the Two Thirds World cooperate with and be of mutual help to each other?  
The question of South-South and South-East cooperation.

### **Expected Outcomes**

We are expecting that as a result of this work together, the following results will be achieved:

- (a). Refine our perspective about the church in the Two Thirds World.
  - i) Understanding of what is church.
  - ii) The role of evangelization and
  - iii) The need of a strong church for global evangelization.

We need to establish that as a result of maturity in the church we can see an increase in evangelization zeal and more effectiveness in reaching the unreached with the gospel.

(b). Identify the significance of discipleship in the church.

- i) As a process to produce “better Christians”.
- ii) As a source for future missionaries.
- iii) As an incentive for a global evangelisation.

We need to establish that as a result of a more effectiveness in discipleship, the church is more aware about global evangelization and produces more candidates and cross-cultural missionaries.

(c) Identify the latent threats to the church in the Two Thirds World and their impact in the following areas:

- i) Church growth (growth).
- ii) Its validity as salt and light in its surroundings (relevance).
- iii) Its evangelization zeal (efficiency).
- iv) Its existence as a church (survival).

## **Responses to Guidelines**

### **(A) Redefining Missions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

By Howard Brant ~21 May 2004

#### ***Understanding the Issues***

At this present time, our world is changing more rapidly than at any time in world history. This is not merely because we have morphed our way through the agricultural, industrial, and technological revolutions into the information age. Some of the most dynamic shifts are taking place in the spiritual landscape of our world as well. As we come into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with all its changes and challenges, there is an underlying sense that traditional missions will have to change in order to remain effective.

#### ***Three Visits From Outer Space***

Professor Andrew Walls, a well-known missiologist, likes to pretend that an alien from outer space makes repeated visits to Planet Earth – but at different stages of world history.<sup>1</sup> If we were that alien, what we have seen on a “fly by” that occurred at the end of the First Century AD? As we looked down from our space ship through our spiritual goggles, we would see a robust strain of Christianity flash out of the Middle East. It lit a path all the way from Jerusalem to Rome. By the time of our first “fly by,” one million believers were involved. Some would be slaves, some from royal household of Caesar. What would catch the observant eye, however, is that while there was this one blinding pathway of spiritual light, the rest of the planet in Africa’s interior, Asia and Latin America remained in total darkness with not a spark of spiritual hope to be found.

The second visit to Planet Earth would not come until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Around 1905 we would find the landscape of Christendom totally redefined. The stronghold of Christianity would no longer be the Middle East. In fact the light that had shone so brightly in places like Palestine, Turkey and Greece had all but flickered out. Instead the bright spots of Christianity had moved to Britain, Western Europe and especially over into the New Worlds of North America, Australia and New Zealand. These “bright spots” in the so called “Western World” now made up 95% of all the Christians in the world – and from them boatloads of missionaries were pouring out into the far-flung reaches of the planet.

Our third “fly by” takes place a whole century later, in 2004. Again the landscape of Christianity has changed dramatically. The lights are still low in the Middle East and throughout Central Asia. Lights, which had once burned brightly in the Western world, are

---

<sup>1</sup> See his analysis of the church in Andrew Walls: [The Missionary Movement in Christian History](#) (Orbis, 1996). In using his analogy I am NOT describing the same six “visits” as Walls does, but only using his brilliant descriptive tool.

still shining – but the luster of those lights has somehow dimmed. In fact in some countries like Canada, New Zealand, UK and Australia where a fire once blazed, the flames are lower now and in other places the logs that burned brightly a century ago are reduced to a flicker. The amazing thing, however, is that the sparks of the gospel have jumped to other parts of the world. Now the fire burns in Chile, Brazil, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Nepal, Korea – and especially in China! In fact, where 95% of the believers had been in the Western world in 1905, now over 70% of the believers on Planet Earth are in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

As our space ship pulls away from planet earth again, we cannot help but ask some questions.

- How did this last dramatic shift in Christendom occur in just one century?
- What does this new demographic configuration signal for the “next wave of missions”?
- What will happen to all those mission agencies that formed around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to take the Gospel “from the West to the Rest”?
- What kind of mission agencies will God use in the next phase of the harvest (which could well be the final one before the Son of Man returns to the earth)?

These are hard questions. If we can answer them then we should have some basis to begin redefining missions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **Three Dynamic Shifts in World Missions**

Among the many significant shifts taking place in world missions, there are perhaps three that are most significant and will affect the way missions will be done in the next decades. The first of these shifts has been identified by Peter Jenkins in his book, “*The Next Christendom: The Coming Global Christianity*” (Oxford University Press. 2002). It is the sudden **emergence of Christianity** as a worldwide phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> Jenkins makes the stunning prediction that Christianity will be the next world religion. In fact, he believes that our faith has become much more popular than most people know or understand. While Jenkins may be too optimistic,<sup>3</sup> his point can hardly be dismissed. Christianity has made powerful inroads into almost every country in the world. In fact, we know of no nation on earth where there is not a viable indigenous church. There are still plenty of people groups that have not been “reached” or “evangelized” – but the gospel witness burns brightly in every geographically defined nation of the world today.<sup>4</sup>

The second major issue is the fact that we now live in a **globalized world**, meaning simply that our earth has become one global village. Geographical boundaries mean little to our space ship. You can reach almost any point on Planet Earth within 24 hours. Communication via the Internet is almost instantaneous everywhere in the world. My family that is scattered around the world and I meet regularly on the Internet. This sudden opening up of transportation and information means that people from every part of the world are on the move. Mass migrations of populations are taking place all at the same time. Africans are moving to Europe. Pakistanis are moving to Western Canada. Mexicans cross into the United States. Filipino servants dominate the domestic services of Saudi Arabia. Muslims from the Middle East and Turkey are flooding into Europe. One can easily find Chinese, Korean, or Brazilian congregations in any major city of the world. The divisions that occurred at the tower of Babel are rapidly disintegrating before our very eyes. CNN, BBC, Deutsche Welle, Radio Moscow, Al-Jazeera all broadcast the same news simultaneously. Whether in Beijing, Sao Paulo, Baghdad, Madrid, or Kansas City the Internet news is only a keystroke away. Our world has become one again.

---

<sup>2</sup> It is clear that Jenkins is using the term “Christianity” in a very broad sense, but what he says in his broad definition of Christianity is essentially true in the narrower definition (truly born again people) – but only in less grandiose terms.

<sup>3</sup> In reality we have to see that Islam is growing very rapidly (by population growth if not by conversion) and still the basic belief system throughout much of the world is animism with a thin veneer of some other philosophical construct such as Hinduism, Buddhism or even nominal Christianity.

<sup>4</sup> There are certainly countries like Bhutan, North Korea and Saudi Arabia where there are few Christians and persecution of the indigenous people if they profess Christianity. It is absolutely certain, however, that in each of these countries there is a definable body of indigenous believers who worship privately in house churches.

The third dynamic is that out of our globalized world is emerging a **globalized church**. By this we mean that Christians in Korea know a lot about what is going on in the church in the United States. If one goes to Uruguay, he finds Christian television programs beamed in from the United States via satellite that are translated and rebroadcast all over Uruguay. The names of Billy Graham, Luis Palau and Benny Hinn are known all over the world. Modern technology will only accelerate this development. In a recent Billy Graham sponsored world convention, 500 Christian leaders from all over the world were asked, "How many of you presently have access to e-mail over the Internet?" Nearly 80% of the hands were raised. When house church Christians are arrested in Beijing, the news flashes around the world instantaneously and millions of Christians are upholding them in prayer. When Southern Baptist missionaries were killed in Yemen, we were in Amman, Jordan. Within hours we were consoling missionaries who had worked together with those who had died.

### **Down Side of Globalization**

There is another element to globalization that we all need to recognize. Globalization brings its own philosophy of life. The social scientist calls it "post modernity." And while there are many definitions of "modernity" and "post modernity," its result is that more and more of our society is becoming secularized through materialism and pluralism. Materialism tends to smother spirituality and eventually drives out godliness. Pluralism strikes deep at the foundations of values and erodes faith. In the Western world, these two giants have birthed a pervasive secular mindset that is now challenging the "missionary spirit." While they have yet to deliver the knockout punch, they have managed to land major body blows that have weakened essential qualities such as strong faith and the willingness to sacrifice for the gospel. If one doubts this point, just look at the declining statistics of career missionaries from the Western nations. What we have all feared can now be statistically demonstrated by comparing the declining figures for the largest evangelical missions in North America.<sup>5</sup>

If anyone wishes to continue the debate, consider this. In the Western world today, we have more seminaries, Christian books, more Christian artists, more money and gadgets of every kind. We use computers, radio, television, movies, DVDs and even the MP3 players. Yet, for all these wonderful tools, the number of our career missionaries is in decline. While we can get many to go "short-term" to the beauty spots, it is more and more difficult to find those who are willing to go into the tough Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu worlds.

Even more worrisome is that in our globalized world, the non-Western or Southern church is picking up on the fact that many "Western" missionaries are not of the same quality as their predecessors. In fact, pluralism has struck so deep that in many sectors basic belief systems are showing signs of erosion. A growing number of Western missionaries would now doubt that everyone must hear the Gospel to be saved. They would doubt whether there is a literal "flames and fire" hell or that lost souls could possibly spend an eternity there. These ideological shifts are dangerous to world missions.

Mission attention has shifted from the **lost** to the **needy** and that is not to say we should not care for the needy, but the gospel is in jeopardy when missions come to believe that delivering the "cup of cold water" is just as important as dispensing "the water of life." A Korean pastor looked at me one day as I pled with him to send missionaries with our mission. He asked, "Why would we send our missionaries with your organization? Our people get up at 4:30 every morning to pray. They trust God. They preach the gospel!" I had the grace to answer him, "Sir, maybe you do not need us.... maybe we need you!"

The philosophy of a globalized world is post-modernity with its materialism and pluralism.

"Why should we send missionaries with your organization?"

<sup>5</sup> A comparison of the 24 largest mission agencies working in North America shows that 16 (66%) of them have been in declension over the past five years.

This is the very heart of what we need to think about. The Western church, which was so highly effective in propagating the gospel in the last century, is in danger of becoming a blunt instrument. Without genuine revival, we will soon be overcome by the deceitfulness of riches, the philosophical ideologies of our day, and by the MTV pop culture that has come into the Western church. Non-Western church leaders are worried. Some of the more astute among them are asking whether the post-modern young people of the West can even minister effectively in their pre-modern society.<sup>6</sup> No wonder, when they hear what is going on in our churches and in our “Western” Christian society. Nigerian Anglicans decry the Western decision to ordain openly gay bishops. Some Westerners are beginning to ask, “Can the West be revived again?”<sup>7</sup> To this they respond that God may have to use the non-Western church to call us back to repentance, and to “do the first works” again!<sup>8</sup>

### **Searching for Solutions**

We ask, “What is the solution to this mess?” Has the plan of God for the salvation of the world gone wrong? Or put another way, did God not know that we would be coming into such a time as this? Is the problem with God’s plan – or with us? As believers in a sovereign God whose plans will not be thwarted, we have to acknowledge that while our context on Planet Earth has changed, the weapons of warfare given to us are still “*powerful through God to the pulling down of strongholds.*”<sup>9</sup>

The solution to our mess is to get back to original intent. We have to get back to taking the whole gospel, from the whole church, to the whole world. To put it in conceptual terms, the gospel must be redeemed. The whole church must be activated. The whole world must be engaged.

### **The gospel Redeemed**

Our missionaries used to preach the gospel fearlessly – the whole gospel. James Hunter, in his book *Flame of Fire* (SIM 1961), quotes a story from the writings of Rowland Bingham, founder of SIM. The story, dating back to 1893, tells of Bingham entering the Muslim town of Iwo in the central part of Nigeria. There he requested that the Muslim “King” allow his party to teach the word of God to his people. The King responded that he would call his counsellors together and give a decision within a few days. Unbeknown to Bingham and his small team, the Muslims conspired to kill him and his band. They would wait for Bingham and the others to come for the response from the chief. An old Hausa Malam was to rise up and curse them and then the young men would stone Bingham and his team.

On Christmas day, 1893, Bingham was called before the chief. His fellow missionary was too sick to accompany him so a Nigerian translator attended him. Together they went to the palace where they had to push their way into the courtyard to await the king. As they sat there, the princes came in brandishing their swords leaving no doubt as to what awaited Bingham. He whispered to his translator, “*Be strong and of good courage. Be not afraid, but speak and hold not your peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set upon thee to harm thee.*”<sup>10</sup>

Faced with a Muslim Chief who was intransigent and a mob ready to stone him, Bingham challenged the Malam with the serious consequences of rejected light, which his team had brought to them. In the words of Christ he cried, “Yet a little while is the light among you. Walk while you have the light...” Bingham recorded, “*We put before them the*

---

<sup>6</sup> This issue was raised recently in a speech given by Pastor Oscar Muriu, a Kenyan pastor of the large Nairobi Chapel, while addressing a gathering in Sydney, Australia.

<sup>7</sup> This powerful question first asked by Bishop Lesslie Newbigin was reiterated by Alan Roxburgh at WEA consultation at Iguassu in 1999. Roxburgh is presently the president of the Missional Leadership Institute.

<sup>8</sup> “Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first” Revelation 2:5. Both professor Andrew Walls and anthropologist Paul Heibert make the point that change does not often come from the center – but from the periphery. The non-Western Church might be the very tool that God will use to save the Western church.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:4 is of great encouragement to us as we look at this era of “speculation.” We have to ask ourselves, “if God gave us the spiritual weapons to take down all strongholds of the enemy, then which weapons are we not using now?”

<sup>10</sup> Words taken from God’s comfort to Paul in Corinth. See Acts 18:9-10.

*consequences of rejecting the ambassadors of Christ as being far more serious than what might happen if they insulted the King of England. We pleaded with them to turn to the only One who could save them because He had died for them."*

When Bingham finished his challenge to the chief, the chief thundered out his verdict. "We have decided that you must leave our town tomorrow morning. No one may open their house to you and no one may supply you with food after that." The priests roared their applause and shouted, "Let the king be strong! Let the king be strong!" The old Hausa Malam stood and pronounced his curse on them in the name of Mohammed – but nobody moved. Bingham and his translator got up and moved toward the gate. Not a hand was raised, not a stone was thrown. The next day, a slave from the king's court came and told them of the evil plan to kill them. "But," he added, "the mob could do nothing, for fear took them."<sup>11</sup>

Where do we find those kinds of missionaries today? We tend to pussyfoot around the edges. In the interest of not giving offence, our gospel and our approach are so bland that its healing power is all but neutralized. In contrast, see what it took to shake imperial Rome in Paul's day, or what it took to shake the foundations of Greek culture, or the hardness of the Jewish establishment. It was the kind of gospel that Bingham preached that day to the Muslim Malam that turned the world upside down.

My wife and I witnessed this in a different context in 1998. That year we took 10 Ethiopians from Ethiopia to India for a three-month missions trip. All of these young men had come out of the fires of 17 years of communist rule in their country. Almost all of them had spent time in prison for their faith. Although you could not get them to talk about it often,<sup>12</sup> some of them bore scars where the shackles had dug into their wrists or marks on their bodies where they had been beaten with rods. When these young men arrived in India, they were fearless with the gospel. Within a day or two, they were challenging people who were possessed by evil spirits. They would walk up to the front of a Hindu temple and invite the priest and all his attendants to come and listen to a message from God. Local evangelists cringed in fear as they heard the men speak out against the idols of Hinduism, and intentionally steered them away from powerful Hindu strongholds that they themselves had feared for decades.

The next year in 1999, a team of eight Ethiopians set off for Muslim Pakistan. There they began sharing their faith openly with Muslims. The local Pakistani church leaders quickly pled with them, "No, don't preach to the Muslims. They will react and come against us. Go and preach to the Catholics! They need to become evangelicals – but leave the Muslims alone!"

We need a heaven-sent revival to blow on our missionaries.

Whatever else we may say about the revitalization of missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it has to start with a personal renewal our faith in Jesus Christ – and a laying down of our lives as living sacrifices again. We need a heaven-sent revival to blow on our missionaries, to help us commit again to the Lord Jesus Christ who told us, "Unless a man will take up his cross and follow Me, he is not fit to be My disciple." What if we got rid of all the "unfit" disciples in our mission organizations and started over again with only those who are willing to take up the cross and die for the gospel?

That is what appears to be happening in missions in China. The Chinese, like the Ethiopians, have been living for over half a century under the tyranny of atheistic communism. Amid the adverse climate and repression of Christianity, the church has grown from one million to somewhere near 100 million. David Aikman, who wrote the book *Jesus in Beijing*, claims that there are 10 million new converts to Christianity in China every year.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> James Hunter, *A Flame of Fire* (SIM, 1961), 119-120.

<sup>12</sup> Desta Lengano, one of these men, explained to me that if they talked about their suffering, they feared that others would place them on a spiritual pedestal. To avoid such acclaim or aggrandizement, they never publicized their stories.

<sup>13</sup> David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington: Regnery, 2003). Note particularly the Appendix where Aikman quotes from their doctrinal statement which by all counts is most orthodox and balanced.

While there is significant growth in China's Three-Self-Church – and among the new elite who come out of the campus movements (there have been 600,000 Christian teachers who have gone to China from North America in the last 20 years), the vast majority of those coming to Jesus in China through the work of the house church movement. There may be up to one million house churches that meet every Sunday.

It comes as no surprise to hear that in a country like this there is a latent missionary movement just under the surface. The book *Back to Jerusalem* by Paul Hattaway tells the story of how in 1996 the leaders of five major house church denominations met in China.<sup>14</sup> During this meeting, an old idea resurfaced. Before missionaries were forced out of China in 1948, there had been a movement of Chinese who believed that it was God's will for the Chinese church to finish the task of the Great Commission. These believers noted that in its early years the Gospel had travelled westward and NOT toward the east. From Jerusalem, the gospel went to Antioch, to Ephesus, to Corinth, to Rome. At the end of his life, Paul was struggling to take the gospel to Spain – the farthest western point of the Roman compass. They observed that over two millennia of history, the gospel continued going west until it came to North America – and from there, it continued westward – until today, there are more Christians in China than in any other country on earth (Korea and USA included). Now the Chinese ask themselves, "What does this mean for us today?" Conclusion: "God wants us (Chinese) to finish the task. We must take the gospel further west – all through the Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu nations between us and Jerusalem." And so they have committed together to raise up 100,000 Chinese missionaries to finish the task of world missions.

Now, here is the point. These are not soft, materialistic, pluralistic, naturalistic, pessimistic sorts who will wimp out on their first missionary journey. No, these are tough soldiers who have one thing in mind. Their goal is to invade the prisons wherever they go and lead people to Christ. One of the qualifications to get into their missions program is that they are willing to die for their faith.

Chinese missionaries must be prepared to die for their faith.
---

As He left us, Jesus told His disciples – "And you shall be witnesses unto Me." We know the origin of the word "witness." It means to be a martyr. This came home to me one day as we were teaching our Ethiopian team in preparation for entry into India. I was speaking on Acts and just mentioned that "witness" meant "martyr" and that all but John the Apostle had died a martyr's death. Suddenly all ten of them were in tears. For them, being a missionary was not riding on a smooth airplane to a hotel on the other side of the world where soft flowing music and a bath awaited! Somehow, being a martyr sounded different to them as they, with no experience in world missions, thought about being plunged into Hindu culture. I will never forget the prayer meeting as they individually and collectively laid out their lives before the Lord – every one of them telling the Lord that they would be glad to die for the soul of one Hindu person. Should it be any surprise that between the ten of them they saw over 1,300 Hindus turn to Christ in their three months of evangelism? The whole gospel!

I challenge myself to get back to the basics that got us here. Faith, prevailing prayer, sacrifice, the word of God, and the gospel preached with faith and the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **Whole Church Activated**

We also need the whole church engaged in world missions. Perhaps the picture we painted at the beginning of our discussion could be a caricature of the Western vs. non-Western church. We know that not all Western churches are dead – nor are all non-Western churches alive. If we were to describe the Western church, I think we would all agree that it would be more like that of Laodicea than that of Smyrna. We are those who are "rich and in need of nothing." God could NOT say of us as He did of Smyrna, "I know your poverty ... but you are rich."<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Paul Hattaway, *Back to Jerusalem* (Gabriel Publishers 2003).

<sup>15</sup> cf. Revelation 3:17 with 2:9.

One of the things that stuck me forcefully over the past 19 years in mission administration is the gulf that exists between Western missions and their daughter churches – but especially between Western missions and the emerging Majority World missionary movement.

No modern missiologist who has any field experience would deny that there are still strong tensions between Western missions and their daughter churches. In this regard, we note that there is often a distinction between Western **denominational** and Western **interdenominational** missions. Denominational missions tend to solve their mission-church dilemma through “turn over” to the local church in a fusion model. They simply become one. Tensions diminish as the indigenous church takes ownership of the mission structures and new missionary recruits simply come out under the church to “serve the church.”<sup>16</sup> Eventually, few missionaries remain.

Interdenominational missions, however, are more likely to recognize the distinction between church and mission. Some would describe that difference in philosophical terms as the difference between “modalities and sodalities.”<sup>17</sup> And while many Western missions have put themselves “under” the churches they planted, many have tried to retain some portion of their unique identity as mission. Thus we have had extensive discussion between church and mission using the “partnership” paradigm. A lot of this has been helpful. I am an advocate of partnerships as superior to the fusion/merger model, which can soon lead to the truncation of mission.

The one problem with “partnerships” is that while they can solve one problem, they can lead to another. They do help us sort out some mission-church tensions, but they also institutionalize structural separation at all levels. For while it is helpful to keep sodalities and modalities separate, Ralph Winter long ago told us that “sodalities need modalities and modalities need sodalities.” Missions need churches – and churches need missions. What happens when national churches (modalities) around the world begin to form their own mission programmes and their own mission societies (sodalities)? Typically, the long-standing distinctions continue because many have not thought through the deep reasons for continued separation. Many Western church practitioners and missiologists would argue that the very highest goal of any missionary movement would be for the church to be totally indigenous such that they would have their own independent mission. After all, isn’t this the highest form of “self-propagation?” When self-sufficiency becomes the supreme value by which we measure maturity, then this is the logical outcome.

What is actually happening is that in most cases, the existing older Western missions are having little to do with the emerging missionary movement – especially when they are the parent or founding mission. Paul picked up his convert Timothy on his second missionary journey and took him along as a member of his missionary band.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, we would insist that the church in Lystra form their own missionary board and send their Timothy off on his own separate mission. We never consider that it might take years of teaching (to say nothing of input from many other parts of the world) to develop another church like Antioch at Lystra.

All this is closely tied together with another highly held dogma in the missiological community – the homogenous unit principle. This construct would encourage us to see a “people group” or some other such unit developing along independent lines. For “growth” purposes, the cultural and social structures are kept intact so as to draw others of similar background into faith and church life. Many fail to see that while this may be a good entry strategy, it is the antithetical to missionary outreach, which by its very nature is cross-cultural. It is misplaced in a globalizing world.

---

<sup>16</sup> While it is not the scope of our paper here to describe what happens, it could be shown that this model often results in the truncation of mission. The Southern Baptists, Assemblies of God and C&MA and many of the British missionary societies are notable exceptions to this principle.

<sup>17</sup> Modalities are like the church itself. Sodalities are like missions or religious orders that one may or may not choose to join. It is both voluntary and temporary in membership. Modalities are stable and do not change. Sodalities are “parachurch” and come and go as needed.

<sup>18</sup> Acts 16:1 ff. Timothy was half Jewish, but certainly not a practicing Jew (for he was uncircumcised) and immersed in the Lyconian/Greek culture of his day. He must have come to faith on Paul’s first visit for Paul calls him his “son in the faith.”

They have imposed the West's highest cultural value on the non-western church.

With these two missiological principles ingrained in our thinking, it is difficult for western missiologists to see anything other than an independent missionary movement growing out of independent churches. What is so paradoxical about this anomaly is that missionaries, who come from a society where "independence" is so valued that we even have an Independence Day, have been deceived by the very demon they seek to cast out. All the "independence" talk is to keep the non-Western church from simply copying Western patterns and norms. Yet in assigning "independence" as the highest value in missiology, they have imposed the West's highest cultural virtue on the non-Western church.

Here is where we need to challenge one another to bring our missiology and our ecclesiology together. Let us ask ourselves again, "What is the church?" Where in the New

We need to bring our missiology in line with our ecclesiology.

Testament do we find that a church is to be set up in independent groups of people made up of the same homogenous unit?<sup>19</sup> Even a quick reflection will tell us that the church is the body of Christ in which there is "neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, for we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body..."<sup>20</sup> If anything, the church ought to be the place in the world where we can put our tribal and ethnic backgrounds behind us and come together as those washed by the same precious blood, baptized by the same Holy Spirit, with one Lord who is Head of the whole Church. Indeed, there are good examples of where this is happening – especially in world-class cities.<sup>21</sup>

Acts 11 tells the story about Antioch becoming the first missionary church.<sup>22</sup> We often point out that new life came to the church (where people witnessed to Jews only) when some African Jews came from Cyrene and stepped across the cultural line and began preaching to Greeks. Revival came – and a missionary church was born. Perhaps it was about this time Peter came to Antioch eating with both Jews and Greeks until men from James found him (for he had fled from Jerusalem after being imprisoned). When his Jewish comrades came, he separated himself and went to sit with the Jews. So did Barnabas, by the way, as did all the other Jews. Only one man in the whole world understood the true nature of the church. Slowly he rose and looked at Peter – the pillar of the church, with Barnabas, his own mentor seated beside him. Then and there Paul publicly blasted them for their hypocrisy! He concluded his reprimand with the amazing verse we all know so well, "*I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live. Yet not I but Christ lives in me...*" Somehow Peter had the grace and humility to take his "public whipping," for by the time of the Jerusalem Council he really had learned his lesson!<sup>23</sup>

The simple lesson is this: The body was not meant to be independent, nor was it meant to be (stay) homogeneous.<sup>24</sup> It must grieve our Lord when He looks out across the mission fields of the world and sees our foreign missionaries every Sunday in their own white Anglo churches – with all the indigenous people worshipping the Lord in their separate churches. More serious still is our uncritical acceptance of missiological theory and practice in this regard. We need to get back to a clearer understanding of God's intention for the church and mission.

Think for a few moments about our world and how it is so divided ethnically, racially, socially. In his brilliant book, *The Clash of Civilizations*, Samuel Huntington describes a world that is becoming more and more fractured along cultural, sociological, and religious lines.<sup>25</sup> Surely the intent of our Saviour was that the power of the gospel should overcome

<sup>19</sup> A thoughtful analysis of Act 8 would indicate that God went to great lengths to keep the Jewish and Samaritan congregations together.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:13. "Jew nor Greek" speaks of ethnic distinction. "Bond or free" speaks of class or social distinction.

<sup>21</sup> What a thrill to visit the International church in Beijing where there are five simultaneous translations and people from many nations worshipping the Lord together.

<sup>22</sup> Note the multi-ethnic background and multi-socioeconomic classes of the leaders of this church

<sup>23</sup> Compare Peter's attitude in Antioch (Galatians 2:11ff) with the way he felt about Gentile believers at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:6ff).

<sup>24</sup> The ideal is INTER-dependence – a model which avoids the pitfalls of dependence, co-dependence or independence.

<sup>25</sup> Samuel P Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations; Remaking of the World Order* (Touchstone, 1997).

these differences. Surely the grand vision of people from every people, nation, tribe and tongue gathered around the throne of God and worshipping together is the ideal picture of “the way it ought to be.”

For Western mission agencies, such a vision must call us to ask whether our missiology and our ecclesiology match. In many cases they do not. For while we preach that the church is one body, we look at Western and non-Western missions and we say they need to be kept apart. Why is that? If one dares to ask the question, he will get a wide range of answers. Some will argue from the base of missiological correctness (questioned above). Others will come at it by raising questions of culture or administrative efficiency. Others will raise socioeconomic points. “They want our countries to pay so they can escape the poverty of their society. If they want to go – let them pay their own way.”<sup>26</sup>

My point here is not to downplay the problems that occur when various cultures work together in the context of mission.<sup>27</sup> But does it not sound disingenuous when a missionary will give his/her life to work with someone in Zambia or Bolivia, yet would never think of going together with that person to Nepal or India to tell people there about Jesus? Why not? What keeps us from letting “them” come into “our” club? Or if they do, we are like the Jews of old who would only allow proselytes into their camp if they became circumcised. We demand any “outsider” to become like us in order to get into our camp!

My conviction is that this separation between Western and non-Western missions is hurting more than helping the cause of world missions. I think that if we could overcome this false dichotomy we would have a more powerful voice in our world. We would counter the argument that Christianity is simply a Western religion. We would demonstrate that Christ’s love is able to overcome our differences. In a world torn by tribalism and ethnic hatred, we would show in microcosm what the church of Jesus Christ should become.

But even beyond that, I go back to the Korean pastor who asked me, a Western missionary, why they would send missionaries with my mission and I responded, “Maybe we need you.” I think we do need them. Western missionary agencies need non-Western missionaries working alongside of to remind us again what it means to sacrifice, to take huge steps of faith, to do what Samuel Escobar calls “missions from below” instead of “missions from above.”<sup>28</sup> We bring our supposed “strength” to the missionary table. They bring their “weakness.”<sup>29</sup> We sometimes act as if we can do missions without God or the Holy Spirit. After all, we have plans and plenty of money. They bring an empty hand – but a huge dependence upon a mighty God. In fact, they do missions the way it has been from the beginning – the way our forefathers did it. We sometimes forget that when Jesus looked into the eyes of eleven men on the day of ascension, they were humble fishermen and a tax collector, and those who would soon say, “Silver and gold have I none. In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.”

### ***Whole World Engaged***

We need the whole gospel. We need to activate the whole church. And we need to engage the whole world. This point may seem redundant to traditional Western missions. We look at the map and see that our organizations are spread out across 20, 30 or 40 nations of the world – and we say, “How could we be more widely deployed?” From one perspective, it seems as if missions have over-extended and even saturated the market. For seven years, I worked as the International Outreach Coordinator for SIM. I found very

---

<sup>26</sup> These comments are in no way to underestimate the huge economic barrier faced by emerging missions. They do have a very serious economic issue that is a topic of great importance that needs to be addressed further in this discussion.

<sup>27</sup> Anyone who has worked with a number of cultural backgrounds on the same field knows this is true. In our mission, we have one country where there are nine different countries represented among our missionaries.

<sup>28</sup> Samuel Escobar used these terms first in a paper delivered at a World Evangelical Alliance consultation at Iguassu 1999.

<sup>29</sup> At the same consultation, Dr. Yusufu Turaki of Nigeria called upon the delegates not to forget the African missionary movement. He said, “We bring something you need from us. We bring our weakness.” In Back to Jerusalem the Chinese accuse Western missions of doing mission like elephants and tigers – whereas they say, “we are like worms.”

few places in the world where one could honestly say that some sort of mission was not already present. So what is the point we are trying to make here?

First is the point that many traditional missions have never been able to move beyond the original challenge they encountered when they first started in a new country. They originally targeted a specific people group – or specific social strata of people – or a unique subculture. Now many years later, they are still working with that same group but are blinded to the changing world in which they work. They never see hordes of unreached people simply because they were not in the original target group.

Allow an illustration. A mission goes into a needy country. There they target a rural section of the country where they minister and plant a church. Other rural communities respond and before long a string of rural churches develops. Rural Christians become upwardly mobile and soon they and their children move to the cities. Some seek higher education. The church spreads to the city. A group of city churches bands together to form a Christian Fellowship of Churches. They appoint their president, vice president and secretary and the mission community all shout, "Hallelujah, our work in this country is done!"

However, suppose for instance, that this was Germany or Cote d'Ivoire. As I write, I go onto the Internet and type in the words, "Growth of Islam in Germany." Here is the first paragraph that comes up on my computer screen:

*Islam has become the second largest religion after Christianity in Germany with its estimated 2.8 - 2.9 million members of foreign origin. Today there are Muslims mainly from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Turkish Republics, Tunisia and Turkey living in Germany.*

Type in the same for Cote d'Ivoire and several entries down read:

*Cote d'Ivoire (officially 38% Muslim and 31% Christian) has been a haven of prosperity in West Africa and a safe home base for many mission organizations. Since 19 September 2003, the political aim of the rebels has been to change the constitution so that all the immigrant workers in Ivory Coast can be naturalized (around 50% of the total population and virtually all Muslim). This will give Cote d'Ivoire a clear Muslim majority that will then democratically elect a Muslim government and Muslim president (Dr. Outtara).*

A globalized world means that populations are more fluid than ever before. People in hard-to-reach places are coming right into our back yards. The local churches of our nations are not doing a very good job at reaching them. Missions, which specialize in cross-cultural evangelism, are NOT paying much attention to the rapidly shifting demographics of our Western nations.

I was recently in New Zealand. The Western evangelical church in New Zealand is taking a nosedive.<sup>30</sup> So are traditional Western mission boards. My own group has lost 35% of our career missionaries in the last five years. We tried to find out what was happening in the churches and we learned that all of the Protestant churches were in the same pattern. The Roman Catholic Church, we were surprised to learn, is the only church denomination that is NOT in decline. The reason is because they cater to the thousands of immigrant Islanders and other ethnic minorities who flock to Auckland and other mainland cities. Surely this is a ripe harvest field for some forward-looking Evangelical mission.

The rise of the ethnic minorities in Western cities is staggering. Go to the cities of Toronto or Vancouver, Canada. Look at Sydney, Auckland, London – or even cities like Singapore, Hong Kong, or Delhi. There we find vast numbers of people of different race, colour and/or language. Traditional missions generally block these people out of their mission vision. But why? Are they not in our mandated areas?

Given the reversals in Christianity in the West and the advances in the non-West, one would think that the flow of missionaries from the West to the Rest would start to reverse itself. We send missionaries from USA to Nigeria, from UK to Kenya, from Australia

---

<sup>30</sup> There are many reasons for this but the main one is that New Zealanders tend to be early adapters and the postmodern philosophy has taken a devastating toll on both church and mission in NZ society.

to Zambia, from Germany to Chile. Yet as the spiritual demographics of our world change, traditional missions continue to think only in terms of sending missionaries from the West to the Rest continues.

Has anyone ever asked the question as to why the traffic in missions is all “one-way traffic”? Why do we send missionaries from Canada to Nigeria but would never think of sending a Nigerian to Canada? We are very happy to send an Islander from New Zealand to Bolivia but would we ever send a Bolivian to New Zealand?<sup>31</sup> Frankly, traditional missions living in a globalized world are still operating in pre-global mindset. In order to pick up on the opportunities that God is laying at our doorsteps, we ought to do some really hard thinking about what we are as mission agencies.

One more very powerful reason for activating the whole missions movement is because the “Western face” is no longer as welcome as it once was. Our non-Western colleagues come free from the “arrogance and triumphalism” associated with Western Christianity.<sup>32</sup> Particularly working in hostile Islamic States, the Western presence brings too much baggage. Perhaps that is why recently the Pakistan Christian Fellowship churches sent an urgent request to Ethiopia to send some of their missionaries back to Pakistan saying, “They fit better here.”

### ***Redefining Mission Agencies***

Ponder the question, “What is a mission agency?” Our quick response would be that we are a religious order whose purpose is to plant, strengthen and partner with churches around the world. We agree that is what we do. Another way to ask the same question is, “What is the function of a mission organization? What are its structures set up to do?” The answer is that a good mission is skilled at enabling missionaries from one country or culture to go and minister in another part of the world where the gospel is needed. By the same token, we are a channel through which the needs of the world are identified and shared with those who have the ability to respond. So, functionally, we create a mission infrastructure that enables us to **move people, resources and information** from one part of the world to another. Can we agree on this functional definition? If so, then we are ready to embrace a new analogy and that can help us think about how we can do all of this more effectively..

### ***Mission as a Highway for the Nations***

Missions started as a trickle and moved in the last century to a mighty river of missionaries flowing from one part of the world to the other. However, now the “river” is drying up. The gradation that once caused the missionary river to flow from the West to the Rest has shifted. A river flows “one way,” downstream. Now we need a new paradigm that more accurately describes our reality. We need to change the concept of rivers into that of highways that allow for “two way” traffic.<sup>33</sup> If we do, then we will suddenly see the traffic pick up again for there will always be people called of God from every nation who need to get involved in missions. If we could just change a few things in the system, we would find that traffic that flows from USA to Spain could just as easily flow from Spain to USA – or from Ecuador to Spain.

What keeps this from happening? It is lack of access! In our mission there is a sharp distinction between Sending and Receiving offices. One will hear the argument, “We are not set up for that.” That may be true, but what would really need to change? Are our structures so inviolate? What would it really take for our “Field Offices” to take on “Sending” roles and visa versa? The cost in terms of finance and personnel would be minimal compared to the enormous benefit in Kingdom terms.

What would it take for our “Field offices” to take on “Sending” roles and vice versa?
---

---

<sup>31</sup> One of our Islander couples recently told me, “Our Islanders here in NZ think just like the Bolivian Christians.”

<sup>32</sup> See a most provocative article by Jehu Hanciles, “Mission and Migration: Some Implications for the Twenty-first Century Church” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 27:4 (2003), 146-153.

<sup>33</sup> This is very much in the spirit of COMIBAM that declared that Latin America is no longer just a mission receiving continent – but a mission sending one as well.

What would it really take? Transfer of funds from one office to another could work just about the same. It is just as easy to make a deposit in a bank as to draw a check. Visa and immigration services would simply drop off passports at the Embassy rather than at the Immigration office. It would be possible to set up local Sending Councils in each country to recruit and screen applicants. Orientation could be held once a year and some of our best staff from other countries could come over to help orientate a group that is ready to go to the field. There could even be an international candidate course held in some part of the world that would be more accessible to everyone.

### ***The “Highway” Analogy***

This analogy of a mission agency as being a highway is rather intriguing. Recently I travelled from downtown Hong Kong to the new international airport. It took about 20 minutes to traverse one of the most densely populated cities in the world, cross over a bay on a suspension bridge, and then pass freely through a massive mountain tunnel and into the new Hong Kong Airport.

Have you ever thought about how highways are created? A highway usually starts as a tiny footpath to get from one village to another. Over the years, the footpath becomes a trail for the oxcart and eventually for the tractor and truck. The once tiny path becomes more travelled. Then one day, some dreamer gets the idea of building a super highway. For years nobody takes action because the cost and labour are enormous. At some point the villages get together and say, “We really need a highway that would enable us all to connect with one another.” They see the potential of efficiency and connectivity. They understand that a highway allows for all kinds of new innovation, new business, and new opportunity.

Highways are built to transport people and goods with the least amount of obstacles. They go up over cities, down under water via tunnels, across bridges, through mountains – over or through or under every barrier. It takes enormous coordination, effort and expense to build a highway. To prepare a highway, deserts and wildernesses must be crossed. Every valley must be filled up. Every mountain must be brought low. Rough places have to be made smooth and even mountain ranges have to be turned into broad valleys. Usually when great highways are completed, there is a day on which the king opens the highway. His glory is revealed and “all flesh” sees it. After the king goes down the highway, anyone can follow. Long after the highway is built, the voice that cried out, “Prepare a highway!” is forgotten. Yet the highway moves thousands of people for years to come. What a challenge to prepare a highway... a highway for all nations!

Some people come onto highways in motor homes or fancy Cadillacs. Formerly, most cars on the missions highway were Jeeps, Chevys and Fords. Today it is just as likely that you will pass a Hyundai, Volvo, BMW, Ambassador, Fiat, or those new little VW Beetles made in Brazil. Highways are wonderful things. You will see all those fine cars – even a Rolls-Royce or a Mercedes speeding along, but you might also see someone cruising along on their Italian motor scooter, or some brave guy peddling his Chinese bicycle...each according to their ability but all going down the same highway.

### ***Progression Of An Idea Already There***

In my own mission (SIM) I can see that the concept of “missions as a highway” has been developing for a long time. In fact, as I talk about this concept, I find this dream latent in the spirits of many around the world. I believe it is a concept whose time has come. As I look at what God has been doing in our mission over the past ten to fifteen years, I can see the way He has led us to become the kind of mission that is poised to take on this new challenge.

...to become the kind of mission poised to take on a new challenge.

1. Part of our purpose statement challenges us to “partner with churches around the world to fulfil the Great Commission.”
2. One of our SIM Core Values is to be “joyfully international.” We say, “We are intentionally international because we believe this best expresses the nature of the body of Christ in the world. We believe we will be more effective as we incorporate the richness of cultural diversity in our membership.”

3. God is wonderfully at work in our so-called “mission field” countries. These churches are catching the vision for world missions.
4. Our agency is in great need of many more missionaries (about 800). We are NOT finding these people in our traditional fishing grounds. Often missionaries from less-developed countries adapt better and identify better with third-world cultures.
5. We are making our support system much more flexible, making it easier for people from less developed countries to send missionaries.
6. There are hints along the line that our agency is drawing more and more non-Westerners. We have been drawing more and more Asians over the past fifteen years. Our fastest growing office is Korea. We now have Guatemalans in India, Peruvians in China. Our director for Sudan is from North India. Our Sending Director in Australia is ethnic Chinese, raised in Indonesia, and his sending church is Nairobi Chapel in Kenya, East Africa.
7. Several of our Sending Offices are developing partnerships with countries that have no Sending Office. Canada is working with Brazil. USA is working with Guatemala and recently set up a branch office in Ecuador so that Ecuadorian applicants to SIM can be handled there and NOT need to come to the USA to join SIM. The number of missionaries applying from countries where there is no SIM Sending Office (such as Nigeria, Ecuador or Peru) is growing rapidly.
8. Through merger and growth, we have already set up an infrastructure that connects over 46 countries of the world. People from many nations of the world could use this same highway to serve the Lord in various parts of the world.

When you put all this together, it becomes clear that missions like ours are well

If we rise to the challenge, we could become a blessing to the nations... by allowing them to use our infrastructures to take the gospel to others.

positioned and really do have the capacity to think about becoming a highway for all nations. The network, experience and infrastructure that we have developed over the years are now being challenged to go to the next level. The critical question is whether we are ready to add this new challenge to our mission agenda. If we rise to the challenge, we

could well be a blessing to the nations – not only in taking the gospel to them – but in allowing them to use our infrastructure to take the gospel to others. If we balk at the obstacles, shrink at the challenges, or get caught in the paralysis of analysis, this moment could pass us by. Certainly as Mordecai told Esther, “God will raise up others to do it, but perhaps God has raised us up for such a time as this.”

### **Action Points**

In practical terms, what would it mean for a traditional mission to become a Highway for all Nations – to move missionaries “from anywhere to anywhere” or at least to move them from where we have worked to other parts of the world where our mission presently works?

1. First, we need to make a conscious decision that we will become intentionally international – not just allowing people from other nations to join us – but purposefully seeking ways to make our infrastructures more accommodating and less restrictive for them to use.
2. Second, to change our policies and systems that tend to exclude others from becoming a part of us. These need to be changed at our top International Council and Board levels. We need to make sure that our promotional literature states clearly, “All candidates are considered without regard to race or nationality.”

We need to send a clear message that people from all nations are welcome to travel on the new Missions Highway.

3. What we need most is an ethos change that stops us from thinking of “us” and “them,” and helps us to see one another as part and parcel of the same Kingdom of God.

4. We need to remove obstacles and create systems that ease the movement of missionaries from one part of the world to another. This would include changes

in our financial systems, personnel system, language requirements, orientation process, Manual translation, etc.

5. We need to start seeing each of our mission offices around the world as having both a “sending” as well as “receiving” function. Every country in the world should potentially have “on ramps” as well as “off ramps.” Only then will we have two-way traffic on our highway. In order to do that we may have to intentionally erase the arbitrary distinction between Sending and Field Offices and simply refer to them as our “Office in X country.”
6. We need to clearly define the rules of the road so that they are well understood by all those who choose to travel this way. This “retooling of mission” would include educating existing members of our agency that “new two-way traffic” will soon be on the road.
6. Finally, we would need to make sure that the KING OF GLORY walks first upon our highway, for unless the Glory of the Lord is revealed, we cannot expect the nations of the earth to benefit.

In order to accomplish all these larger tasks, many minor changes are needed. We can do them if we focus on the larger goal ahead. Our plea, however, would be that we step out in faith and not be paralyzed by trying to analyze every aspect of the whole thing before we do anything. Many of the obstacles to building this highway will not be apparent until we get to them. The paralysis of analysis destroys initiative and growth. Like a person who sets out into the night on a long journey, we can only see a short distance ahead of us. Let us go as far as we can see and believe that the lights will reveal new ways to move ahead when we get there.

### **Concluding thoughts**

The goal of missions should not be limited to evangelism or church planting. The ultimate goal is not an independent church, but a church enabled to become a full participant in propagating the Gospel to the nations of the world. Once we embrace this larger vision, we will have made a radical shift in our missiological thinking. If we do, we will find new avenues of engagement in mission will open before us.

The bottom line is whether or not we can catch a vision of what God intended His church and mission agencies to look like at the end of the age. God separated the races at Babel so that evil would be restrained from spreading too rapidly. From the many nations, God chose one (Israel) to reveal His purposes and bring forth a Saviour. Then on the Day of Pentecost, something wonderful happened. The Holy Spirit descended. Certainly there were the tongues of fire, the mighty rushing wind and the experience of tongues. What really happened that day is later pinpointed by Paul when he writes to the Corinthians and tells them, “*By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... whether Jew or Greek, bond or free....*” What Paul is telling us is that the church is something totally unique in God’s economy. Here ***national barriers are to be shattered***... for there is neither Jew nor Greek, but also ***economic barriers are to be shattered***... for there is neither bond (slave) nor free man.

If we say that the cultural, stylistic, organizational, linguistic, operational and practical barriers are too great, then we may not have understood what God did when He placed us into the church. To our peril we neglect the ministry of the Holy Spirit within us. We limit the power of God to demonstrate what the church should be. If we as foreign missionaries cannot allow the Holy Spirit to overcome our ethnic as well as class distinctions, then who can? I believe it can be done. It should be done, and by God’s grace it will be

done – if not by us, by others who are in tune with what the Spirit is saying to the churches of our day. The tide of mission history is pressing hard against us. We need to be like the sons of Issachar “*who understood the times and had knowledge of what Israel ought to do.*”<sup>34</sup> Let those of us who understand our times and know what to do – do it by faith and for the glory of God’s Kingdom.

---

<sup>34</sup> II Chron. 12:32. The new incoming Director of SIM International, Malcolm McGregor has taken this verse and adopted the motto: “Seize the Day.” He calls for not only understanding the times – but taking action accordingly. May it be so.

Question: If instead of an imaginary alien in a space ship -- what if the Lord Jesus Himself comes back to Planet Earth in 2020? What will He find going on in the world of missions by that time?

*Dr. Howard Brant  
21 May 2004  
SIM International  
SimHiway@aol.com*

### **Response from Bertil Ekström to Howard Brant's article**

(1) Mission agencies seem to have evolved along two separate lines – those traditional agencies which rose up out of the Western world and those emerging missions which are now rising up in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Contrast and compare these two types of missions. How are they similar? -- how are they different?

[Response]. Yes, if we generalise, there is a difference between the Old Sending (OS) and the New Sending (NS), in terms of development. In many ways, though, the NS use the model seen in the OS and make great efforts to emulate them. However, it is also true that there are distinctives. The OS, as Howard Brant remarks, seem to have less flexibility in responding to new challenges, such as less evangelised groups and areas. The missionaries from the OS tend also to be much more concerned about the financial and social security, in comparison with the missionaries from the NS. I agree with Brant that the NS, in many ways, are doing missions as the OS did decades (or even centuries) ago with a courage and a focusing in "winning souls" that we don't see so much of among the OS anymore. At the same time the OS have the advantage of experience and endurance. We, from the South, need to learn with the perseverance of working for decades in difficult regions without seeing so much of results, in many cases.

(2) Certainly some emerging missions will want to keep their geographic or denominational distinctives -- and that is only right. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of bringing these two separate kinds of mission together to form a united front in world missions?

[Response]. It would have, of course, an important synergic effect on world missions. Even if it is not just a question of rich and poor, I believe that the two kinds of mission movements could complement each other and make the impact much greater.

(3). What could be the concerns, fears, or dangers to the emerging missions if they were to consider such coming together and what would be some of the fears that traditional missions would have if they changed to work alongside many missionaries from the emerging churches? Are these concerns of a spiritual nature, and are they human fears that come from our fallen nature?

[Response]. This is a complex question because it deals with prejudices and with both spiritual and human factors. Representing the NS, I would say that one of the big problems is that the proposed "Highway" is designed, built and controlled by the OS. Even in the text written by Brant (addressed to the OS in North America, Australia and New Zealand and maybe to Europe), I read a plea for "letting the NS use the Highway". I think the problem for the OS is that the NS are building their own Highway without tolls and speed limitations. Of course, there is fear from both sides. For the OS it could be of not being relevant anymore. For the NS that they will not be accepted by the traditional missions and will not be able to meet the requirements of the minimum good standards for sending and supporting missionaries.

Another aspect that should be mentioned, due to the article, is that there is already a strong mission movement from the South - it is not something that will happen in some near future. According to Patrick Johnstone, at least 50% of the cross cultural missionaries come today from the NS. There are many Africans in Europe, Latins in Europe, Asia and North America, Asians in Africa and North America, apart from working in their own continents.

There is a huge potential in an honest and deep collaboration between the NS and the OS and we should not ignore the fact that our common enemy tries all he can to destroy any effort of working together.

(4). What deep philosophical, ideological and even psychological issues come into play in this discussion? The author has identified some mega trends, old prejudices and faulty church planting theories that may have contributed to a sense of separation. Can these "ghosts" be identified, named, exposed, dealt with, and overcome?

[Response] I think I have mentioned some in the earlier answers. Unless there is a real commitment to deal with the "ghosts" from both sides, the (spiritual) building will continue haunted. There is a need for humility and readiness to listening from both sides. We do not always speak the same language (sometimes even in a literal sense) and we need to take more time in an open and sincere dialogue. We also need to overcome the difficult phases of partnership that require sacrifices from both sides. We still lack really good models for partnership between OS and NS.

(5). The author makes the assumption that if it were possible to have a fully integrated mission with people from all parts of the world working together—that mission would have a more genuine and powerful testimony in the world. It would be better for the Kingdom—and it would be better for the gospel. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

[Response] Yes, I agree. The people of God from different parts of the world united for the same goal advancing the Kingdom are a strong testimony to a world characterised by conflicts, competition and carelessness for the weak. In the places where it has been possible to work together the results show the impact of it and the emergence of a Church that does not carry the DNA of division that so strongly affects us in the sending countries. However, the issue is not an easy one and we tend to idealise cooperation on the mission field when we have so many barriers to cooperate with our neighbour church.

*Bertil Ekström*  
*Appointed Executive Secretary*  
*World Evangelical Alliance Missions Commission*  
*Caixa Postal 7017*  
*13076-970 Campinas SP Brazil*  
[bekstrom@worldevangelical.org](mailto:bekstrom@worldevangelical.org)

## **(B) The Perspective of the Two Thirds World Churches for World Missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

*By Makito Yoshimoto*

### **1. Introduction**

In Pattaya, Thailand, we, representatives of the evangelical churches from all over the world have gathered at the Forum hosted by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in order to share visions on world missions. This is a significant event in the history of Christian mission. Firstly, we are looking at the future direction of world mission. Secondly, it is being held when the Two Thirds World churches have been emerging as the major bearers of world mission enterprise. Thirdly, it is held at the time of change not only in Christian missions, but also in the world with its tremendous confusion, despair, conflicts, hatred, violence, discrimination, exploitation and so on. As a partaker of Issue Group 15, the Two Thirds World Church, I am very eager to hear about what visions and missions the people of those regions have been given by God. Also I, as a representative of a Japanese church, would like to contribute a humble voice to the discussion on world missions.

### **2. Definition: the Two Thirds World Churches**

When we try to clarify the perspective of mission of the Two Thirds World churches, we must begin by defining the term "Two Thirds World churches". At first, the term "Third-World" was used to designate those regions which were compared and contrasted with the first western capitalist world and the second western communist world. Lawrence E. Keyes understands it in the following way:

The definition of the Third World which I choose to use, therefore, is a social-psychological explanation. It is the mental identification with some grouping or country other than that of the two great Western powers. It includes not only the majority of African, Asian and Latin American peoples, but also the Cambodians in Canada, the Hispanic Americans in the United States and the Africans in Europe. The Third World consists of these peoples that possess a greater affinity with their own people than with either the capitalist or communist countries. They cultivate their own national independence and when abroad, prioritize the maintenance of personal relationship "back home."<sup>35</sup>

Later "third" began to be considered to have negative connotation such as inferior, underdeveloped, third-rate people. According to the *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* the term is explained as follows:

... In practice its use is mainly associated with Western discussion of non-Western theologies, and the increase in evangelical missionaries from the continents of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. "Two Thirds World" has been in greater use since 1982, but it is not universally preferred. While the Ecumenical Association of Third-World Theologians (EATWOT) is a representative group that continues to own "Third World" as a self-designation, others are hesitant about either term. Both relate to common experiences of Colonialism, poverty, and Christianity as a minority religion, usually in a multireligious context. ...<sup>36</sup>

Larry E. Keyes and Larry D. Pate emphasize a geographical aspect of the term.

Because all three of these labels (that is: Third-World; non-Western; emerging missions) have an aspect of value in their use, they will be used interchangeably in this paper. However, the one

---

<sup>35</sup> Lawrence E. Keyes, *The Last Age of Missions* (Pasadena, William Carey Library, 1983), 10

<sup>36</sup> John Roxborough, "Two-Thirds Worlds" in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000), 975-976

term that currently seems to best fit this new phase in world missions is “Two Thirds World.” It focuses our thinking not on economics, nor upon culture or history, but on geography. It highlights the fact that this new missionary movement is taking place in that portion of the world where at least Two Thirds of the world’s nations and peoples are located. It does not imply that the missionary activities of churches in the other third of the world are unimportant. The missionary movements in both parts of the world are needed and critical with regard to the task of completing the great commission. Yet, because of the size and significance of the Two Thirds World missions movement, this term does seem to fit best.<sup>37</sup>

Keyes and Pate refer to “the Three-Fourths World missions” in the case of adding Central and Eastern Europe.

Today we speak of Two Thirds World missions to denote the missionary movements in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania. They represent Two Thirds of the world’s land mass and more than Two Thirds of the world’s people. In the future, we may need to refer to the non-Western missions movement not as the Two Thirds World missions movement, but as the Three-Fourths World missions movement. If we add Central and Eastern Europe to Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania, we are considering approximately three-fourths of the land masses of the earth and three-fourths of the world’s population.<sup>38</sup>

From these remarks we can confirm that the term “Two Thirds” can only be determined through the contrast with the Western world, the One-Third world. In this study I limit the scope in that sense. From the above mentioned starting point, we can describe further common features or issues and different aspects which the Two Thirds World churches have.

Common issues which the Two Thirds World churches have are exploited experiences by the colonial Western nations. From this common historic situation they have still all kinds of disadvantageous conditions in the global economic and political structure which is monopolized by the One-Third Western hegemony. Under these burdens, the Two Thirds World churches are struggling to realize their identity and to become free and independent.

On the other hand, there are differences among these districts. Differences are caused by the various situations in the blocks in the Two Thirds World churches. Cultural differences among African, Latin American, Asian churches are not insignificant. The level of economic, industrial, educational development is not the same among blocks or countries. As for the present paper I will not go into details of these similarities and differences.

### **3. Definition of Mission**

In the second place, discussing on missions of the Two Thirds World churches, we need to define mission. Definition of mission is not simple. Extremely speaking, there are so many definitions of mission as the number of missiologists and theologians. David J. Bosch studies the shift of paradigms of the theology of mission. He analyzes a tremendous number of paradigms, philosophies, ideas and methods of missions. He humbly says:

We may, therefore, never arrogate it to ourselves to delineate mission too sharply and too self-confidently. Ultimately, mission remains indefinable; it should never be incarcerated in the narrow

---

<sup>37</sup> Larry E. Keyes and Larry D. Pate, “Two-Thirds Missions: The Next 100 Years” in Missiology, 21:2,(April 1993)189

<sup>38</sup> above, 201

confines of our own predilections. The most we can hope for is to formulate some *approximations* of what mission is all about.<sup>39</sup>

The reason why mission is indefinable is that mission is ultimately the work of the indefinite Triune God. My basic conviction is that missions of the Christian Church are the *missio Dei*. At the end of the section dealing with the eschatological meaning of mission Bosch writes as follows:

But then we must define our mission—with due humility—as participation in the *Missio Dei*. Witnessing to the gospel of present salvation and future hope we then identify with the awesome birthpangs of God's new creation.<sup>40</sup>

I understand the Christian mission as the creative and redemptive work of God. I define the Christian mission in the following way.

Mission is the self-sending creative and redemptive action of the triune God for the mankind and the world. Its ultimate goal is the completion of the Kingdom of God and salvation of the people of God. This mission is implemented by God's working through the agency of the Body of Christ, the Church, by proclaiming the gospel, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, realising salvation in people who accept the gospel by faith.

Some may criticise that this definition is too all-embracing a concept. I don't deny it. However, I think the Christian mission is infinite and an eternal phenomenon. I theologise and missiologise on concrete issues and themes of Christian missions by developing from this axiomatic concept.

#### **4. The Perspective of Missions of the Two Thirds World Churches for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

##### **(a). What is God doing in the Two Thirds World Church?**

The reason why this forum has set up the specific issue group concerning the Two Thirds World churches is based on the fact that God has been working phenomenally among churches in these regions. The number of non-Western Christians has surpassed that of the Western Christian after the turn of the century. Two Thirds World missionary agencies and missionaries are increasing greatly and rapidly. Two Thirds World church leaders, missiologists, theologians, mission agents have begun to take leadership in theology, missiology, missions and conferences. We cannot but recognize that God is working explicitly in the Two Thirds World churches and has given His special provision for these churches in the last age of world missions.

There are several reasons for the growth of the Two Thirds World churches.

Firstly, people of the Two Thirds World churches have great spiritual needs. The oppressed persecuted, exploited, discriminated, disadvantaged, powerless and poor people tend to look upon God for help. Without strong genuine spiritual needs there will never be a spiritual awakening.

Secondly, God's providence is bestowed upon the people of the Two Thirds World churches. The gospel was and is offered primarily for the poor in spirit. That is Jesus' word. The God of the Bible lowers the arrogant oppressing people and raises the humble pious poor people. I believe the God of the Bible is unchangeable as revealed in the Bible. I believe God loves, chooses and uses the people of the Two Thirds World churches. God is shifting the bearers of His mission from the Western church to the Two Thirds World churches. I say this not from prejudice or preference, but from the revealed nature of God.

Thirdly, the emerging missionary movements are the work of God, namely *Missio Dei*. *Missio Dei* is God's sovereign dispensation, but the Christians of the Two Thirds World churches believe in it more sincerely, expect God's intervention more strongly and commit themselves to follow more thoroughly. The Western Christians

---

<sup>39</sup> David J. Bosch, Transforming Mission : Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, American Society of *Missiology* Series, No.16.(Maryknoll, NY:Orbis, 1991)9

<sup>40</sup> Bosch, 510

are more rationalistic and trust too much in human reason and ability. They try to solve problems with human resources. Without faith in God's working, God would not work.

**(b) Possible hindrances**

Although Two Thirds World churches missions are developing, some risks could be thought.

Firstly, concerning cultural factors, syncretism could be the most cautious risk in the process of realising identity. The universal truth of the gospel should not be distorted into mixture of the Biblical truth and heathen religions. Theories and models of contextualisation need to be studied.

Secondly, from the aspect of ecclesiological factors, problems could be insufficient training of leaders, lack of ecclesiological and theological resources and so on. For example, missiology and theology are developing in the Two Thirds World churches. Because of shortage of spiritual tradition, theological materials, sources, scholars and institutions, theology and missiology in the Two Thirds World churches, they seem never to catch up with the Western theology and missiology. Western missiologists and theologians seem to enjoy the prestige and advantage of the tradition of the Western church. If the theologians and missiologists aim at producing their works in the paradigm of the Western church, they would perpetually remain behind. If they reckon this situation as a wonderful opportunity to create their theology and missiology on the totally new frontier, then they could overcome this negative factor with all their disadvantages.

Thirdly, they face tremendous economical and political factors which are negative in their influence. They are suffering from political instability, exploitation through the world economic structure ruled by the developed nations, conflicts between religions and nations. The Church in the difficulties of the world bears sufferings together. She always faces Satan, spiritual enemies, and sins of the world and human nature.

Lastly, the Two Thirds World churches could fall into spiritual sins such as separatism, provincialism, pride, formalism, coldness and fallacy.

**5. The contribution of the Two Thirds World churches to world missions.**

What contributions can be expected for world missions from the Two Thirds World churches?

**(a). Recovery and advance of *Missio Dei*.**

Through the history of missions God has guided and promoted His salvific work through His churches. Yet the work done by human agents was not without faults. Separatism, syncretism, sacerdotal corruption, persecution, crusade, religious court, colonialism, liberalism, secularism, post-modernism and so on. The old Western church seems to have lost the restoring power. On the contrary, the younger churches from the Two Thirds World can have greater potentiality to recover the faith of early Christianity. It is expected from them to re-discover and advance the power and life of *Missio Dei*. It means the power of the gospel, the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of spontaneous witnessing of all believers. By life it means the life with genuine joy of salvation, the life filled with the Holy Spirit, the life devoted to live like Jesus Christ Himself, the life filled with peace and love for our neighbours.

**(b). Integration into *Missio Dei*.**

In the coming age God will promote world missions more and more through Two Thirds World churches. Yet this does not mean that Two Thirds World churches are privileged or specifically talented. They are just an integrating part of *Missio Dei*. Excellence of them is to discern *Missio Dei* and to confess humbly that human missions are only participation into and contribution to *Missio Dei*.

Concerning the relationship between missions by the One Third Western churches and missions by the Two Thirds World churches we must overcome the dichotomous frame and restore the *Missio Dei* centred hub structure. I think this can be of great help for both the Western churches and Two Thirds World churches. Two Thirds World churches can be emancipated from authority of the Western churches.

Western churches can also rethink and be renewed in the Western paradigm. I will describe this using a diagram.

**Figure 1**

**The Paternalistic Relationship**

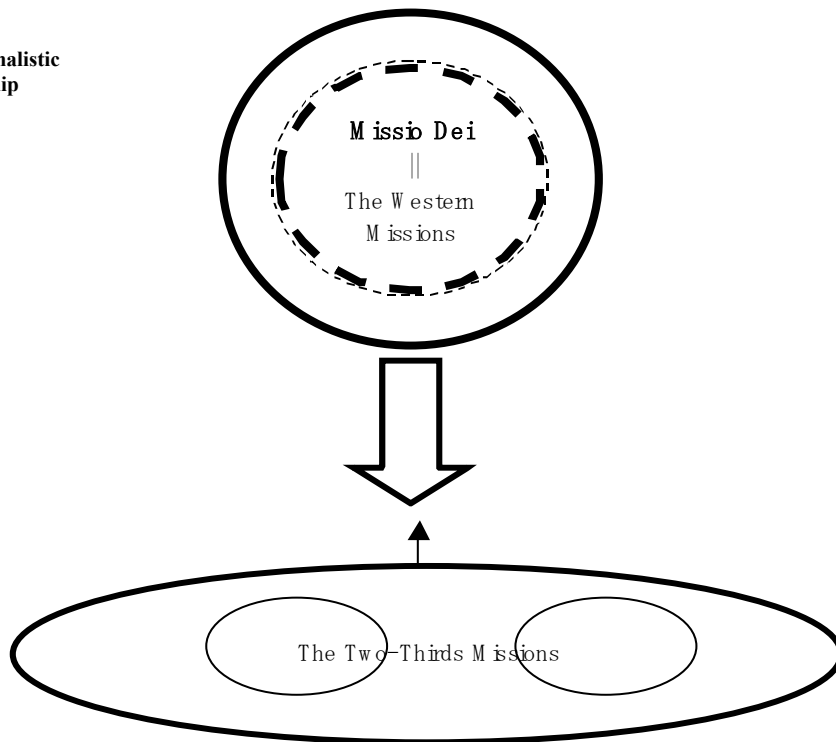
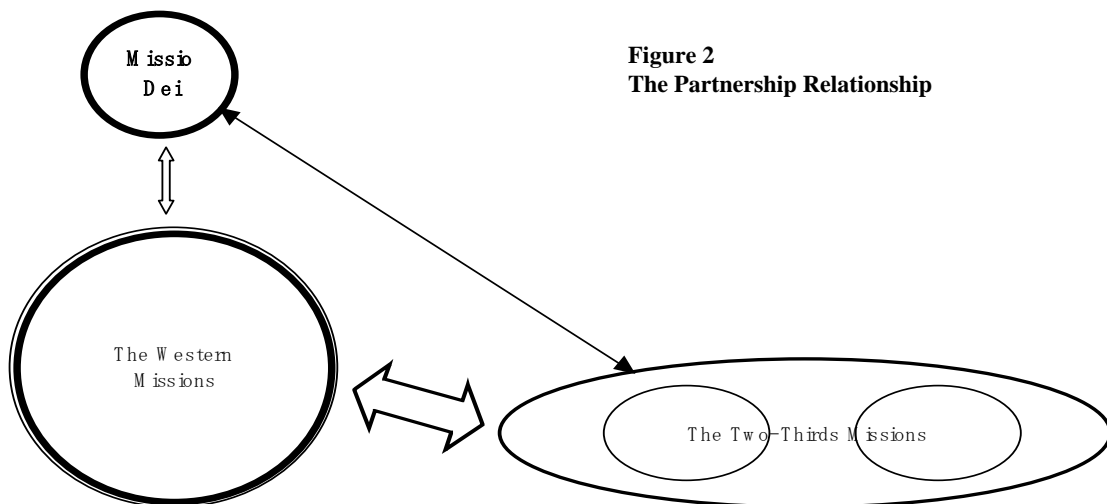


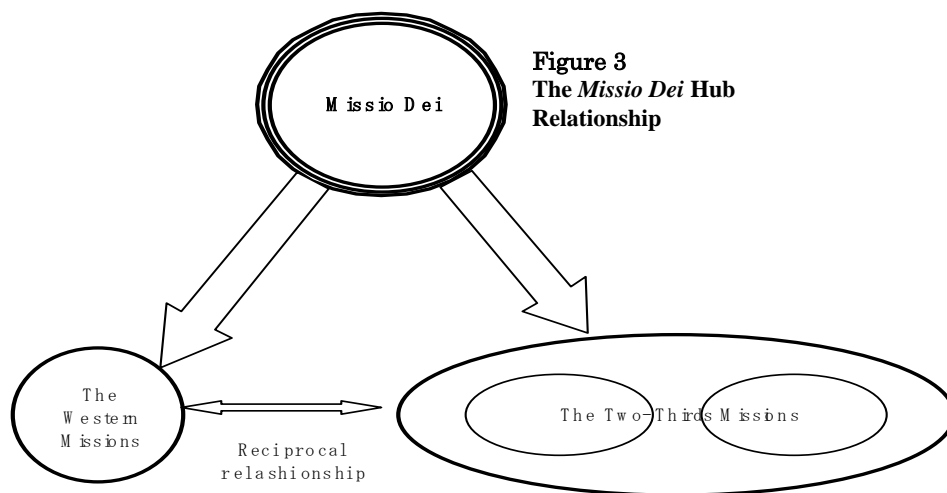
Figure 1 shows the paternalistic relationship which was typical in Western missions through the colonial ages. Western churches identified their missions almost with *Missio Dei*. They believed that Western Christianity is the only authentic expression of true Christianity. They proclaimed their Christianity, taught it to the younger churches, and required them to imitate it as much as possible. They could not tolerate any spontaneous expressions of Christianity by the non-Western churches.



**Figure 2**

**The Partnership Relationship**

Figure 2 shows the partnership relationship. From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century the relationship between the Western church and the non-Western churches was rethought and re-structured. The younger churches began to advocate the three self model of indigenised church. On the part of Western churches and missionary institutions they became aware of their western-centred mindset and abandoned one-way approach, western domination, cultural imperialism. Partnership became the catch word for the new relationship in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The concept partnership seems the word expressing equal and plausible relationship. Nevertheless, I observe some negative factors. In many cases it reveals the Western and non-Western dichotomous frame. Missiologists of both sides start with this framework and remain in that relationship and often cannot solve problems clearly. Secondly, Western missionary institutions mean by partnership that they reckon their younger churches as co-workers of their Western missions. In this case Western missions stand still in a leading position and understand themselves as the major canal of world missions.



**Figure 3**  
The *Missio Dei* Hub  
Relationship

Figure 3 shows the structure of world missions in which *Missio Dei* stands in the hub-position of all missionary activities. In this case each mission tries to discern *Missio Dei* in its context. It obeys the guidance of *Missio Dei* and to devotes itself to participate in *Missio Dei* and to promote its missions and to try to integrate its missions into world missions in terms of *Missio Dei*. Relationship between local missions, for example, the relationship between Western missions and Two Thirds World missions, is reciprocal, namely fully equal and mutually complementary. Not a few Christians may question whether this structure might disintegrate world missions, or deteriorate the existing missionary structures, or whether Two Thirds World churches missions could develop into the sound form of Christianity without the help of Western churches. Would churches be occupied with their own missions and forget that their missions are a part of *Missio Dei*, these dangers might be realistic. Yet if they discern *Missio Dei* in their missions, why could God possibly guide their

missions into the destructive direction? God works in all missions and uses them to build the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we trust in the work of God, we can hope for the progress of world missions. Western missions seem to be bewildered in the face of the emerging of Two Thirds World missions. However, if Western churches turn to *Missio Dei* and believe God works among their missions, then they can recover confidence and eagerness to promote world missions and integrate them into *Missio Dei*, not rule other missions. If Two Thirds World churches have faith in *Missio Dei*, they can believe that God will help them to establish their Christian identity and express the Christian faith in their contextually appropriate way and to contribute to world missions by using their special talents. These missions from all parts of the world would enrich and complete the Body of Christ.

## **6. Conclusion**

I have described the perspective of world missions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, specifically from the viewpoint of the Two Thirds World churches. I take part in IG15 as a representative from a Japanese church. Some may ask why I chose Two Thirds World missions as a workshop, because Japan is generally reckoned as one of the developed countries in today's world. As for economic and political situations in Japan, Japan can be seen as belonging to the One-Third Western league. Yet culturally, Japan is distinctively of non-western origin. I am very strongly conscious of non-western nature of Japanese culture, although superficially having been westernised. Japanese Christians have gradually noticed the Hellenistic factors of Christianity which Western missionaries have brought to us. We feel in it something foreign, inappropriate for our society and unsatisfactory for our deep spiritual needs. Japanese Christians are fully convinced of the truth of the gospel and love our Saviour. We are often bewildered with church institutions, denominationalism, dogmatics, western forms of worship, educational curricula and the way of training, Christian lifestyle, methods of evangelism, attitudes toward Japanese culture and society and especially the self-confident attitudes of Western missionaries toward indigenous Christians and secularism and unbelief in their home countries. In these circumstances, I cannot but ask what Christianity really is, how we believe in it, how we can express our faith in our society fully confidently and appropriately, how we should contribute ourselves to the international community of Christians. This is why I partook in this group. Other brothers and sisters from other parts of the Two Thirds World churches would have totally different problems and far difficult situations. For them my report may sound to be too theoretic, abstract, introspective, and unrealistic. For these shortages I am looking forward to learning directly from representatives from those regions. It will be a great privilege for me to attend this forum. I am fully confident it will enrich my future thoughts on missions.

(C) Case Study from Latin America  
by Ronald Vásquez

**1. What is God doing in the Two Thirds World Church?**

The Two Thirds World Church is growing in numbers as never before in history. I can say this as a person who lives in Latin America. All over our continent, the growth of the church and its development have been very impressive during the last century. Some countries like Chile, Guatemala and Brazil have experienced a growth of evangelicals from 20% to 25% of their population. According to the last surveys an 18% of Costa Rica's population is evangelical. The presence of the evangelical church is obvious when most cities have evangelical churches in all their neighbourhoods. This number of churches tends to keep growing in each country. It is important to say that this growth happens more among the pentecostal and neopentecostal groups than among the more conservative and historical churches.

The growth of the evangelical church is also evident in the infrastructure of huge temples, the existence of Christian radio stations, television channels which broadcast internationally and in the development of social programmes for unprovided groups like children, drug addicts, alcoholics and prostitutes. It is also shown by the presence of evangelical politicians in the executive, legislative and judicial powers. Some countries have evangelical newspapers as well.

In many countries, the gospel came first to the lower classes of society, but in recent years it has come to all the social strata; in a minor scale for the higher classes, but with a well-established presence. It is true that the evangelical church in the Two Thirds World has been seen with some suspicion by the Roman Catholic Church, especially in Latin America, because its impressive growth is creating a good impression in its surroundings and the media. Many people value its ethics and the principles that come from the Word of God, which are taught by Christian evangelicals.

The gospel was brought to Latin America by missionaries from the United States and Europe and with this also came the teaching of doctrine pertaining to each missionary or group. Eventually, this had its influence in some countries more than in others, in the sense that they should not mix with others due to doctrine differences. Evangelicals were not united and in some countries they still are not. If a person declares himself or herself to be baptist or pentecostal, he or she is immediately under doctrinal judgement. This is perhaps the inheritance from a North-Atlantic theology, as it has been known in Latin America in theological circles. However, as time goes by, in most Latin American countries the gospel is 100 years old, more or less. The church has been becoming more mature and though there are denominational groups that do not wish to mix with others, there is a general perception that evangelicals are united to develop certain programmes at national levels and this is a witness for a whole country. Obviously, there is always a respect code for doctrinal situations and there are many evangelical alliances and many interdenominational leaders who make efforts in order that unity becomes a reality in each country, which I think will contribute to the advance of the gospel in every country.

By the late 90s and early 2000s, one way in which we can see God's work in the Two Thirds World Church is through churches oriented to cell groups. There is a variety of strategies followed by pastors who are at the forefront in this ministry and many of these churches have experienced an amazing growth, going from 200 members to 1,500 in a short period of time. This kind of growth is very impressive, but it is a cause of concern about the way these new believers are developing, whether they are lacking from a nearby pastoral care, Christian fellowship and a true and deep spiritual growth. But this is a subject to be dealt with further on.

**2. How can these churches be more effective in evangelism and discipleship?**

Although numerical growth in these places has been amazing because of the evangelistic efforts that have been made, perhaps the discipleship side has not been suitable, nor the more effective. We are used to the expression that "many people come through the main door but leave through the back door". This means that we are good to evangelise, we are creative in evangelistic efforts addressed to the masses that are

reached, but we are not good for the next step. It is very easy to achieve someone's conversion in Latin America, but it is very hard for this person to join a church for fellowship. As an example, we use a case in a country in Latin America where a survey was made among the churches to find out whether they had evangelism and discipleship programmes. The results of such survey said that 90% of the churches had an evangelism programme, but only 29% had a discipleship programme. This shows the weakness of the church in discipleship.

In a radio programme, Dr. Juan Kessler, a missionary from the Netherlands who worked in Latin America for many years, said that he found it interesting that in a conference in Europe a book called "*Growth and Desertion in Costa Rica*" (El Crecimiento y la Deserción en Costa Rica) written by Dr. Jorge Gómez was mentioned. They said that this book described the principles and the symptoms of how a church can grow in a particular time of its history, but then, if a good discipleship programme is nonexistent, if this formative area is not looked after, this church stops its growth and diminishes. Dr. Kessler made this comment because people were saying in that European conference that this also happens in other parts of the world.

Some years ago, in an office from an evangelical alliance in Latin America, the cards from some people who were converted three years before in an evangelistic campaign with Luis Palau, a famous Latin American evangelist, remained filed in this office. The executive director of such organisation said that he could not understand how it could be possible. The question is, what happened to those people who made a decision for Christ?

The Two Thirds World Church has to work not only with the amount of converts, but to improve the quality of conversions, to develop a better follow up and discipleship plan, oriented to the development of a good Christian character. Otherwise, in a few years time we will have nominalistic church goers in many Two Thirds World Churches, especially in Latin America, as it has been the experience of the European church and nowadays of the church in the United States.

To answer the question about the effectiveness in the evangelistic task, I refer to Dr. Christian Schwarz's principle from his book "*Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches*". One of the qualitative principles or characteristics he mentions is *Evangelism according to need*. The first thing he clarifies is that we must understand clearly the evangelising task. The most important thing is to understand the difference between believers who received the gift from God to be evangelists and those who have other gifts. Sometimes, in some Christian circles it is expressed that every believer should be an evangelist, but the reality of this all is that the task and responsibility of every true Christian should be to be willing to serve with his or her specific gifts so that the evangelistic mission is fulfilled. Of course, that does not make every Christian an evangelist. An evangelist is someone who has received the spiritual gift from God.

What we do have to understand is that the task of every true believer is to serve non-believers, with whom he/she has good personal relationships, in order that these people listen the gospel and make contact with the church. What we are learning in Latin America is that the key for the growth of the church is that it addresses its evangelistic activities to the questions, worries and needs of non-believers. This requires creativity and the search of strategies according to the idiosyncrasy of each country ethnic group. Here is where this principle (evangelism according to needs) differs from other ways of taking the gospel to non-believers.

This is about evangelistic strategies. We also want to mention discipleship because we do not see a dichotomy between the one and the other. I just make this difference to answer the question.

The Two Thirds World Church, speaking more specifically of the Latin American Church, should give a high priority to biblical discipleship to be more effective and to make a positive impact in society. This can be shown through a relational evangelism and a multiplying discipleship. Sometimes it seems that the church has not understood, deepened or reflected enough on the verses in Matthew 28:19-20 and II Timothy 2:2 and the implications for the development of the ministry of the local church.

The priority, according to a careful analysis of those biblical verses, is to form the Christian character of disciples, to teach them to keep Jesus' mandates, to live according to

them and to practice them. This will be shown in Christian ethics from the Kingdom of God, which will help many people from the Two Thirds World get to know Jesus through the witness of Christians. Many of the discipleship programmes are oriented to teach only some doctrines, or to stabilise believers, to give them information and strategies for church growth, or to give them superficial Bible teachings, but they do not challenge them to change their lives and character. Every discipleship programme should be directed to transform people's behaviour adjusting them to the life and character of Christ, which will be reflected in their teachers.

One of the books that has helped me to rightly understand biblical discipleship and from my viewpoint one of the works that best describes the discipleship style developed by Jesus in the gospels, is Dr. Robert E. Coleman's "*The Master Plan of Evangelism*". It is interesting that despite its age, this is one of the books recommended by Bible schools, seminaries and Christian universities for their evangelism, discipleship and Christian education courses. Therefore, I think that the Two Thirds World Church should revise the principles written by Dr. Coleman in his book to have a more effective discipleship.

If a church is well disciplined, then it will be a healthy church in all the areas of its ministry relations. The church in Latin America will be a church that reaches the lost, that discipulates the new converts, that prepares believers in all the stages of their lives to be an impact in their communities and that sends missionaries to reach the unreached peoples with the gospel.

### **3. What is the role of the Two Third World Church in the world today?**

I want to summarise this answer in a few words.

1. It should share the strategies and keys for growth with fellow believers from other parts of the world. This experience can be motivating for believers from other parts of the world where the church is having times of trial and little fruit.
2. It should show signs of the Kingdom of God in its own culture, contextualise the gospel to their reality. This will be an evidence of Christian ethics, which identifies itself with the socially unprotected ones. It is also a witness of true Christianity in each country.
3. It should be a good steward of what God has given. It has to use its financial and human resources for the development of the missionary task. It has to understand that it received by grace and now it is time to give by grace, taking the word of God to the unreached peoples. Working closely with an organization that cooperates sending missionaries to different large groups of unreached peoples, it is amazing to see how God is touching young people and young couples to go to the missionary field. The problem is that sometimes these people do not have churches or leaders to support them with the burden God is putting in their hearts.

*Ronald Vásquez*  
Pastor in Costa Rica, Central America  
(Article originally written in Spanish)

## **(D) Case Study from Nigeria**

### **Discipleship – a means of harnessing the gains of the labour amongst the unreached**

*By Tokunbo Salami*

#### **1. Preamble**

This paper focuses on the subject of discipleship with particular reference to the Igala tribe of the Middle Belt of Nigeria. However the issues raised are very relevant to the two-thirds world in general. It is the writer's strong conviction that the present interest being generated in the unreached tribes of various nations can only be sustained and achieved when such a missions effort has a strong discipleship emphasis, thrust and strategy.

#### **2. Introduction**

It would be worthwhile at the very beginning of this paper to take an overview of the work of evangelism and reaching the lost in Igala Land, Nigeria's 9<sup>th</sup> largest tribe.

While CMS (Church Missionary Society) missionaries visited Igala land from the 1840's to the 1860's, they did not take up full residence in the land in any appreciable number nor did they succeed in gaining a foothold for the gospel. The full analysis of this particular gospel thrust and its failure is the subject matter for another paper. However, in 1919 missionaries of the Plymouth Brethren Movement from the U.S.A. finally took up residence in the land. The first convert was baptised in 1926, seven years later. Thereafter the gospel began to make very significant progress in the land. From such humble beginnings of the gospel in 1919 has arisen a formidable army of believers in their several thousands in several parts of Igala land. It is generally believed that Christianity in Igala land now accounts for at least between 40-50% of the total population of Igalas. Of this number, between 10-15% would be considered evangelical. This is something to specially be grateful to God for, especially when one remembers that all these are the gains of the gospel within an eighty-five year period.

#### **3. The Challenges Now Facing Us**

While thanking God for what He has done the truth remains that there is still much more land to be possessed. A recent survey of Itope District in Ofu Local Government Area revealed that out of 58 villages surveyed 28 were without any church. Again a survey of Ogbabede and Biraidu Districts of Dekina Local Government Area three years ago revealed 33 villages without a single church. Hence while Igala land cannot be said to be unreached there are still several unchurched communities. Such unchurched communities are populated by Muslims and traditional worshippers. Yet this is not the only matter of concern to us.

Of greater concern to us is the fact that of the world's major religions it is Islam and not Christianity that presently has the highest growth rate. While Christianity has an annual growth rate of 1.5%, Islam is growing at the rate of 2.2% a year.

Consider the implications of this fact. We now have at least 9 million Fulanis and 4.5 Kanuris in Nigeria, the gross majority of whom are Muslims. This means that 10 years from now we will be trying to reach 11 million Fulanis and 5.5 million Kanuris. So we see that unless God performs a miracle by exponentially increasing the conversion rate to Christianity we will not be able to finish the work of evangelisation in our communities talk less of the world at large. Remember also that not all Christians are available for Christian service.

Consider yet another discovery: one of the mainline evangelical denominations in Igala land has as many as 40 churches in one particular district but only 6 of these churches have pastors. The survey of Itope District referred to earlier on revealed that at least over a quarter of the churches in the district are without pastors. Such congregations are usually made up of lethargic Christians who are lacking to a large extent in spiritual knowledge and power. Such Christian converts are very liable to becoming syncretic where traditional religions are strong. Where Islam is the predominant religion of the community, members of churches without adequate pastoral care usually revert back to Islam in the face of much

pressure and hostilities all because they have not been sufficiently grounded in the faith. There is indeed no doubt as to the fact that a large number of adherents to Christianity in Igala land are nominal Christians.

We have thus identified 4 cogent needs or challenges which pose a serious threat to our fruitful labour amongst the unreached:

1. High population of unevangelised communities most of whom are adherents of Islam or traditional religions.
2. Rapid growth rate of Islam which is even higher than that of Christianity.
3. A scarcity of pastors or mature Christian labourers to man existing local congregations as a means of preserving gains of our present evangelistic thrusts in Igala land and even beyond.
4. High population of nominal Christians.

#### **4. The Way Out-Discipleship**

I wish to state here that the main means of arresting the above trends and meeting the challenges which these 4 major needs are posing to us, is discipleship.

#### **5. What is Discipleship?**

By discipleship we refer to the gradual process by which a believer consciously commits himself or herself to learning and following after the character and lifestyle of Jesus with the goal of increasingly becoming like Him. Let us note the following very important facts concerning discipleship:

1. The Great Commission as it was originally given was to make disciples. (See Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV); John 8:30-32).
2. Only disciples can stand the test of these times, withstand the pressures of life and the onslaughts of the gates of hell. (See Matthew 4:23-5:1; 7:24-27; 8:1).
3. Only by a focus on vigorous discipleship will we be able to mass-produce quality labourers for the remaining unevangelised and unreached places. (See Acts 6:1-8; 8:1-8 & 2 Timothy 2:1-2.)
4. If God helps the Church in Igala land, the two-thirds world (or indeed anywhere), to focus on biblical discipleship as defined above, the four serious threats to both local and world evangelization we highlighted earlier will have been properly addressed and overcome.

#### **6. Suggested Models of Discipleship**

We would need to introduce and focus on discipleship in the following ministry spheres:

- (a) Discipleship in the local churches (by discipleship classes, home cells etc.).
- (b) Discipleship through interdenominational fellowships.
- (c) Discipleship through evangelical outreach and other activity groups.
- (d) Discipleship in schools (both secondary and tertiary levels).

#### **7. Conclusion**

The potential of the Church in these parts to play a very key role in the last lap of world evangelisation is very high. It is my earnest prayer that we will not fail God nor our generation but that utilising the means of biblically sound discipleship, we shall preserve the gains of our present missions thrust. May the LORD Himself enable us! Amen.

### 3 Regional Reports

The church in the Majority World (Africa, Asia and Latin America) is growing very fast both in numbers and in vision. The centre of God's work in the world seems to be moving in those regions. Missions within and from these regions are thriving. People are being converted to Christ and missionaries are being sent from there to parts of the world that don't have Christian witness or that are post-Christian and in need of being re-evangelised.

1. Although the church in the whole world has to continue to focus on worldwide missions, it must be recognised that the former missionary sending countries are now in need of missionaries themselves. Missionaries from the Majority World can provide this need.
2. The different contexts and cultures within which the church is growing and the gospel is being preached, provide the worldwide church with the new perspectives, visions, tasks, methods and means for world evangelisation.
3. The church in the Majority World is providing the world with a new missionary force, focused on communicating the gospel in an indigenous way, with indigenous resources.

This reality/fact makes it necessary for the worldwide church to be cooperative in its efforts for the advancement of the gospel.

#### I. LATIN AMERICA

##### ***Reasons for Strength:***

1. Growth is seen as a movement of God with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
2. Growth is seen mostly within the charismatic movement, which responds to the needs of people.
3. In Latin America there is post-modern church talking to a post-modern world.
4. The church is responding to a natural world and to people's needs.
5. The church is relevant in a context of poverty, which is a reality in Latin America.
6. Growth happens in the Christian context of Latin America.
7. A reaping time of what was sowed a hundred years behind.
8. A growth in indigenous leadership in the church.
9. An advance in the contextualisation of the message by national leaders.
10. It is a time to participate.
11. An effective use of media.
12. A growing feeling of unity.
13. There is a growth of mega churches because of a growing focus in cell/small groups.

##### ***Hindrances and Weaknesses:***

1. Theological traditionalism.
2. The measure of success is established in numbers.
3. Disappointment due to bad experiences of Christians involved in politics.
4. Lack of commitment.
5. We do not like to think on things that hurt.
6. Leadership that has not been prepared to receive such a large growth.
7. Paternalism is still there, economically and theologically.
8. Activism is more attractive than reflection in some churches, which is a cultural problem.
9. A growing institutionalism among traditional churches.
10. Popular and traditional religions, animism and spiritism are growing even in some Christian churches.
11. There is a post-modern worldview with a relative perspective and no absolutes.
12. A growing materialism is captivating the Latin American mentality.
13. Lack of training among leadership.
14. Nominalism is growing among young people of third and fourth generations of Christians.
15. Evangelicalism is no more an alternative to people. Catholics used to be our focus, but the Catholic Church has given a new platform, similar to the evangelical, cell groups, retreats.
16. We need a transformation of the concept of discipleship as character formation, leadership must be taught to focus on the change of lifestyle.
17. We have to be consequent with what we teach.

##### ***Effectiveness***

1. The Christian message is relevant to the real needs of the people.
2. An emphasis on reaching our people in our context and own culture.
3. The way we train missionaries as disciples who have an impact on the lifestyle.
4. The church is the sending agency, the local church is sending.
5. There is an incarnational ministry, we are sending missionaries for a lifetime.
6. We do not send short term missionaries, but medium and mostly long term missionaries. They do not become part of something already done, they begin a new work.
7. We send missionaries with a renewed theology, although we are in the beginning processes.
8. We have a theology which is beginning to be taught.
9. Latin Americans preach everywhere they go.

### ***South/South Cooperation***

How to cooperate with Africa and Asia?

We need to have a shared missionary strength, share our theological and missiological reflection. There should be translation of materials in both worlds.

As Latin Americans we are in a privileged situation. We do not have persecution and we have to accept that we need each other.

## **II. AFRICA**

The church in Africa has grown. Three to seven million professing faith.

### ***Reasons of growth***

1. Powerful evangelism.
2. Strong prayer movement.
3. Spiritual warfare: demons.
4. Suffering and poverty.
5. Political Instability.

There has been church planting in Africa and as a result, many churches have been established, especially in Nigeria and West Africa. There is also missionary awareness. Many missionaries have been sent by agencies and individual churches.

Because of suffering and poverty, many people who are looking for hope have come to the Lord. There is a powerful preaching from African preachers.

### ***Hindrances***

1. Government legislation opposed to Christian preaching.
2. African traditional religions and culture.
3. Islamic Sharia is established in some countries.
4. Language is a barrier. The French speaking areas do not have many resources.
5. Lack of cooperative efforts.
6. Lifestyle.
7. Double standard living of Christians.
8. Biblical teaching emphasising prosperity gospel.
9. Limited finances.

### ***Strengths***

1. Prayerfulness in the church.
2. Dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit.
3. Powerful preaching.
4. Wonders and miracles.
5. Large church attendance.
6. The interest of young people in this ministry.
7. Generous giving.

### ***Weaknesses***

1. Pastors without adequate training.
2. Church leaders lacking administrative skills.
3. Lack of missionary vision.
4. Lack of Kingdom perspective.
5. 20,000 attending on Sundays, yet without a vision.
6. Lack of true godly leaders.
7. Lack of true success.

### ***Effectiveness***

1. Christian living is a strong witness to the gospel.
2. Contextualised living of Christians.
3. Spiritual warfare shows the relevance of Christianity.
4. Social activities linked with the gospel.

### ***Discipleship***

1. There should be more emphasis on it than before.
2. If we talk about power we should talk about purity too.
3. True decisions about lifestyle changes are needed.
4. Preaching needs to be clear and relevant.

### ***Help for world evangelisation***

1. More missionaries from Africa have been sent.
2. More indigenous mission organisations.
3. Sending churches are growing in number.
4. Provision of resources and materials for world missions.

### ***Western Christians***

1. There is a need of contextualised missionary missions.
2. Partnership with Western missions is needed.

### ***Outcomes***

1. Africa should send more missionaries to Europe.
2. Good Christian living of Africans in Europe.
3. A tentmaking strategy for missions need to be more seriously considered.

## **III. ASIA**

Asia is the largest continent in terms of population. The two largest countries, China and India, are in Asia. Some of the countries in Asia have the highest birth rate. Asia is a huge continent with many countries, many people groups, many languages and cultures that make it very difficult to report as one region. The largest religious blocks are in Asia and two of the largest religions, Hinduism and Buddhism were born there.

The church in Asia is in the midst of exciting times and the Holy Spirit is moving in some parts. The church is growing in the midst of times of struggle, but it is becoming more and more committed. Many Churches are burnt down, pastors and Christians are killed, but God is working in Asian nations. There are opportunities for cooperation between the church and missions in Asia and the rest of the world, especially Latin America and Africa.

### ***Strengths***

1. Asia is a young continent.
2. There are evidences of church growth in some parts of Asia.
3. Missions are growing in Asia, examples like India and Korea are relevant.
4. There is freedom in some parts of Asia to evangelise those who cannot be reached in other countries.
5. Other areas have more syncretistic religions with an open opportunity to evangelism.
6. The work of Indian Missions is very effective in India.
7. There are some ripening fields like northern India, where preaching has an immediate response.
8. India, Japan and Korea have been moving towards an economical ability to send missionaries.
9. There are a lot of opportunities in Middle East countries for non-intentional missionaries, or creative access ministries from Indian and Filipino Christians.

### ***Hindrances***

1. The largest religious blocks are in Asia (Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim).
2. The three largest Muslim communities are also in Asia (Indonesia, Pakistan and India).
3. There is a strong animistic influence in most Asian countries.
4. There is a growing cultural nationalism connected with religion in some of the Asian countries, which adds some pressure on Christians in those areas.
5. The church is struggling in countries like Japan and Thailand.
6. Hindu sections of Asia are very resistant to evangelism and people have very little interest in Christ.

### ***Effectiveness***

1. Connections among missions are growing in places like India.
2. A learning process about cooperation as a two way street is opening opportunities for connection.
3. The church in India is already sending missionaries to the rest of the country.
4. Opportunities are open to missions in some places. India has more than 1,500 languages and more than 4,700 people groups.
5. Korean missions have an effective and growing sending process.

### **IV. OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD**

#### **Strengths:**

1. Persecution and church growth.
2. Effectiveness of missionaries.
3. Indigenisation of the gospel.
4. Role of poverty in the growth of Christianity: poverty and health issues. Wonderful holistic programmes.
5. Increasing literacy.
6. The boldness of witness.
7. Numerical growth and enthusiasm.
8. Suffering, sacrifice and committed worship.
9. Effective leadership.
10. Bible translations in many languages.
11. A good use of the media.
12. The challenge of Islam, secularism and other cults.
13. Internet use, a tool for the youth.
14. HIV- AIDS. The church is the only body who has an answer.
15. Missionary sending from Nigeria, India and Korea is strong.
16. Azerbaijanians are sending missionaries to other countries.
17. Church networks in China continue to be strong. There are now 80+ million believers.
18. Missionary sending from Latin America is growing and one target is the re-evangelising of Spain.
19. Leaders from Latin America with leaders from USA are meeting in partnership to renew the church in USA.

#### **Hindrances**

1. Increasing growth of traditional religions.
2. Illiteracy.
3. Dependency on the West.
4. Christianity perceived as Western.
5. Corruption of church leadership.
6. The confusing message from the media as to how the gospel is preached.
7. Some expressions of Christian worship are still too western.
8. Need of servant hearted Christian leaders.
9. Ethnic loyalties.
10. Syncretism.
11. Lack of discernment by leaders.
12. Theology is non-indigenous.

#### **Discipleship**

1. Leadership, which are not necessarily trained outside, but church based.
2. Discipleship is done through mentoring.
3. Transformation, models of Christian families in all lifestyles.
4. Christianity should not be perceived as a Sunday only activity.

## Conclusions on the subject of Co-operation

To deal with this issue, the participants of this group were divided into three groups and each group shared their conclusions as follows:

### ***Obstacles for cooperation***

- The language barrier, linked to cultural differences.
- Lack of trust, maybe due to lack of finances, lack of knowledge and understanding.
- Different worldviews.
- War situation in Iraq as an example.
- Prejudices from both sides, differences in lifestyle, lack of money and how we use it.
- Legal obstacles.
- Different understanding of mission and our institutions in terms of missions.
- Lack of time to build relationships.
- Paternalism
- Fear to the unknown.
- Not taking consciousness of the multiform work of God from North to South.
- Insensitivity and lack of understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Fear of losing power.

### ***Suggestions and strategies for cooperation***

We have the same faith, baptism, Lord, vision to evangelise the world and resources. We need to establish some kind of dialogue and to gather once or twice a year. For example, theologians could get together to share and not think, for example, that African theologians should work only in Africa. They could share their work with Latin Americans and with the North. We can use this to educate people to get over the hindrances we already mentioned.

Reflecting on the barriers or obstacles, we give the following recommendations:

- We need to build relationships and invest time, sharing information, visiting each other. We need to be deliberate about building relations.
- We also should tighten the ties regardless of differences.
- It is important to keep good communication and that we take time to listen to each other as equal partners.
- It could be interesting to try to mix staff. That mission organisations appoint new staff from other regions. People with special interest and different ministries.
- Exchange of programmes between organisations.
- Overcome paternalism.
- Work with common goals, create prayer groups to develop unity.

### ***Practical ways to initiate North-South cooperative work***

We are called to preach the gospel and take each other's burdens. It takes the whole church to do the work. Some suggestions:

- Establish fellowship, associations in partnerships for periods of, say, 5 years.
- Forums like this one would be very useful, to discuss issues.
- Look for commonality of similarities in things that are apparently distinct.
- Exchange with people from one place to the other.

## Recommendations

First, the Church in the Majority World would like to recognise and thank God for all the work that has been done in the past, which has resulted in an outpouring of God's Spirit on our Majority World countries. Recognising that the Spirit of God is now moving all over the world, we call attention to the fact that the evangelical churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America have come of age and it is time that their status and potential be fully recognised by the worldwide Christian Community.

We have come to realise that Christians in the part of the world we come from, represent the majority of the world's Christians. We struggle over confusing terminology used for churches from our part of the world. Some call us "Majority World" churches. Some call us "developing" countries or churches. Others refer to our missions as "emerging" missions. We want to share that we are not comfortable with these words and are looking for terminology that is better suited to our present reality.

We note that church and mission development is at different stages in different regions of our "Majority" world. For instance, the churches in Latin America have come together into one large missionary association—COMIBAM—while the churches in Africa do not have such a abroad association.

Latin America and Korea are sending out large numbers of missionaries — whereas Africa and India — who have large numbers of missionaries working within their borders or in nearby countries — have yet to be engaged at the international level.

We recommend that some opportunities for dialogue be developed that would allow for regional discussions — particularly in the area of international missions so that Latin America, Africa, India, East Asia and Korea could learn from each other. We invite the North American sending structures to join in.

We encourage the new sending structures — churches or missions — in the Majority World to form cooperative or partnership agreements with other similar structures, who may be able to work with them for better effectiveness.

## 4. Additional contributions from IG participants

### Challenges for church leaders in Africa

*By Dr. Francis Bola Akin John*

The Church in Africa needs leaders who can take her to the next level. To convert the reaped harvest and integrate them into the main life of the church, a new generation of leaders must rise to the surface. If the church in Africa is not to go the way of the church in Europe, then we must face and solve these key issues. If we are going to move on from strength to strength and see a greater move of God, then we need to rectify these leadership problems that are threatening the forward march of the church here. We must rise up to face, fight and finish these challenges. We must stop behaving like the ostrich.

A. Twelve Vital Leadership Challenges: These issues are not theoretical but practical leadership problems that every careful observer can see. They are not particular to my church or denomination, but they spread across the landscape of the church here. We cannot just fold our arms pretending as if they do not exist. The future of the work demands that we address them squarely today.

1. The Challenge of Individualism / Independence. Too many church founders are not responsible to anyone and therefore can preach, teach and lead their church the way they like. They behave as the Alfa and Omega of their ministries. They relate with no one and are not accountable to anyone. Too many nasty incidents are the outcome.
2. The Challenge of personal kingdom building. It is an open secret that many of our leaders are focused on building their kingdom rather than that of Jesus. Most personal kingdom builders are leaders highly gifted, visionary and entrepreneurs who are focused and literally consumed with what they are doing. They build their church with the heart of a CEO building a large and successful company. They have hurt the body of Christ in no small measure. Sometimes, leaders see their denomination as the very Kingdom of God.
3. The Challenge of success and significance. Too many of our leaders focus on success without emphasising in ministry. Many fail to explain how they truly come to become who they are. Success is seen by some only in numbers and buildings. This has led many young leaders into error and wrong pursuit.
4. The Challenge of servant leadership. So often our leadership teaching and practices are wrong. Position, title, age and class are used as parameters of leadership. We emphasise hero worship and adulation of leaders. We emphasise control, selfish interest and connection. We operate with the unwritten code that church leadership means self-enrichment. We need to see true servant leadership.
5. The Challenge of leadership development. Most of our churches have no deliberate leadership development policy. We handpick and appoint leaders with little or no spiritual training to lead and pastor our church. We now tilt towards secular education, high paid jobs and management styles of worldly companies to run the church of the living God. No wonder decay is setting in gradually.
6. The Challenge of mentors and fathers. This is a serious leadership issue. The cry is for true fathers and genuine mentors. Most mentors have become tormentors. Many fathers have led in the wrong way. They fail to provide good examples to follow. Moreover, they have not been balanced, open and transparent in their approach to issues and Scripture. Wrong models are hurting the body of Christ more than anything else.
7. The Challenge of pitching camp. This is one great challenge that is eating up the unity of the Body of Christ. Every leader has a camp and if you do not belong to their camp, you are a person non-gratia. Church leaders of a different camp and ministerial network feverishly work to discredit each other. Belonging to camp A or B has worked against the unity of the church. Today, you have so many ministerial networks and associations, but the needed unity is not there.
8. The Challenge of mega churches. Consciously or unconsciously, mega churches and their pastors tend to behave as if they own their territory. They look down on

smaller churches and tend to control and demand obeisance from them. In some cases, they tend to take the properties of smaller churches, thinking that they only can win the city for Christ. This attitude has brought much anger into the body of Christ. Big and small churches are the will of God. Both of them are needed for city taking. Both need each other.

9. The Challenge of continuous learning. Church leaders in Africa need to overcome the challenge of refusal to learn. Many who have experienced one form of growth or the other now detest learning. Lack of learning spirit is hindering the continuous growth of the church here. Leaders with no relevant, current and up-to-date information are not leading the church up but down.
  10. The Challenge of church image. The unpalatable behaviour of pastors and church leaders has created a wrong image for the church. The majority of society sees the church as a “commercial venture”. Most of the wrong views people have about the church boils down to wrong leadership being displayed. To change the image of the church, leadership must lead the way.
  11. The Challenge of wrong motive. It is crystal clear today that many are in the ministry for the wrong reasons. The desire for money and financial lucre have eaten so deep into the life and blood of many so called leaders. Too many reports of wrong deeds by church leaders show clearly that their motives of being in the ministry are wrong. We must rise up to face this challenge
  12. The Challenge of successors. Church leaders in Africa have really not come to terms with the issue of successors. They still behave as if they will live forever. Some who have to choose successors are doing it the wrong way. In some cases, when the leader dies or is incapacitated, no one is able to take his place. This has led to the decay and death of so many once promising ministries. It's time we begin to address this challenge.
- B. Overcoming These Challenges: Every challenge has a solution. The Lord of the harvest can help us to overcome these formidable challenges. The following steps can assist.
1. Willingness to admit mistakes.
  2. Willingness to adjust and change.
  3. Rediscovery of God's heart and mind.
  4. Renewing our vision for world evangelism.
  5. Praying seriously about them.
  6. Taking steps to connect with other leaders.
  7. Willingness to embody the required change.

Yours In The Service,  
*Dr. Francis Bola Akin John*

## PARTICIPANTS

David D. Ruiz	Guatemala
J. Ismael Ramírez .	Guatemala
J. Norberto Saracco	Argentina
Francis Bola Akin-John	Nigeria
Adewumi Asogun	Nigeria
Juan Pablo Bongarrá	Argentina
Howard Brant	USA
Monroe Brewer	USA
William de Jesús	USA
Bertil Ekström	Brazil
Gertrud I. Kurrle	Germany
Jesús Iondoño	Colombia/Guatemala
Yacouba Mariko	Mali
Enrique Montenegro	Argentina/Spain
Ntai Pheko	Lesotho
Mayra Urizar de Ramirez	Guatemala
Elsa Ramírez de Aguilar	Guatemala
Vincent J. Ratnasingh	India
Simon Steer	UK
Ronald Vásquez	Costa Rica
Makito Yoshimoto	Japan
Rogelio Castillo	Argentina
Antonino Galvano	Argentina
Tokumbo Salami	Nigeria (did not attend the forum)