Appendices for the Short-Term Mission Leader Manual

Updated: Nov 2025

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Appendix A: Registration Documents

Documents are as follows:

- Registration Packet with No Logo (for those wishing to use the documents, but are not affiliated with Gateway)
    - You may request a Word Doc copy from Gateway to alter as your church/organization sees fit
- Registration packet – required for all Gateway team members and leaders
    - Note: If using Managed Missions, all of this can be done through a MM Registration application (after team members have been chosen). It can also be customized to your team needs – contact Kristi Thao at kthao@nabconf.org or serve@nabconf.org.
- Sending Church Org Partnership Agreement

PLEASE FILL OUT ALL DOCUMENTS AND RETURN TO:

PRAYER TEAM

Since there is such a dynamic power in prayer, it is great to build a team of people who are committed to praying for you and your team while you are preparing and out on the field. Try your best to get at least 20 people who would like to invest into your trip in this way. Let them know that they will be on the list to receive updates throughout your journey.

Email your list of people with their email addresses to:

Team Member Medical Information

Team Member Health History

(to be filled out prior and taken to the Physician's Exam)

Note: In the instance that you need medical attention while on the trip, additional health history information may be pertinent. This information will only be seen by the Team Leader and Team Medic who will keep it in confidence.

Team Name: _____

Team Member Name: _____ **Age:** _____

Please answer the following questions thoroughly.

1. Have you ever had any serious illness or injury or had surgery? If yes, please explain:

2. Have you ever had asthma, lung trouble, any kind of heart trouble, or any type of kidney trouble. If yes, please describe:

3. Have you ever been diagnosed as diabetic or had sugar or albumin in the urine? If yes, please explain:

4. Have you had an allergic reaction to medication, antibiotics, insect stings, or foods? If yes, please explain and name allergies:

5. Do you have a history of recurring infections, migraines, adverse symptoms in correlation to monthly menstrual cycles, or other health issues? If so, please describe:

6. Have you ever been diagnosed or treated for depression, anxiety, anorexia/bulimia, or other mental health concerns that impacted your daily living? If yes, please describe:

7. Do you have any dietary restrictions?

8. Do you have any other health concerns not listed above?

_____ _____

Team Member Signature Date

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian (if under 18) Signature Date

Team Member Physician's Examination

*Please NOTE: This Physician's Exam CAN BE WAIVED if the Team Member has had a similar examination within 2 years of the Gateway Team's departure date. If this is the case, please fill in the Team Member's name at the top and the physician's info at the bottom WITH THE DATE of that exam.

Team Member Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Height: _____ Weight: _____ Pulse: _____ Blood Pressure: _____

Physical Exam

General Appearance:

Heart: Lungs:

Abdomen: Extremities:

Eyes: Ears:

Nose, Throat, Mouth: Neuropsychiatric:

Other Defects:

Medications Currently Taken – Please list the name, dosage, frequency, and reason for use:

Release for Travel – In your opinion, is there any reason why this individual should NOT travel to an international and/or domestic location or participate n moderate to heavy physical work and exercise?

Please look over the questions on the Medical Information Sheet and make any additional comments where you feel it is appropriate.

Signature of Examining Physician: _____ Date: _____

Name of Physician: _____

Office Address: _____

Phone: _____

Emergency Contact Information

Team Member Name: _____

In Case of Emergency contact:

Primary

Full Name: _____ Relation: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Secondary

Full Name: _____ Relation: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Publicity Release

I irrevocably give you, your subsidiaries, affiliates, successors, assigns, and licensees the absolute right and permission to copyright, use, publish, post, re-use, republish, and distribute all photographs or video footage taken on or during the approximate period covered by the mission dates shown below, for editorial, advertising, art, promotion, fundraising, or any other lawful purpose and any medium whatsoever without restrictions.

_____ _____

Team Member Signature | Team Member Name (please print)

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian (if under 18) Signature | Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

VERIFICATION OF MEDICAL INSURANCE

Team Name: _____

Team Member Name: _____

Gateway and the North American Baptist Conference require that all participants serving with the denomination have adequate medical insurance coverage. Some medical insurance policies will cover short-term overseas travel. Some do not. You must verify with your insurance carrier that your current policy will cover you while you are on this mission.

CURRENT POLICY

Insurance Company:

Company Address:

Policy Number:

Company Phone #:

Please initial the appropriate statement below:

_____ I have checked with my insurance company, and my current medical insurance policy **DOES** cover the Gateway Missions trip for which I have applied.

_____ I have checked with my insurance company, and my current medical insurance policy **DOES NOT** cover the Gateway Missions trip for which I have applied. The following company will insure me during my mission trip

If your current medical insurance policy does not cover your Gateway Missions travel or you have no medical insurance, please speak with your Team Leader about securing Short-Term Mission Insurance for yourself. These policies also cover expenses such as medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. (Your Team Leader will provide you with the following information as necessary.)

Gateway highly recommends a SHORT TERM MISSION insurance: Mission Armor (https://missionworks.global/missionarmor/), Gold Plan, for all teams. This is a need if your current policy will not cover your trip. The team leader typically takes this out for the entire team.

_____ _____

Signature of Team Member (18 years or older) or Parent **Date**

Release of Liability

I understand and agree that I will serve in a volunteer capacity for the North American Baptist Conference and its churches (the Conference), and as such, am not entitled to, and will not claim, any wages, compensation, benefits or remuneration of any kind. Unless specifically stated in writing to me, the Conference will not provide to me or obtain on my behalf any medical, dental, disability, liability, life, medical evacuation, accidental death and dismemberment insurance or any other insurance of any kind.

I understand and agree that serving as a volunteer means I am not an employee or an agent of the Conference or its field organizations.

I understand and agree that my volunteer service in another country may expose me to health and safety risks that my include, but are not limited to: inadequate or nonexistent medical care, inadequate or nonexistent housing, dangerous roads and travel conditions, unsanitary food and water, exposure to diseases and dangerous animals, natural disasters and other Acts of God, crime, kidnapping, civil and military unrest and war. I further understand and agree that such risks could result in physical or mental injury to me or in my death. I further understand and agree that if I am involved in any type of hostage or kidnapping situation, the Conference will not provide nay ransom money on my behalf.

Unless stated in writing, I understand and agree that all travel, living and related expenses incurred by me in relation to my volunteer service with the Conference are my responsibility.

I understand and agree that the Conference does not knowingly assign volunteers to locations it knows or believes to be exceptionally dangerous. The Conference does not make any guarantees about the safety and security of the country and location to which I am going.

I understand and agree that my safety is my own responsibility and as such, I am solely responsible for adopting any reasonable precautions to minimize risk including, but now limited to, maintaining a safe lifestyle, following the laws of the host country, and respecting the cultural norms of the host country.

By signing this release I warrant and represent that I have obtained all recommended shots, inoculations, and any other preventative measures necessary for the country to which I am going I further understand and agree that such shots, inoculations and other preventative measures, and any expenses incurred as a result thereof, are solely my responsibility.

I acknowledge and agree to forever discharge, release and hold harmless the Conference, its churches, pastoral staff and leadership, its affiliates, its missionaries, employees, officers and agents for any and all claims, actions, suits, demands and obligations of any kind, both known and unknown, that are in any way related to or are a direct or indirect result of my volunteer service.

I agree and understand this release shall be final and binding on me, my heirs, executors, and administrators, and that this release shall survive my term as a volunteer.

I agree and understand that this release expressly revokes and supersedes prior discussions, agreements and representations that may have been made with regard to the subject matter of this release, and that this release may only be modified or revoked in writing by the Conference.

I _____, agree to serve as a volunteer in the country(ies) of _____, for the dates of _____.

I warrant and represent that I have read and that I understand this release and agree to be bound by its terms and conditions. Dated this _____day of _____ Year _____.

_____ Volunteer Signature

_____ Volunteer Name (please print)

_____ Parent or Guardian Signature (if under 18 years old)

_____ Parent or Guardian Name (please print)

_____ Witness Signature

_____ Witness Name (please print)

Parental Consent Form

To Whom It May Concern:

I/We do hereby give permission for my son/daughter _____(Full Name as it appears on passport) to travel to _____(Team destination) for the dates of _____(dates of mission) with _____(Team Leader) acting as his/her guardian. This consent also applies to any emergency or other medical treatment that is deemed necessary.

Signatures of BOTH Parents/Custodians:

_____ _____
Parent Signature Date

_____ _____
Parent Signature Date

Signature & Seal of Notary Public:

Parental Consent Form – Canadian

CANADA)
PROVINCE OF _____)
CANADA)
TO WIT:)

WE or I, _____, of the Town of _____, in the Province of _____, DO SOLEMNLY DECLARE THAT:

1. We are (I am) the natural mother and father of _____, born _____.
2. We are (I am) authorizing _____, chaperones and/or Agents of _____, to take our son/daughter on a church organized trip to _____, from _____ to and including _____. In the event that there are any flight delays we (I) authorize any additional days necessary to accommodate such flight delay.
3. We are (I am) granting authority to the aforementioned person(s) to make any and all decisions relating to the health care, including all consents for treatment of our son/daughter during the period of the trip as set out in the preceding paragraph.
4. We are (I am) granting authority to the aforementioned person(s) to make any and all decisions and to provide any and all consents relating to any activities, classes or excursions which require parental consent for our son/daughter to partake in during the period of the holiday.

AND WE (I) MAKE this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true and knowing it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of "The Canada Evidence Act".

(SEVERALLY) DECLARED before me)
at the Town of _____, in the)
Province of _____ this _____ day)
of _____, _____.) _____
)
)
_____)
A Notary Public in and for the) _____
Province of _____)
My Appointment expires _____)

Policies and Guidelines

Leaders/Members of this team are reminded that they are ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ. As you serve you not only represent God, but also your country, your church/organization and Gateway. This is a tremendous responsibility. Consequently, you should strive to be above reproach in your actions and attitudes.

You agree to:

- Submit to your Team Leader
- Attend the training sessions laid out by your Team Leader for your mission.
- Conduct yourself according to the policies and guidelines below.

If at anytime during this trip your behavior constitutes a problem, the Team Leader has the authority to send you home. Additional costs incurred as a result of this action will be at your expense.

Conduct:

Because of the wide range of cultures and customs we serve in, it is necessary to have some standard guidelines that allow all teams to participate with safety, a clear conscience, and without the potential for hindering the work of a missionary or pastor in any culture. These policies are for all team members during ministry with Gateway regardless of age:

- No narcotics, underage drinking of alcoholic beverages, or tobacco in any form. (Moderate alcohol use can be common in many cultures where Gateway serves.)
- Personal entertainment and communication devices (i-pods, mp-3s, cellphones) are recommended only during travel.
- No culturally inappropriate dancing, music, or clothing.

Relationships:

Any undisciplined relationships that jeopardize team unity, effectiveness of the team's ministry, or the ministry of our host receivers will NOT be tolerated and could result in dismissal of a team member.

- No exclusive male/female relationships with a national, or within the team (except, of course, for married couples). Many North American customs of dating - including embracing, holding hands, etc. are not shared by many of the cultures that we serve. Spending too much time with another team member or national can be misread.

Unity, Cooperation & Conflict Resolution:

Conflict resolution within the team - To put aside personal desires and differences for the sake of unity and cooperation should be handled privately with those involved according to Matthew 18:15. If still unresolved, the Team Leader should be consulted in a private context away from the public work of the team.

Conflict resolution with someone outside of the team - should be taken to the Team Leader(s) who will consult with the host receiver.

The final authority in conflict resolution rests with the Team Leader.

Additional Guidelines:

1. Security & Protection – Listen carefully to and obey all the guidelines that the Team Leaders and especially the host national/pastor/missionary gives regarding safety in your mission location. Review the dangers and risks associated with serving in your mission location. Seriously consider the Release of Liability for you are signing to work with Gateway Teams and the stipulations it contains.

2. Gifts – Some general principles for giving gifts to national Christians:

    a. Never give monetary gifts individual to individual.

    b. Monetary gifts should only be given to a ministry/church from the team as a whole. (The only exception would be giving to the church's offering.)

    c. Give all gifts towards the end of your mission so as not to make the receiver feel obligated to give in return.

3. Finances & Shopping – Honor the Lord with your personal finances by not showing off purchases and exploiting our North American wealth. Use discretion when shopping in how much money you carry and allowing others to see it.

4. Dress – Most of the guidelines in this area should come from your host national/pastor/missionary. However, in many cases it will be best if you are conservative with your dress.

5. Political Conversations – Avoid talking about American or national politics in the presence of non-team members. Remember, most people in the world consider all North Americans to be "United States" citizens and will often assume this.

As a member of this Team I agree to adhere to the previously stated Policies and Guidelines and understand that if I do not I could be sent home.

Signature of Team Member: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian (Minors): _____

Date: _____

Gateway Team Member Registration Packet

Please fill out all documents and return to:

Prayer Team

Since there is such a dynamic power in prayer, it is great to build a team of people who are committed to praying for you and your team while you are preparing and out on the field. Try your best to get at least 20 people who would like to invest into your trip in this way. Let them know that they will be on the list to receive updates throughout your journey.

Email your list of people with their email addresses to:

Team Member Medical Information

Team Member Health History

(to be filled out prior and taken to the Physician's Exam)

Note: In the instance that you need medical attention while on the trip, additional health history information may be pertinent. This information will only be seen by the Team Leader and Team Medic who will keep it in confidence.

Team Name: _____

Team Member Name: _____ **Age:** _____

Please answer the following questions thoroughly.

9. Have you ever had any serious illness or injury or had surgery? If yes, please explain:

10. Have you ever had asthma, lung trouble, any kind of heart trouble, or any type of kidney trouble. If yes, please describe:

11. Have you ever been diagnosed as diabetic or had sugar or albumin in the urine? If yes, please explain:

12. Have you had an allergic reaction to medication, antibiotics, insect stings, or foods? If yes, please explain and name allergies:

13. Do you have a history of recurring infections, migraines, adverse symptoms in correlation to monthly menstrual cycles, or other health issues? If so, please describe:

14. Have you ever been diagnosed or treated for depression, anxiety, anorexia/bulimia, or other mental health concerns that impacted your daily living? If yes, please describe:

15. Do you have any dietary restrictions?

16. Do you have any other health concerns not listed above?

_____ _____

Team Member Signature Date

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian (if under 18) Signature Date

Team Member Physician's Examination

*Please NOTE: This Physician's Exam CAN BE WAIVED if the Team Member has had a similar examination within 2 years of the Gateway Team's departure date. If this is the case, please fill in the Team Member's name at the top and the physician's info at the bottom WITH THE DATE of that exam.

Team Member Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Height: _____ Weight: _____ Pulse: _____ Blood Pressure: _____

Physical Exam

General Appearance:

Heart: Lungs:

Abdomen: Extremities:

Eyes: Ears:

Nose, Throat, Mouth: Neuropsychiatric:

Other Defects:

Medications Currently Taken – Please list the name, dosage, frequency, and reason for use:

Release for Travel – In your opinion, is there any reason why this individual should NOT travel to an international and/or domestic location or participate n moderate to heavy physical work and exercise?

Please look over the questions on the Medical Information Sheet and make any additional comments where you feel it is appropriate.

Signature of Examining Physician: _____ Date: _____

Name of Physician: _____

Office Address: _____

Phone: _____

Emergency Contact Information

Team Member Name: _____

In Case of Emergency contact:

Primary

Full Name: _____ Relation: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Secondary

Full Name: _____ Relation: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Publicity Release

I irrevocably give you, your subsidiaries, affiliates, successors, assigns, and licensees the absolute right and permission to copyright, use, publish, post, re-use, republish, and distribute all photographs or video footage taken on or during the approximate period covered by the mission dates shown below, for editorial, advertising, art, promotion, fundraising, or any other lawful purpose and any medium whatsoever without restrictions.

_____ _____

Team Member Signature | Team Member Name (please print)

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian (if under 18) Signature | Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

VERIFICATION OF MEDICAL INSURANCE

Team Name: _____

Team Member Name: _____

Gateway and the North American Baptist Conference require that all participants serving with the denomination have adequate medical insurance coverage. Some medical insurance policies will cover short-term overseas travel. Some do not. You must verify with your insurance carrier that your current policy will cover you while you are on this mission.

CURRENT POLICY

Insurance Company:

Company Address:

Policy Number:

Company Phone #:

Please initial the appropriate statement below:

_____ I have checked with my insurance company, and my current medical insurance policy **DOES** cover the Gateway Missions trip for which I have applied.

_____ I have checked with my insurance company, and my current medical insurance policy **DOES NOT** cover the Gateway Missions trip for which I have applied. The following company will insure me during my mission trip

If your current medical insurance policy does not cover your Gateway Missions travel or you have no medical insurance, please speak with your Team Leader about securing Short-Term Mission Insurance for yourself. These policies also cover expenses such as medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. (Your Team Leader will provide you with the following information as necessary.)

Gateway highly recommends a SHORT TERM MISSION insurance: Mission Armor (https://missionworks.global/missionarmor/), Gold Plan, for all teams. This is a need if your current policy will not cover your trip. The team leader typically takes this out for the entire team.

_____ _____

Signature of Team Member (18 years or older) or Parent **Date**

Release of Liability

I understand and agree that I will serve in a volunteer capacity for the North American Baptist Conference and its churches (the Conference), and as such, am not entitled to, and will not claim, any wages, compensation, benefits or remuneration of any kind. Unless specifically stated in writing to me, the Conference will not provide to me or obtain on my behalf any medical, dental, disability, liability, life, medical evacuation, accidental death and dismemberment insurance or any other insurance of any kind.

I understand and agree that serving as a volunteer means I am not an employee or an agent of the Conference or its field organizations.

I understand and agree that my volunteer service in another country may expose me to health and safety risks that my include but are not limited to: inadequate or nonexistent medical care, inadequate or nonexistent housing, dangerous roads and travel conditions, unsanitary food and water, exposure to diseases and dangerous animals, natural disasters and other Acts of God, crime, kidnapping, civil and military unrest and war. I further understand and agree that such risks could result in physical or mental injury to me or in my death. I further understand and agree that if I am involved in any type of hostage or kidnapping situation, the Conference will not provide any ransom money on my behalf.

Unless stated in writing, I understand and agree that all travel, living and related expenses incurred by me in relation to my volunteer service with the Conference are my responsibility.

I understand and agree that the Conference does not knowingly assign volunteers to locations it knows or believes to be exceptionally dangerous. The Conference does not make any guarantees about the safety and security of the country and location to which I am going.

I understand and agree that my safety is my own responsibility and as such, I am solely responsible for adopting any reasonable precautions to minimize risk including, but now limited to, maintaining a safe lifestyle, following the laws of the host country, and respecting the cultural norms of the host country.

By signing this release I warrant and represent that I have obtained all recommended shots, inoculations, and any other preventative measures necessary for the country to which I am going I further understand and agree that such shots, inoculations and other preventative measures, and any expenses incurred as a result thereof, are solely my responsibility.

I acknowledge and agree to forever discharge, release and hold harmless the Conference, its churches, pastoral staff and leadership, its affiliates, its missionaries, employees, officers and agents for any and all claims, actions, suits, demands and obligations of any kind, both known and unknown, that are in any way related to or are a direct or indirect result of my volunteer service.

I agree and understand this release shall be final and binding on me, my heirs, executors, and administrators, and that this release shall survive my term as a volunteer.

I agree and understand that this release expressly revokes and supersedes prior discussions, agreements and representations that may have been made with regard to the subject matter of this release, and that this release may only be modified or revoked in writing by the Conference.

I _____, agree to serve as a volunteer in the country(ies) of _____, for the dates of _____.

I warrant and represent that I have read and that I understand this release and agree to be bound by its terms and conditions. Dated this _____day of _____ Year _____.

_____ _____
Volunteer Signature Volunteer Name (please print)

_____ _____
Parent or Guardian Signature (if under 18 years old) Parent or Guardian Name (please print)

_____ _____
Witness Signature Witness Name (please print)

Parental Consent Form

To Whom It May Concern:

I/We do hereby give permission for my son/daughter

_____(Full Name as it appears on passport) to travel to

_____(Team destination) for the dates of

_____(dates of mission) with

_____(Team Leader) acting as his/her guardian. This consent also applies to any emergency or other medical treatment that is deemed necessary.

Signatures of BOTH Parents/Custodians:

_____ _____

Parent Signature Date

_____ _____

Parent Signature Date

Signature & Seal of Notary Public:

Parental Consent Form – Canadian

CANADA)
PROVINCE OF _____)
CANADA)
TO WIT:)

WE or I, _____, of the Town of _____, in the Province of _____, DO SOLEMNLY DECLARE THAT:

1. We are (I am) the natural mother and father of _____, born _____.
2. We are (I am) authorizing _____, chaperones and/or Agents of _____, to take our son/daughter on a church organized trip to _____, from _____ to and including _____. In the event that there are any flight delays we (I) authorize any additional days necessary to accommodate such flight delay.
3. We are (I am) granting authority to the aforementioned person(s) to make any and all decisions relating to the health care, including all consents for treatment of our son/daughter during the period of the trip as set out in the preceding paragraph.
4. We are (I am) granting authority to the aforementioned person(s) to make any and all decisions and to provide any and all consents relating to any activities, classes or excursions which require parental consent for our son/daughter to partake in during the period of the holiday.

AND WE (I) MAKE this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true and knowing it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of "The Canada Evidence Act".

(SEVERALLY) DECLARED before me)
at the Town of _____, in the)
Province of _____ this _____ day)
of _____, _____.)
)
)
_____)
A Notary Public in and for the)
Province of _____)
My Appointment expires _____)

_____

_____

Policies and Guidelines

Leaders/Members of this team are reminded that they are ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ. As you serve you not only represent God, but also your country, your church/organization and Gateway. This is a tremendous responsibility. Consequently, you should strive to be above reproach in your actions and attitudes.

You agree to:

- Submit to your Team Leader
- Attend the training sessions laid out by your Team Leader for your mission.
- Conduct yourself according to the policies and guidelines below.

If at anytime during this trip your behavior constitutes a problem, the Team Leader has the authority to send you home. Additional costs incurred as a result of this action will be at your expense.

Conduct:

Because of the wide range of cultures and customs we serve in, it is necessary to have some standard guidelines that allow all teams to participate with safety, a clear conscience, and without the potential for hindering the work of a missionary or pastor in any culture. These policies are for all team members during ministry with Gateway regardless of age:

- No narcotics, underage drinking of alcoholic beverages, or tobacco in any form. (Moderate alcohol use can be common in many cultures where Gateway serves.)
- Personal entertainment and communication devices (i-pods, mp-3s, cellphones) are recommended only during travel.
- No culturally inappropriate dancing, music, or clothing.

Relationships:

Any undisciplined relationships that jeopardize team unity, effectiveness of the team's ministry, or the ministry of our host receivers will NOT be tolerated and could result in dismissal of a team member.

- No exclusive male/female relationships with a national, or within the team (except, of course, for married couples). Many North American customs of dating - including embracing, holding hands, etc. are not shared by many of the cultures that we serve. Spending too much time with another team member or national can be misread.

Unity, Cooperation & Conflict Resolution:

Conflict resolution within the team - To put aside personal desires and differences for the sake of unity and cooperation should be handled privately with those involved according to Matthew 18:15. If still unresolved, the Team Leader should be consulted in a private context away from the public work of the team.

Conflict resolution with someone outside of the team - should be taken to the Team Leader(s) who will consult with the host receiver. **The final authority in conflict resolution rests with the Team Leader.**

Additional Guidelines:

1. Security & Protection – Listen carefully to and obey all the guidelines that the Team Leaders and especially the host national/pastor/missionary gives regarding safety in your mission location. Review the dangers and risks associated with serving in your mission location. Seriously consider the Release of Liability for you are signing to work with Gateway Teams and the stipulations it contains.

2. Gifts – Some general principles for giving gifts to national Christians:

    a. Never give monetary gifts individual to individual.

    b. Monetary gifts should only be given to a ministry/church from the team as a whole. (The only exception would be giving to the church's offering.)

    c. Give all gifts towards the end of your mission so as not to make the receiver feel obligated to give in return.

3. Finances & Shopping – Honor the Lord with your personal finances by not showing off purchases and exploiting our North American wealth. Use discretion when shopping in how much money you carry and allowing others to see it.

4. Dress – Most of the guidelines in this area should come from your host national/pastor/missionary. However, in many cases it will be best if you are conservative with your dress.

5. Political Conversations – Avoid talking about American or national politics in the presence of non-team members. Remember, most people in the world consider all North Americans to be "United States" citizens and will often assume this.

As a member of this Team I agree to adhere to the previously stated Policies and Guidelines and understand that if I do not I could be sent home.

_____ _____

Team Member Signature Date

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian (if under 18) Signature Date

Sending Church or Organization Agreement

Please fill out, sign, and email to: Gateway (NAB) – Rschmor@nabconf.org

I/We agree to serve with Gateway's (NAB) understanding of Short-Term Mission (STM) team ministry which reflects their membership in SOE.org (Standards of Excellence in STM) for the project stated below. In agreeing to serve in this way for this project, we agree to the following:

1) To confirm an agreement of the details of this mission project through ALL the signatures on this document including destination, dates and type of project
2) To use preparation materials, documents, forms (from Gateway's Team Leader Manual and other resources) and, if necessary, Gateway trainers provided by Gateway for:
   a) Accepting applicants
   b) Securing medical clearance for team members
   c) Providing the necessary visas, releases, supplemental insurance coverage and other documentation for team members
   d) Effectively training, preparing and orientating them
   e) Leading them through the travel and trip experience
   f) Debriefing them for re-entry and follow up of the experience
3) To involve our Sending Church (mission board) or Organization in approving/supporting the project
4) To respect and honor the Host Receiver Missionary, National Leader or Pastor's wishes for this project; as well as (if applicable) their request to work through Gateway (NAB)

_____ _____
Team Leader's Signature Date

_____ _____
Sending Entity Representative's Signature Date
(from e.g., Sending Church's/Org's Mission Board, etc)

Team Information

Team Leader's Name & Email: _____

Team's Destination: _____

Team's Dates: _____

Team's Project: _____

Team's Sending Church or Organization: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:
cc: Host Receiver _____
cc: Sending Org. _____
cc: Gateway Office _____
Gateway (NAB) 16715 Dane Court West, Brookfield, WI 53005 (414) 737-4892
North American Baptists, Inc. 1219 Pleasant Grove Blvd., Roseville, CA 95678 (916) 797-6222

Appendix B: Team Coordinator Job Descriptions

- Worship (Music) Coordinator
- Team Medic – assistant leader
    - Sample Medical Kit supply list
    - Medical Kit Supplies Dispenses – blank record
    - Prescription Meds Record
    - Medical Report Form
- Media Coordinator
- Baggage Coordinator
    - Baggage List
- Carry-On Coordinator
- Food Coordinator
- Finance Coordinator – assistant leader
- Team Journalist
- Prayer Partner Coordinator – not on departing team
- Drama Coordinator
- Tool Coordinator
- Language Coordinator
- ESL Coordinator

Worship (Music) Coordinator

As the team's worship and music coordinator you hold a key job not only during the Team Meetings of the mission itself, but also during the training sessions. Entering into worship together helps unify the team spiritually and helps individual keep an ear open for God's leading. You will work closely with the primary team leader in the development of team meetings and will likely minister in music as part of your team ministry.

In the interest of being culturally sensitive, ask your primary team leader about cross-cultural issues that might affect your music selection.

Your responsibilities could include, but are not limited to:

- The selection and coordination of English language worship songs for team meetings during training and the trip, as well as for group performances on the mission and in your reporting service.

- The selection and coordination of worship songs for group singing in the language of the host culture. Your primary team leader (or your language coordinator) may be able to help you bring together these songs.

- The selection of special numbers from among your musically talented team members. Some of your team members may have indicated special musical abilities that they have on their applications. Check with your primary team leader.

TEAM MEDIC

Assistant Leader

If you have no medical background or have never taken a first aid class, it might be helpful to take a simple first aid class before leaving on the trip.

Your responsibilities include:

- Tracking all team members (together with your primary team leader, included in his/her checklist) to make sure they have completed their required immunizations.
- Obtaining a copy of each team member's Medical Information and Physician's Exam from your primary team leader. Be familiar with the information of these forms.
- Putting the team medical kit together. A sample list of what may be needed follows. You are responsible for the medical kit at all times, including during travel.
- Administering medical attention, dispensing medicines, supplies, and prescriptions- even for adults. Why for adults? If a person is unconscious, they won't be able to tell the attending physician what meds they've taken, but you will be able to. You can keep track of all medicines dispensed, including prescriptions, by using the accompanying forms.
- Deciding along with the primary team leader and your host national/pastor/missionary when someone needs emergency care. Work with your primary team leader to fill out the Medical Report Form (make multiple copies) if a team member has any emergency treatments.
- Obtain a first aid booklet from a local health clinic for quick reference. Also check to see if any basic first aid classes or CPR classes are available.

SAMPLE MEDICAL KIT

	Band-Aids		Scissors*		Laxative
	Adhesive pads		Cold medications		Nausea preventative
	Sterile pads		Allergy medications		Pepto-Bismol*
	Ace bandage		Adhesive tape		Throat lozenges
	Hydrogen peroxide*		Tweezers*		Rubbing alcohol*
	Thermometer		Aspirin/Tylenol		Antihistamine
	Muscle relaxing cream		Antacid		Neosporin
	Cotton balls		Moist towelettes		Antibiotics
	Toilet paper		Small Towel		

* NOTE: Be aware of airline restrictions for carry-ons.

Medical Kit Supplies Dispensed

Team Member Name	Supply/Medicine	Date/Time	Team Medic Signature

Prescription Meds Record

Gateway Team Destination and Date: _____

Team Medic's Name: _____

DATES to be inserted for vertical columns

*Name/Medicine****																				

Medical Report Form

Date: _____ Time: _____

Patient Name: _____

Insurance Co. and Policy #: _____

Hospital or Clinic Name and Address: _____

_____

Name of attending Physician, Nurse, Dentist: _____

Injury/Illness Diagnosis: _____

_____

_____

Other Conditions: _____

_____

_____

Tests or Lab Results: _____

_____

_____

_____

Prescribed Medications and/or Treatment: _____

_____

_____

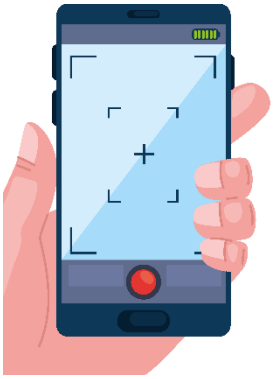
_____

Side Effects or Complications: _____

_____

_____

This Form Completed by: _____



Media Coordinator

As the Media Coordinator, your main job is to capture memories of your team's mission experience for the team members themselves, and for those back home who will want to know what happened. Even though you'll be busy taking pictures, it's important that you're in a few of them as well. Take some time in getting to know the etiquette when taking pictures in your host culture. People in some cultures are offended when you take their picture, or they may ask for money after being photographed. Be sensitive!

The best advice I have ever been given is, don't take a picture of the locals until you have actually spent some time with them.

Your responsibilities include:

- Taking pictures. Try to tell a story from beginning to end and capture not only the beauty of your host country, but also the true economic conditions. Pictures of people often tell the story best.
- Take all the equipment that you'll need from home. These items are usually very expensive in other countries.
- Taking videos. Again, don't leave out the beauty of the country, but remember that people will best tell your story.
- Blog or email supporters as often as possible. Many teams will go to locations with on-line access; find out from your host whether or not daily e-mails are possible before you go. A daily update (and even sending pictures/video) to your supporters, or at least to your sending church/organization is a great idea. Change the size of the image and it will upload/send more successfully.

To do upon return:

- Share your photo's with your team.
- Work with your primary team leader on pictures/video for reporting service

Here is a great article to read and think through before you start snapping pictures and video.
http://www.craiggreenfield.com/blog/2016/selfieservice

Baggage Coordinator

Your job is an important one during travel. Whether by plane, train or automobile (or bus!) you need to make sure that all bags are accounted for. It can get very confusing when 30-40 pieces of luggage need to be moved very quickly.

Your responsibilities include:

- Creating tags for every piece of baggage (including carry-ons, although they will be watched and accounted for by the Carry-on Coordinator).
    - Create a document that has about 6-8 squares on it (with a little space between.)
    - Include your sending Organizations Name, number and Address. And number them 1– however many bags you may have.
    - Go to an office supply store before the second to last training session and laminate the tags.
- Keep track of the number and the contents of each piece of luggage with the accompanying form. At every location the luggage is moved to (church parking lot, airport curb, airport check-in, airport baggage claim, in and out of buses and vans, check your list to see that all bags are accounted for.
- Work with your Team Leader during travel for instructions and instruct the team members as to where the luggage ought to be moved.

Traveling on trains:

- Be careful, trains stop only for 2-3 minutes and can be very crowded.
- Trains are often high above the ground, and team members may need help loading their bags.

Traveling on buses:

- Most buses have a luggage compartment underneath. Supervise the loading of the team's luggage.
- Micro-bus (combi) travel—have each team member take some luggage with them (the team will most likely need to be split into groups of less than 8).

Baggage List

Gateway Team Destination: _____

DATES & LOACTION to be inserted for vertical columns

#	Contents	Owner																				

Carry-On Coordinator

Your job enables the rest of the team to help with the heavier luggage. Remember that most people have their valuables in their carry-on, so your job does carry a lot of responsibility.

Your responsibilities include:

- When arriving at a destination, watch your primary team leader for where the team is going to gather. Find a spot in that vicinity where there is not much traffic.
- The primary team leader or the baggage coordinator will direct everyone to follow you and set down their carry-ons. Then they can help with the heavier luggage.
- Your responsibility is to watch the carry-ons until the other team members are finished moving the luggage. After they have picked up their carry-ons, you are no longer responsible for them until the next time everyone needs to help with the team baggage.
- If a stranger grabs one of the carry-ons, notify security immediately and shout, “Thief!” Don’t run after them.

Food Coordinator

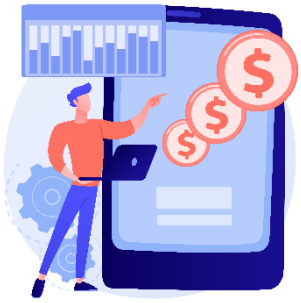
Find out very early on what the food preparation situation is from your primary team leader. Depending on the situation, you will take on one of two roles:

Nationals (and/or hosts) are preparing the meals:

- Be a resource person for them, helping them by doing whatever they ask you to do.
- Make a schedule for team members to help with the preparations and clean-up.

The team is responsible for meal preparation:
If this is the situation, understand that as Food Coordinator, your time will be limited by this role.

- Make a schedule for team members to help with the preparations and clean-up.
- Plan the menus with the help of your primary team leader. Take into account the team's schedule of activities and where they will be during meal times (sack lunches?).
- As appropriate (and legal), take non-perishables with you and purchase local fresh foods on location. Work closely with your hosts when it comes to shopping on site (in markets, etc.) as well as preparing those foods safely (boiling water, using iodine, etc.).
- Find out ahead of time what utensils and cooking supplies you will need to provide and what is available on site. Also, find out what type of kitchen facilities you will have access to.
- Keep receipts and report all your spending before and during the mission to the finance coordinator and the primary team leader.



Finance Coordinator

Assistant Leader

You have an important position of trust and will work closely with the primary team leader. Your responsibilities will need to start early on in the process as you help your primary team leader with the budget and keep track of the fund raising. But your job doesn't stop there.

Your responsibilities include:

- Working closely with the primary team leader in formulating a budget and keeping track of income and expenses throughout the support-raising process. Acquire an accounting ledger or bring a laptop with Microsoft Excel (or equivalent) early on for this purpose and use it through the actual mission.
- Encourage anyone that purchases items on behalf of the team to obtain (or generate) receipts for all transactions. While on the mission, balance the books DAILY!
- While traveling divide funds among leaders so that no one person is carrying more than $10,000. Cash (in U.S. funds) is essential as credit cards, travelers checks and ATMs cannot be relied upon in many other countries. Taking $100 notes as new as possible is the best for exchanging money in other countries as well.
- Upon arrival at your destination find a safe and secure place to keep funds (ask your host for assistance).
- Shortly after your arrival back home, meet with your primary team leader and the treasurer of your sending ministry (church, youth group, school) to finalize the books on your trip. Have each person sign a copy of the closing document.

There are many ways to track finances while on-field. One option is a simple printed table like the one on the next page. Another option is using a spreadsheet. Here is a Sample Ledger with some built in formulas that you can view. Under File (or "Share & export" if on a phone app) you may "make a copy" or download as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Note that Google Sheets can be made available offline, which may be helpful if you won't always have internet connection while on-field. What's important is that receipt tracking is done in a way that makes sense to you and all expenses/transactions are recorded.

Receipt Tracking

After each purchase (or at the end of each day):

- Number your receipt in correspondence with the line to be filled in below.
- Fill out spreadsheet according to info that is required.
- Place receipt in envelope.

There will be times when you do not receive a receipt. Please take a moment to write one and record info.

	Date	Item Description	Vendor	Cost/Currency
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Receipt Tracking Process

At the end of your Mission Trip, it is important to reconcile your expenses. You want the amount spent and the amount of money left over to add up as close as possible to the dollar amount started with. I know this task may seem tedious, but it is incredibly helpful in reconciling your budgets and is important in stewarding your donated dollars well. Here is an easy way of doing this while traveling.

After each purchase (or at the end of each day) take some time to do the following:

- Number your receipt in correspondence with the line to be filled in on the Receipt Tracking Sheet. The below example would have #1 in an easily seen place.
- Fill out spreadsheet according to the info that is required. Be as descriptive as possible.

	Date	Item Description	Vendor	Cost/Currency
1	7/21	Team lunch during first layover	Sandwich Hut	$60 USD

- Place receipt in an envelope.

There will be times when you do not receive a receipt. Take a moment to write one and record the information as listed above.

Currency Exchange

There will always be a small discrepancy due to the currency exchange in each country. It is always easiest to exchange the amount of money you expect to use the first day you are there, work out of the local currency and then exchange any extra funds back to USD before leaving. If you do this in the airport you will always get a horrible exchange rate so ask if your host will be able to take you to the bank the first day.

Keep your receipts from exchanging money as it will help you calculate the money that is lost through exchange.

Team Journalist

Your role is similar to that of the media coordinator in providing a lasting remembrance of the experience.

Your responsibilities include:

• In addition to your own journal of personal experiences, journaling the events of each day on behalf of the team.

- Work closely with the media coordinator to share your experiences with your supporters back home. Sometimes it is good to ask your team members to write down a story they want to share instead of doing it every day.
- Writing thank-you notes to those that host or serve the team meals, provide lodging or transportation, or that serve the team in another capacity.
- Writing an article (100-200 words) summarizing the team's experiences using the team journal.

Prayer Partner Coordinator

Not on the departing Team

You are responsible for heading up the prayer efforts of your sending body back home.

Some suggested responsibilities include:

- Meet with the primary team leader to discuss what the prayer needs of the groups and individuals are during training and the trip itself.
- Get a copy of the Personal Prayer Team List for each team member. Identify and re-cruit a number of other people from the sending church (organization) that will dedi-cate themselves to praying for this team on a daily basis.
- Design and make a prayer calendar that highlights prayer for specific individuals on each day of the mission. Make these available to the individuals identified on the Personal Prayer Team Lists as well.
- If possible, receive emails or other correspondence from the team's media coordina-tor during the mission and relay this information of the team's progress to the list of prayer partners.

**Note: The best way to communicate with the prayer supporters is through email sev-eral times throughout the duration of the mission project.

Drama Coordinator

You will help coordinate and prepare the team for this ministry during training. During the mission you will be sensitive to when and how this ministry will be used.

Responsibilities may include:

- Working with the primary team leader to know what type of dramas would be most effective in your team's context. Take into account language differences, abilities of your team members, budget and performance settings. Mimes are often the answer to the language issue although they are more effective when followed by an explanation.
- Gather props, background music, make-up, scripts and whatever else you need to train your team members.
- Although ability of your team members should be taken into account, don't allow lack of ability (as perceived by the individual) to be the reason someone doesn't participate in this ministry. A willing spirit is the most important thing to have.
- Don't count on obtaining any materials for your dramas at your destination. Prepare and pack what you will need. The simpler the better!

Tool Coordinator

As the team “Tool Man” (or woman), you will help make sure that the team’s work projects go smoothly. A team’s work project could be hindered or shut down entirely if the right tools are not available. Depending on your destination, replacements may be very hard to find or not available at all.

Your responsibilities include:

- Discussing the nature of the work project and what tools will be required with your primary team leader and host. Some tools may be available on site. Perhaps a request for tool donations from your church or organization will bring in the tools you need.
- Work with the baggage coordinator to see that all of the tools are inventoried and packed with the team’s luggage. The empty suitcases brought by team members for team supplies should provide room for this. Also an action packer from your local hardware store works well for this.
- When on the work site keep an inventory to see that the tools are all accounted for at the end of the day and ready for use the next day.

Language Coordinator

You will help the team train and prepare for their cross-cultural work (Session #5 and #6). Proficiency is not the goal of language learning for a short-term mission, but the nationals usually appreciate attempts that are made to learn the local language as a gesture of Christian love. A good minimum is learning greetings like “hello” and “goodbye”.

Your responsibilities include:

- Assembling materials to help teach the basics of the local language to your team members. Many times these materials will include songs and scripture verses that will be used in the team’s ministry project. Your primary team leader should have a booklet with some basic helps for speaking the local language in his/her training manual.
- Facilitate the language learning portion of your team’s training and preparation.
- Find out what the situation will be regarding interpreters at your destination. Are you proficient enough to function as an interpreter? How many interpreters will your team need to do your project adequately? Do you have an interpreter for any border crossings, travel or other situations requiring a native speaker?
- Encourage your team members to make attempts to speak the language despite mistakes.

Booklets available from NAB Gateway.

ESL Coordinator

As the person responsible for coordinating this ministry, you will be the main point person for training the team before you go and for coordinating this work while on the project. Your host national/pastor/missionary may have some materials already in mind for this ministry, if they have requested a team for this purpose.

An ESL camp takes a lot of thought and effort. Your role is key to the success of the mission. Be sure that your primary team leader gives you enough time in your training sessions to prepare your team sufficiently. You may need to schedule a separate training session devoted solely to the preparation of this material. Don't forget about logistics such as seeing that all of your needed materials get packed with the other team supplies, and inventory what you have so that everything is accounted for.

NOTE: The Gateway Office has both a Beginner and Advanced ESL curriculum suitable for Short Term Missions available. Please inquire.

Appendix C: Support Discovery

- Support Discovery
- Prayer letters
- Support Letter Guidelines
    - Sample support letter

Support Discovery

Used by permission of Culture Link

What is Support Discovery?

There is something you shouldn't leave home without—a Support Team! What's a Support Team? It's people who are committed to joining you in ministry through prayer, finances and encouragement. No one can stand alone. We all need the body of Christ.

So, what is Support Discovery? God provides support for those He calls. Therefore, He has a Support Team for you! Support discovery is finding out who those people are. Two primary areas for short-term missions support are prayer and finances. These go hand in hand. Those giving are usually the ones praying for you. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matthew 6:21

Those who support you need to see themselves as a team, united together with the common cause of making you as effective as possible in your cross-cultural ministry. They must feel a part of your ministry and not just see themselves as one involved in charitable giving. In a team concept, everyone has a responsibility. In short-term missions, those who give and pray are just as important as those who serve cross-culturally.

Is It Biblical to Build a Support Team?

A basic prerequisite for Support Discovery is a clear understanding of the biblical basis for this ministry. If you are embarrassed by the thought of asking for support and do not understand the biblical basis, you will not properly challenge people to join you. It is critical that you take the time to search the Scriptures. Read the verses following each question and then write your own answer before reading the comments.

1. From Where Will My Support Come?
   a. Read: Phil. 4:19; 1 Chron. 29:12-14; Mark 12:41-44
   b. Record your answer:

God is the source. God is the source of all you have and the One you entrust with all you give. Biblical giving is always to God, not to an individual or church. And the reverse is also true. Biblical receiving is always from God and not an individual. Even though people want to support your ministry personally, they must know that their giving is unto the Lord. Thus, their giving is a response to their faithfulness to Him and not just their individual concern for you or your ministry.

As you look to individuals and churches for support, you must keep in mind that the Lord prompts those who give and pray. You must pray for God to call those He desires to support you—Support Discovery!

2. Am I and My Ministry Worthy of Support?
   a. Read: 2 Cor. 5:20-21; Matt. 10:10; Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:10-20; I Cor. 9:3-14; I Tim. 5:18
   b. Record your answer:

The ministry and minister is worthy of support. You are valuable in the sight of God. God provided for your salvation and provides for your every need. As one called by the Lord to certain tasks, we can be sure He will provide for our personal needs and ministry needs. Consistently throughout Scripture, God provided for His servants' earthly needs through the gifts and offerings of His children. If God leads you to missionary life, then you can be confident that He will provide.

3. Will Raising Support Be Easy?
   a. Read Eph. 6:10-12
   b. Record your answer:

Support Discovery, like missionary life, is a spiritual battle. Satan will try to discourage you in the Support Discovery process. Satan is against you. He will cause you to think of yourself as a beggar or one not worthy of support. Remember, the easiest way for Satan to keep us from a cross-cultural ministry is to discourage us before we even leave home.

4. Should People Be Challenged to Give of Their Finances?
   a. Read: 2 Cor. 8:7; Rom. 10:15
   b. Record your answer:

Yes! The need to give to missionary service is greater than your need to receive. God could provide for you in a different way to accomplish His will. However, He has chosen to do so through the gifts of other believers. By giving, believers are able to be involved in the advancement of God's Kingdom and they are able to exercise dependence on the Lord in their finances. Believers are able to serve as senders by giving.

It is critical to challenge people to give. Be honest and straightforward in this challenge. Just as you need to be challenged spiritually, so do others (Hebrews 10:24). Do not be afraid to challenge people to pray for you, your ministry, and the world. Also, as people are challenged to be involved, you too will be spurred on in your faith.

5. Should I Ask Directly For Financial Support
   a. Read: Rom. 15:24; Phil. 4:14-20
   b. Record your answer:

There is nothing in Scripture that prohibits asking directly for financial support. It is true that there are a number of men and women in the history of missions who did not ask directly for support. Their reasons were based on personal convictions, not on explicit biblical principles. Paul directly tells the Romans in 15:24 he hopes to have them “assist” him on his journey to Spain. Paul’s motivation in Philippians 4:14-20 for having people involved in his ministry is for their blessing! Your challenges will allow others to experience God’s blessing.

It is important to be open about finances. Most people prefer to hear what your needs are and how they can be involved rather than to have you “hint” about giving. It is important to present your financial needs clearly, directly and honestly, without being pushy. Let the Lord speak to them about joining your support team.

Support Team Levels of Commitment

Not everyone on your support team will be equally involved. That's okay. Everyone has different gifts and abilities. You will need people to be involved at two different levels:

A. As Givers: They may give a one time gift and pray for you occasionally. These are valuable members of your team. Be sure to keep them informed.

B. As Prayers: You need people committed to pray for you once a week before you leave and daily while you are on the mission. Ask them to continue to pray for you once a week for a month after you return. Pray and look for at least 10 people to pray for you on this level.

Where Do I Begin Support Discovery?

So how do you go about Support Discovery? Time, energy and hard work. But, the best place to start is with prayer. It's not work that makes things happen—it's God! (Isaiah 26:12; Zechariah 4:6)

- PRAY – Prayer plays a vital role in the process of Support Discovery. Even though it is through God's people that you receive the support, remember that it is the Holy Spirit who leads people to be involved. Here are some things you should be praying for:
    - Pray for God's direction in making your list of potential support team members.
    - Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide people as they consider committing themselves to praying, giving, and helping.
    - Pray for people to be open to God's leading.
    - Pray for boldness as you share your needs.
    - Pray for wisdom and clarity as you share about your ministry.

Pray about how and when you can best share your needs with them. Remember, you are praying and looking for people at two different levels of commitment. In thinking about financial sources, you may want to use some of your own savings or earnings. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." One way to help find additional funds in your own back pocket is by cutting down on your own normal spending. Be creative.

- List Potential Support Team Members – Pray about who should be on the list. Ask God for ideas. Be sure to include:
    - Home church
    - Friends from school
    - Work colleagues
    - Neighbors

    - Relatives

- Send Prayer/Newsletters – You will want and need to write a prayer/newsletter to invite people to in you in the ministry through prayer and financial giving.

- Final Letter – Soon after returning home

    - Summarize your ministry/mission.

    - Thank your supporters for their faithful part in your ministry.

    - List prayer requests for those whom you served and yourself.

- Thank You Notes – Whenever you receive a pledge of prayer support or a monetary contribution, be sure to send a personal acknowledgement and thank you. Send one before you leave and one during the first week you are on the project site.

Prayer Letters

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These are an extremely important and effective means of informing family members and friends about your upcoming ministry. They allow you to share how the Lord is directing you and also give others an opportunity to respond with prayer or financial support. Here are some guidelines for writing a letter:

- Be personal. Your friends are interested in YOU. In your opening paragraph, share briefly how you were led to participate in this ministry. Even though this will probably be a typed and copied letter, try to make it sound like you. Be friendly and personal.
- Be brief, but informative. In your second paragraph, include major details about the kind of ministry you will have. Explain what you will be doing as specifically as possible. Through your contacts, you will have many opportunities to share your faith in Christ with the nationals.
- Present your need. There are many ways to ask people for help and you should do this in a way with which you are comfortable. Recognize that most people will want to know about what you are doing and will help in whatever way they can. Many of your friends and relatives will not be able to personally participate in an overseas short term mission, thus they will be excited to join your support team. But they can't help you if they don't know your needs.
    - Share your need for prayer support. Everyone can do this, and it is a very important need for your ministry.
    - Share your need for financial assistance. Explain that this is part of your experience as a short-term missionary, to trust God for your needs. Give the estimated total you will need (this will vary depending on how long and where you are going). Explain that this amount will be used to cover your transportation, training and living expenses for your mission.
- Be creative. Use your imagination in writing and designing the letter. Art, pictures, quotes, borders, colored paper, creative writing, clip art, etc., all help make your letter more personal and creative. Your letter should be neat, attractive and printed clearly. We do not recommend that you hand write your prayer letters. Your letter can be written in a variety of styles, but most of all, we want it to say, "READ ME!" when it enters someone's home.
- Additional Ideas for Prayer Letters
    - Me, teach English to Polish students? - or– But I don't know a word of Romanian! - or– And sleep on the floor or in a tent in the Czech Republic? And share the Gospel in a foreign country? And sing a song in the Hungarian language? I would never have imagined that these words would be describing my coming winter/summer.
    - I will need much prayer support as I prepare for the challenges ahead of me: living in a new and different culture, communicating through a language barrier, and constantly giving of myself in service. Please pray that I will have God's strength and that my life will show the personal relationship that I have with Christ.
    - In closing, I would like to share a verse with you that communicates what God is doing in my life (choose a verse that has special significance to you).
    - I am anticipating the growth of my faith as I trust God to supply for my financial need of $_____. If you would like to help in my support for this winter/summer ministry _____ will handle my support of funds. All gifts are tax-deductible, and a receipt will be given.

Support Letter Guidelines

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Focus: To raise prayer support for your ministry and financial support as the Lord provides.

1. Do make your letter personal. Be yourself in your writing expression. We encourage you to write why you are going and what you hope to see God do in and through you. And also include what you hope to learn from your host receivers.

2. Do make it spiritual, but please be sensitive. Avoid preaching, sermonizing, or outlining biblical passages.

3. Do use one or two verses that are appropriate to what the Lord is teaching you and doing in your life. Verses that support what you are trusting the Lord to teach you.

4. Do be specific and try to limit the letter to one page.

5. Do check your grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Have someone proof your letter.

6. Do make the letter appealing to the eye, original, and easy to read. Artwork, headings, and space will help the reader understand the message.

7. Do find out where the checks need to be sent and how they should be designated from your church and/or agency.

8. Do mention your financial need. Example: “The cost of this mission will be$1000. If you feel the Lord leading you to share in this ministry, you can make the checks payable to First Church USA and enclose a note designating to your name/name of mission and/or organization.

9. Do mention the date by which you need your support raised.

10. Do mention where to send support. Be sure to include the address where it should be sent.

11. Do remember to include your return address on your prayer letter.

12. Do make a copy of the letter for your team leader.

Sample Support Letters

Example #1

Dear Friends and Family,

I am writing to share with you the fantastic opportunity that the Lord has provided for me this summer.

I have been chosen to serve on a short-term mission team to the Fiji Islands! The team is composed of First Church USA members and we will be working in tandem with AFC International.

When: August 1-16, 2010

Where: The Fiji Islands

Cost: $1900 per team member. This covers airfare, food and materials. Each team member is responsible for raising 100% of their Financial and prayer support.

Purpose: The first and foremost reason for going is to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the Fijian people. We will be working with Bible College students in Latoka, Fiji. We will be going into schools, which are primarily Hindu, where we will share Christ through drama, music and testimonies. In addition, we will organize backyard Bible clubs for children. It is the hope of the Christian leaders to use these means of outreach to start a church.

Prayer: God will open the hearts of the people.
Team Unity
I will be open to what God wants to teach me about His World & Kingdom.

I am so excited about this mission! Will you please consider sharing this opportunity with me as the Lord leads you to pray and/or give? Financial support is essential to my going on the mission, but of equal or greater importance is your commitment to pray.

If you would like to be involved, please make check payable to: First Church USA and mail to:

First Church USA
World Missions Ministry
308 Church Street NE
Anywhere, USA 99999

Please enclose a note designating the contribution to John Doe.

In Christ,

John
P.S. 50% of my support is due June 1 and 100% is due July 1.

Example #2

Dear Friends and Family,

Please take the following multiple choice test to learn what is happening with me this summer.

A. This summer I will:
    1. Quit my job and sell suntan lotion in Hawaii.
    2. Go to Bulgaria on a mission team in June.
    3. Get married!
    4. Do nothing.

    Answer: 2 (Why didn't any of you pick 3!??)

B. While in Bulgaria, I will:
    1. Study the compose of wheat bulgar for baking.
    2. Help remove communist statues from big buildings in a single bound.
    3. Work with Gateway Teams teaching English for the purpose of relationship evangelism and church planting.
    4. Be in Bansko (a small resort town)
    5. 3 and 4

    Answer: 5 (I will be part of an English team to assist the national church in Bansko.)

C. The cost of my mission is:
    1. Nothing, I am a lottery winner.
    2. $1800
    3. $4500
    4. $25

    Answer: 2

D. Would you consider:
    1. Helping me iron clothes before I go.
    2. Joining me as a prayer partner.
    3. Joining me as a financial partner.
    4. Call my mom and tell her it is ok for me to travel on airplanes.
    5. All of the above

    Answer: 2 and 3. Please prayerfully consider if God would have you be a partner with me in this ministry to Bulgaria

E. To make a financial contribution:
    1. Make check payable to First Church USA
    2. Designate John Doe
    3. Mail to 308 Church Street, NE; Anywhere USA 99999
    4. All of the above (Support deadline is June 1)

    Answer: 4

God Bless,
John

Appendix D: Short Term Missions in the Bible

- STM – A Biblical Concept
- Esther, Stepping out in Faith
- Daniel, God's instrument for a special time

Short-Term Missions – A Biblical Concept

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For over a decade, the trend of short-term missions has been a growing phenomenon. Churches, families, single adults, and people young and old have ventured into cross-cultural ministry through this avenue of service. As a World Missions Pastor, I saw the positive and negative aspects of these opportunities. Usually, as a result of a less fortunate experience by a short-termer or those on the field, the question will arise, “Is short term missions biblical?” Great question and it should be addressed before jumping into something that may be merely a fad or trend.

You won’t find the term “short-term missions” in Scripture. In fact, don’t waste your time looking for “mission”, “career missionary”, “church planter”, or many other terms used in cross-cultural ministry. They simply aren’t there, but the concepts are. To clarify the concept “short-term missions”, two definitions from Webster’s, one for mission and one for short-term, have been combined. This definition says, short-term missions is the act of sending one for a relatively small period of time for a specific task such as propagating one’s faith or a humanitarian work.

With this clarification in mind, now ask, “Are there scriptural examples of short-term missions?” The answer is yes! We are going to look at 4 such examples.

An Investigative Mission—Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 13 & 14)

The Lord said to Moses, “Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites.” (Numbers 13:1,2 NIV)

Moses obeyed God’s instruction and sent 12 men on an investigative trip for 40 days. As you may know, all these men returned having seen the richness of the land, yet only two could see past the challenge of giants to envision a land filled with the knowledge and presence of God and His people.

This is a clear example of God sending people out for a specific purpose over a limited amount of time— a short-term mission. Interestingly, all these men experienced a short-term mission, but only two saw how God was working. This happens even today. God often reveals His desires for a culture/land to people who have been on short-term investigative assignments. This is one aspect that makes short-term ministry exciting!

However, it is disappointing to see a God-given vision stomped out by teammates, family, church members, or even church leaders back home. We should prayerfully consider the visions and ideas that short-termers bring back. These short-term mission experiences can be God’s means of inviting a church into long-term involvement in an area of the world where knowledge and presence of Him is just developing.

An Evangelistic Mission—Jonah (Book of Jonah)

The Word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai: “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” (Jonah 1:1-2, NIV)

No doubt the book of Jonah records one of the world's greatest revivals led by one of the world's worst evangelists. In spite of Jonah's bad attitude, God sent him out for a specific task—to preach to Nineveh.

In this example we see that God does call people to specific short-tem tasks, such as evangelism, in cross-cultural settings. Does God have a specific task for you or your church? Ironically, Jonah spent more time running from God than God actually desired for him to serve. This is often the case with us. We may spend years debating God's invitation for us to participate in a short-term mission opportunity that may only last 15 days.

A Training Mission—The 12 Disciples (Matthew 10:1-42, NIV)

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "...as you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near…" (Matthew 10:5-7)

Jesus, in His wisdom, began sending His disciples on specific ministry assignments early in their ministry. We can only imagine how they felt as Jesus prepared them for the things they would face. After they returned, the 12 probably expressed to Jesus that they did not encounter all the issues which had been discussed in their preparation. However, Christ knew what the future would hold for them after He had departed earth. He alone knew their need for ministry preparation which would impact them for a lifetime.

Today's short-term mission assignments can be incredible tools for training and equip-ping believers for future ministry.

An Encouragement Mission—Tychicus (Ephesians 6:21-22)

Tychicus…will tell you everything, so that you may also know how I am and what I am doing. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage you. (Ephesians 6:21-22, NIV)

Perhaps this example is not as dramatic or distinct as the first 3 short-term illustrations. Nevertheless, encouragement missions are numerous throughout the epistles. Here Paul is sending out a specific person for a specific task—encouraging the body of Christ, over a short period of time.

Is this really short-term missions? It fits the definition. But it isn't evangelistic or project oriented. Nonetheless it is a ministry assignment. As you look over the epistles you see the early church sending its people to build up the "career church planters" (Phil. 4:18) and the missionaries sending workers back to the local churches for the same purpose. This illustration introduces a new level of ministry involvement that short-term mission can have—compassion within the Body. Churches need to care for their long-term missionaries and short-term pastoral visits can be an opportunity to accomplish this.

These 4 examples are a few of the short-term mission illustrations found throughout Scripture. Each of these missions existed for a clear purpose. Perhaps bad experiences occur because missions are not planned with clear direction from God, invitations from the overseas fields, and/or a distinct purpose. Short-term mission is one of many tools God is using to make His name known to the nations. Use it as God has designed and illustrated it to be used in the Bible.

Ester, Stepping Out In Faith

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Have you ever thought, “I can’t make a difference. I’m only one person?” Perhaps, you felt this way because you couldn’t see past your circumstances. Don’t limit God to your circumstances. God is sovereign and knows where to place His people to accomplish His purposes.

The book of Esther unfolds the story of how God used one woman to deliver an entire nation. Esther takes you to ancient Persia during the reign of King Xerxes. During the third year of his reign, Xerxes hosted a feast for his governmental leaders. They even had the promise of being spectacular, except for one problem. The queen refused to attend. This enraged Xerxes which resulted in him replacing her as his wife and queen. In this setting, the story of Esther begins.

There was a Jew, Mordecai, who had a beautiful cousin, Esther, whom he had raised. Mordecai and Esther had been carried from Jerusalem into exile and were living in the capitol of Persia. When King Xerxes began his search for a new queen, he sent out a command to gather all the beautiful virgins from his kingdom. Esther was among those chosen in the king’s house.

In the palace, Esther lived an exemplary life, gaining favor with the king’s employees. She lived out the faith on which her family had depended. However, due to Mordecai’s warning, Esther did not reveal her nationality. After preparation, it came time for Esther to be presented to the king. When Xerxes saw her, he was so taken by her, he placed the royal crown on her and made her his wife.

Becoming the queen was more than Mordecai could have dreamed for Esther.

Because of his concern for her, he stayed close to the palace gate to remain informed. There he heard the king’s eunuchs plotting to kill him. Mordecai reported this to Esther, and she told her husband. The accusations proved true, and the men were hanged. At this point in the story, you first see Esther’s life impacting a kingdom by submitting to be used of God where he placed her.

Meanwhile, the King promoted a man, Haman, to a high position. Everyone bowed before Haman—except Mordecai. This made Haman so angry he determined to kill Mordecai and all the Jews. With his influence, Haman deceived Xerxes, and had him issue a decree that all Jews be put to death. When Mordecai overheard this, he sent word to Esther and urged her to go to the king and beg for mercy.

Unfortunately, Esther had not been summoned to her husband for 30 days. The penalty for entering the king’s court without permission was death. Yet Mordecai pleaded with Esther, saying, “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?”

Esther had been raised under Mordecai’s godly influence. She knew that God was with her. “Go, gather...all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me,” she said to Mordecai. “Do not eat or drink for 3 days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

Perish? It didn't matter—Esther accepted God's plan for her life. Having faith in God, she committed to do what she knew was right. So she went before the king. When he saw her, he accepted her presence. Instead of punishing her, he promised her anything—as much as half the kingdom. Esther was wise. She only asked that he and Haman attend a banquet. Once they arrived, the king again asked Esther what her petition was. Esther simply invited the two men to yet another banquet.

In God's providence, the king was unable to sleep that night, he asked a servant to read a portion of the chronicles. The section described Mordecai's help in exposing the plot to kill the king. When Xerxes discovered nothing had been done to repay Mordecai, he called Haman and asked what he should do for a man who had honored the king. Haman, thinking he was that man, suggested a great reward. When he learned that Mordecai was the one to be honored, he feared for his life.

At the second banquet the king again asked Esther what her petition was. She said, "If I have found favor with you O King, and if it pleases your majesty, grant me my life and save my people. For I and my people have been sold for destructions, slaughter and annihilation." The king demanded to know who was responsible. Finally, Esther's opportunity came to speak. "The adversary and enemy is this vile man, Haman."

The king ordered Haman to be hanged. The plan to destroy the Jews was reversed as well. God's people were now safe.

Esther could have stepped outside of God's plan, choosing to use her human will or beauty to manipulate events. The results could have been recorded in history as a disaster rather than a blessing of redemption. Esther chose to believe God, submit to His will, and act with courage. She depended on Him for the outcome.

Esther was one person submitted to God. He used her in a mighty way. The next time you find yourself in circumstances you don't understand, will you be like Esther? Will you allow God to accomplish His purposes through you? Will you be His special instrument for a special time?

Daniel, God's Instrument for a Special Time

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The time was the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah. The circumstances were less than ideal for the Jewish nation because the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, had conducted a raiding party into Judah and taken it captive. Included in this besiege was a man, taken from this homeland, away from his people, yet nonetheless faithful to God. This man was Daniel.

Daniel and his friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were selected by Babylonian officials to serve their captors. The selection criteria was far from simple. Those chosen were to be "Israelites from the royal family and the nobility—young men without physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's palace." Knowing these men were chosen, meant they met these characteristics.

You can imagine that prior to captivity, Daniel and company, full of talent and promise, dreamed of being used of God by holding positions in Judah. From man's perspective they could be used by God in their homeland because of their amazing abilities. However, circumstances were not in their favor. Fortunately, Daniel knew his trust was not in circumstances, position, or abilities, but rather in his sovereign God. This knowledge made Daniel a man of resolve. "Daniel resolved not to defile himself." Regardless of circumstances, he was steadfast on obeying God and recognized his position with God. He approached God in a state of dependence. This is seen with his acknowledgement that "we do not make request to You because we are righteous but because of Your great mercy."

Daniel knew he had nothing to offer to God and recognized that his usefulness for God's purposes was dependent on God and His mercy. This realization of dependence from Daniel and his friends and their submission to God resulted in their being used to reach the nations. God's purpose for their lives was greater than they could have ever dreamed for themselves.

The book of Daniel records stories of these men's opportunities to serve the Lord. One such incident came when Nebuchadnezzar told everyone to worship an image. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not bow and break the commandment: 'you shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them." Because of their obedience, these men were thrown into a fiery furnace. God sustained them! When they came out of the fire, the royal advisers crowded around. They saw the fire had not harmed their bodies, singed their hair, scorched their robes, and there was no smell of fire on them. Nebuchadnezzar stood amazed saying,

"Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent His angel and rescued His servants!" Not only did King Nebuchadnezzar make A proclamation to those in his palace, he also stated: "...to the people, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world: May you prosper greatly! It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me." Through submission to God, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were used to reach the nations with the truth of God.

As the book of Daniel progresses, another king, Darius, recognized that Daniel had the Spirit of God and promoted him to a high position. The other officials were jealous because Daniel "was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent." They devised a plan to have the King make a law requiring people to only worship the King which they knew Daniel would not obey.

Instead of becoming a man fighting a cause, Daniel concentrated on his relationship with the Lord and continued his daily time with the Lord as usual. This devotion was noticed, and the penalty of such actions resulted in Daniel being placed in a lion's den. God closed the lions' mouths so Daniel was unharmed. Again, God's power was declared! Declared? Yes, in that He is able to protect His people in any situation. And the declaration goes beyond protection to fulfilling God's own purpose of making Himself known to the nations was accomplished as well. As a result of observing Daniel, King Darius wrote: "To all peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: May you prosper greatly! I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel."

Focusing on their relationship with God, depending on God for their obedience in whatever circumstances God placed them and not on their abilities, Daniel and his friends were divine instruments used by God for a specific purpose during a specific time. Daniel did not have to seek causes to accomplish for God, rather, he submitted himself to God to be used in His plan.

Through Daniel lessons are learned of God's faithfulness to His people and God's faithfulness to Himself. God desires to use each believer to make Himself known to the world. Believers can be used by seeking God, allowing Him to place them where He wants them, and He will manifest His life through them and make them an instrument for the special time in which they are living.

Appendix E: Cross-Cultural and Contextualization

- The Uniqueness of Christ
- Redemptive Analogy
- Missions and Money
- Different Views Concerning Relationships and Money
- Culture, Worldview, and Contextualization
- Culture Shock, Coping with it
- Culture – Permanent or Temporary

The Uniqueness of Christ

By Charles Van Engen – used by permission

We live at the dawn of the most exciting missionary era ever. Never before could we say that there are Christians in every nation on earth. With about 1.5 billion Christians circling the globe, the Christian faith now has the potential of evangelizing the other 4.5 billion people in a way never before possible. The global reawakening of interest in spirituality, in the spirit world and in religious phenomena provides an unprecedented opportunity for calling people to faith in Jesus Christ. In today's world, our assertion that Christ is unique is heard as an assessment that other religions are to be disregarded. Chapman pointed out that "to speak of 'other religions' is ultimately to refer to two-thirds of the human race. The world's other religions present a challenge to Christians not only because they have worldviews that conflict at many points with our own, but also because their influence is growing…We must do more…than simply reassert the uniqueness of Christ in old categories, more than just produce strategies for reaching people of other faiths. We must first do some hard thinking about religions."

Three Broad Categories

In recent times, the attitudes of Christians toward other religions generally are classified in three broad categories: pluralist, inclusivist, and exclusivist. Notice that two of these words sound essentially positive. "Pluralist" is positive in terms of the multicultural and multireligious world in which we live. "Inclusivist" is positive in terms of opening our arms to receive all those who are loved by God. "Exclusivist," however, sounds like a negative word. Pluralists and inclusivists feel quite negative about the content of the so-called exclusivist position. In fact, few of us would like to be accused of being exclusive, whether it be institutionally, culturally, eco-nomically, politically, or socially.

Consider the basis on which these positions are compared. If the basis is tolerance, the pluralist and inclusivist would seem to espouse tolerance; the exclusivist would seem to support intolerance. What if the basis for comparison is love? The pluralist loves everyone, as does the inclusivist, for they both refuse, as Clark Pinnock says, "to limit the grace of God to the confines of the Church." It is the so-called exclusivist who "restricts hope" and therefore relegates people of other religions to "zones of dark-ness," refusing to love all peoples enough to offer then a "wider hope." If the basis of comparison is global openness versus parochialism, the exclusivist position looks ancient and out-of-date narrow and parochial. If the basis of comparison is optimism versus pessimism, the inclusivist position is, in Pinnock's words, "optimistic of salvation" while the so-called exclusivists demonstrate a "negative attitude toward the rest of the world," and a "pessimism of salvation, or darkly negative thinking about people's spiritual journeys. I'm not sure I want to be an exclusivist. I'm even less inclined to be an exclusivist when I hear what the open, accepting, loving and tolerant pluralists say about me!

John Hick argues of exclusivists: "[their] entirely negative attitude to other faiths is strongly correlated with ignorance of them…. Today, however, the extreme evangelical Protestant who believes that all Muslims go to hell is probably not so much ignorant as blinded by dark dogmatic spectacles through which he can see no good in religious devotion outside his own group…"

If all human beings must, in order to attain the eternal happiness for which they have been created, accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior before they die, then the great majority of humanity is

doomed to eternal frustration and misery…To say that such an appalling situation is divinely ordained is to deny the Christian understanding of God as a gracious and holy love.

Apparently, exclusivists are not nice people! Of course I'm speaking tongue-in-cheek, but can we not do better? At the very least, it seems that we need to continue our search for better conceptualization and articulation of what a so-called exclusivist position involves. Perhaps we even need a new word. Let me suggest a fourth perspective: the "evangelist" paradigm. I have chosen this name because I want to present a paradigm whose starting point and center is the evangel—the confession by the disciples that "Jesus Christ is Lord."

An Important Distinction: Faith Does Not Equal Culture

Before we look at the missiological implications of this fourth paradigm of "evangelist," let's examine two presuppositions. The first deals with the relationship of faith and culture. Paul Hiebert says: "The gospel must be distinguished from all human cultures. It is divine revelation, not human speculation. Since it belongs to no one culture, it can be adequately expressed in all of them. The failure to differentiate between the gospel and human cultures has been one of the great weaknesses of modern Christian missions. Missionaries too often have equated the good news with their own cultural background. This has led them to condemn most native customs and to impose their own customs on converts. Consequently, the gospel has been seen as foreign in general and Western in particular. People have rejected it not because they reject the lordship of Christ but because conversion often has meant a denial of their cultural heritage and social ties."

The difference between faith and culture is supported not only anthropologically, but also historically and biblically. Historically, a review of the history of the Church demonstrates that the gospel of faith in the lordship of Jesus Christ has always tended to break out of the cultural molds that would imprison it. Originally, the gospel was not Western at all—it was Middle Eastern. It began among Aramaic-speaking Jews. Then it took shape in all the cultures surrounding Jerusalem that are referred to in Acts 2—in Greek, Roman, North African, Ethiopian, Indi-an, Near Eastern and Arabic cultures. It expanded to the Franks, Scandinavia, the British Isles, and on and on. To closely associate any culture with biblical faith, one must ignore the historical expansion of the Church.

Even more profoundly, the distinction between faith and culture is biblically essential. This issue is at the heart of Acts and Romans. The issue here is precisely how a single faith in Christ's lordship can take shape in a variety of cultures. The difference between faith and culture is also essential for an understanding of Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians. Paul speaks of the mystery "that through the gospel the Gentiles [the ethnē, comprising a multiplicity of cultures] are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:6). Revelation and 1 Peter also would be difficult to understand were there no distinction between faith and culture.

The nature of the world in which we now live has made the equation of faith and culture more dangerous than ever. Christians and non-Christians alike share this in common. All are radically impacted by the largest redistribution of people the globe has ever seen. In this new reality, all of us are called upon to find ways of affirming cultural relativity: tolerance, under-standing, justice, equality, and co-existence within the new multiculturalism. If one views faith and culture as nearly synonymous and also beings to be open to cultural relativism, the next step is some form of religious pluralism. If one goes all the way with this process, one arrives at the pluralist position. If one cannot go that far—feeling strongly constrained to hold tightly to the uniqueness of the cosmic Christ-event---one arrives

at the inclusivist position. If one refuses to accept cultural relativism, but holds faith and culture to be synonymous, one arrives at an exclusivist position reminiscent of the cultural Protestantism of the 19th century.

A Crucial Starting Point: Good People Damned or Condemned People Saved?

The second presupposition deals with the form of the question of salvation asked by each of the four paradigms. We must be conscious of the radical difference between the pluralist/inclusivist stance on the one hand and the exclusivist/evangelist stance on the other. The bottom-line theology of salvation of the pluralist and inclusivist positions asks, “Given the fact that humanity is basically good, and God is a God of love, how is it possible that God could condemn so much of humanity to eternal punishment?” The exclusivists and evangelists ask the question differently: “Given the fact of the fall, and that ‘all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’ (Rom 3:23), how is it possible that so much of humanity can be saved?”

A Foundational Conviction: Knowing the Historic Jesus

Now before developing the major missiological implications of the “evangelist” paradigm, I want to clarify a foundational commitment from which all else derives. I am making a conscious choice to highlight the Christian’s personal relationship with the historic Jesus Christ who was born, lived in Palestine during a specific historical time, ministered, died, rose, ascended, and is coming again. The absolutely radical claim of the canonical text of the Bible is that this Jesus lives today and that He is the one with whom the Christian disciple relates personally by faith.

Even John Hick recognized the implications of this position: “If Jesus was literally God incarnate, the second Person of the holy Trinity, living a human life, so that the Christian religion was founded by God-on-earth in person, it is then very hard to escape from the traditional view that all mankind must be converted to the Christian faith.”

Hick instead opted to understand the narrative about Jesus Christ as a “metaphorical” rather than a literal description of a verifiable historical fact. This decision was coupled with his prior conclusion that “any viable Christian theodicy must affirm the ultimate salvation of all God’s creatures.” The combination of these two factors leads logically to a pluralist position.

The Fourth Position: Evangelist

In developing the missiological implications of the evangelist paradigm, I will try to present a Trinitarian and kingdom-oriented perspective that may help us listen to the other three paradigms and critique them as well. In doing so, we need to be able to move past the pessimism about mission, faith, and the Church that is exhibited by pluralists and inclusivists alike. At the same time, we must be more open than traditional exclusivists have been to a modern global village of interreligious encounter and multicultural diversity. In our new global society, we can no longer afford to create, protect, and preserve our own seemingly safe sanctuaries of religious exclusivity.

Our study of the implications of the evangelist paradigm will be limited to three basic categories. This paradigm of approaching other religions is a way that is (1) faith-particularist, (2) culturally pluralist, and (3) ecclesiologically inclusivist.

Faith-Particularist

The first element of this new paradigm is personal. It deals not with religious systems or theoretical religions as such, but with people and personal faith. It has to do with personal faith in, and allegiance to, Jesus who lived and ministered in Palestine at a specific time in history. The only truly unique and distinctive aspect of Christian faith (the term “particularist” refers to that which is unique and distinctive instead of general and universal) is a personal relationship of the Christian with the resurrected and ascended Jesus Christ of history. In the evangelist paradigm, confession of Jesus as Lord involves a personal relationship that breaks the bonds of all religious systems. It means that we are not so much adherents of Christianity, we are simply disciples of Christ. Following Christ is a vital relationship rather than subscribing to a religious formula. It is not neat, logical, or coherent. It is not exclusive, arrogant, or triumphalistic. Rather, it is humble confession, repentance, and obedience. Thus the major question is not if one is a member within a particular religious system, even if it is a Christian tradition. Rather, the crucial issue is whether or not one relationally belongs to the person of Jesus Christ. The ultimate question is the question of discipleship—of one’s proximity to, or distance from, Jesus the Lord.

The evangelist paradigm calls into question the institutional structures of all churches and especially of Christianity as a religious system, for the churches now are viewed as the fellowship of disciples whose allegiance is to Jesus more than to a particular institution. The evangelist paradigm also calls into question the inclusivist perspective that the cosmic Christ-event effectively saves all persons regardless of their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. And it brings into questions the pluralists’ relativistic reduction of the confession “Jesus Christ is Lord” to Jesus being only “a Christ” among many.

On the other hand, the confession of Jesus as Lord also highlights all that cannot be called “lord” by the Christian. The confession calls for stripping away the layers of the artichoke of cultural accretions that Christians have added to the basic confession. As Paul declares in Romans, and we see modeled in Acts, our faith requires us to confess with our mouths and believe in our hearts that Jesus is Lord. That’s all there is. Nothing else really matters. All else is to be held lightly. Everything else is negotiable. Thus, when we call people of other cultures and faiths to confess “Jesus is Lord,” it is not our Jesus (exclusivist), nor is it a Jesus (pluralist), nor is it the cosmic amorphous idea of Jesus Christ (inclusivist). Rather it is Jesus the Lord who calls for conversion and transformation of all who confess His name. Because of this, it is only in humility, in personal repentance and in prayer—with the expectation of a great diversity in cultural forms—that we may invite others to join us in confession Jesus as Lord.

Culturally Pluralist

Along with the historicity and relationality of Jesus Christ, we must also affirm the universality of Christ’s messianic lordship. Jesus the Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of all the universe, as the first chapters of John, Ephesians, and Colossians all state. All of us are concerned about the whole of humanity and the care of God’s creation. We wonder how humans can live together in peace and justice, especially in the midst of increasingly difficult clashes between conflicting religious allegiances. Given our universal concerns, we need a trinitarian missiology that is kingdom-oriented. We must also remember that Christ’s lordship is not only over the Church, but also over all the world. The pluralist and inclusivist perspectives, however, confuse the manner, scope, and nature of Christ’s kingly rule over the Church (willing subjects) and over all humanity (un-willing sub-jects).

The lordship of Christ brings into question the exclusivist position on other cultures and religions as well. It opens up a much greater breadth for contextualized encounter between Christians and the many cultures of our world. Not all so-called non-Christian culture is sinful, but neither is everything in culture relative. Rather, we are called to "test the spirits" (1 John 4:1-3). This broad, all-encompassing Christology means that we must listen carefully to the new Christologies that are arising in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Everything that does not contradict the biblical revelation concerning the historical Jesus Christ our Lord is open for consideration. As Hendrikus Berkhof says: "That Christ is the truth does not mean that there are no truths to be found anywhere outside of Him, but it does mean that all such truths are fragmentary and broken unless they become integrated in Him as the center."

Ecclesiologically Inclusivist

This third missiological implication of the evangelist paradigm has to do with the kingdom of God and the Church (the term "ecclesiological" derives from the Greek word for church, ekklesia). The Kingdom leads us to the Church, the disciples of Jesus Christ the Lord. The Church is not only a gathering of individuals; it is much more because it includes Jesus Christ who is not only Lord of creation but also head of the Church. Thus, Jesus sent His Spirit at Pentecost to establish the Church. The Church belongs to no human person, and the church growth must be growth in the numbers of disciples of Jesus, not proselytism to expand someone's little churchly kingdom. The evangelist paradigm seeks to correct the triumphalism and arrogance of which the exclusivists have sometimes been accused.

Because Jesus Christ the Lord is the head of the Church, the Church's mission is to participate in the mission of Jesus the Christ. In Acts 13 Paul says that Christ's disciples, the Church, are commanded to be a "light to the nations." It is the Church's responsibility, therefore, to focus on the whole of humanity. It is the Church, not some cosmic idea, that gathers disciples. And the Church—of which Christ is head—is called to proclaim that Jesus is the Lord of all humanity, not simply "a Christ" for the Christian.

An Outward Movement to the Nations

This world-encountering Church is as broad as all humanity (pluralist), as accepting as Christ's cosmic lordship (inclusivist), and as incorporating and gathering as Christ's disciples (exclusivist). Clearly, the scandal associated with this Church is that it is filled with fallible human beings, yet it is still the Church of Jesus Christ. Just as clearly, the shape of this Church needs to be reconsidered in today's world of multiple religions and cultures. "The Church cannot escape the fact that to confess Jesus as Lord moves it profoundly toward its own universality—a movement outward to the nations. This is climactically presented to us in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20: "Full authority in heaven and on earth has been committed to me. Go forth therefore and make all nations my disciples.'… Thus the mission of Jesus becomes inescapable and utterly binding for all of his disciples. They cannot confess Jesus is Lord without at the same time proclaiming His lordship over all people… So Jesus Christ, the Lord of all people, all creation, and Lord of the Church, sends His people to a radical encounter with the world."

Ultimately any new paradigm of the Christian's response to other cultures involves only a restatement of the mystery of the gospel for all people, a mystery that "for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known…according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In Him and through faith in Him we may approach God with freedom and confidence" (Eph 3:9-12). If Paul and the early Church could so emphatically state such a conviction in the midst of their amazing cultural and religious diversity, we, too, can feel confident in doing so. Although our subject is incredibly complex, the heart of it is really quite simple: "Jesus Christ is Lord." In the midst of many cultures and people of many faiths, we must be bold. We must learn more profoundly how to be evangelists who are faith-particularist, culturally pluralist, and eccesiologically inclusivist.

Reflection Questions

1. Van Engen identifies two presuppositions that must be observed by the "evangelist." What are they and why are they important?
2. Define the approach to other religions that is (1) faith particularist, (2) culturally pluralist, and (3) ecclesiologically inclusivist.

Redemptive Analogy

By Don Richardson — used with permission

When a missionary enters another culture, he or she is conspicuously foreign. This is to be expected, but often the gospel is labeled as foreign, too. How can it be explained so that it seems culturally right?

The New Testament approach is to communicate by way of redemptive analogy. Consider these examples:

> The Jewish people practiced lamb sacrifice. John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus as the perfect, personal fulfillment of that sacrifice by saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes way the sin of the world!" This is redemptive analogy.
>
> When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, a Jewish teacher, both knew that Moses had lifted up a serpent of brass upon a pole so that Jews, dying of snakebite, could look at it and be healed. Jesus told Nicodemus that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This too is redemptive analogy.
>
> A Jewish multitude, recalling that Moses provided miraculous manna on a six-day-a-week basis, hinted that Jesus ought to repeat His miracle of the loaves and fishes on a similar schedule. Jesus replied, "Moses gave you not the true bread from heaven. The true bread from heaven is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world…I am that Bread of Life!" Once again, redemptive analogy.

When some charged that Christianity was destroying Jewish culture, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews showed how Christ actually fulfilled all the central elements of Jewish culture—the priesthood, tabernacle, sacrifices, and even the Sabbath rest. We call these redemptive analogies because they facilitate human understanding of redemption. Their God-ordained purpose is to precondition the mind in a culturally significant way to recognize Jesus as Messiah. Outside of scripture, it appears that God's general revelation is the source of redemptive analogies worldwide (see Ps 19:1-4 and John 1:9).

A Powerful Strategy for Today

This strategy of redemptive analogy can be applied by missionaries today as they discern the particular redemptive analogies of each culture. Consider the advantage: When conversion is facilitated by redemptive analogy, people are made aware of spiritual meaning dormant within their own culture. In this way, conversion does not deny their cultural background. Instead, they experience heightened insight into both the Scriptures and their own cultural heritage, and thus they are better prepared to share Christ meaningfully with other members of their society.

Finding and Using Redemptive Analogies

The Sawi "Peace Child"

As told in the book Peace Child, the Sawi tribe, my wife and I were shocked to learn, honored treachery as a virtue. Accordingly, Judas Iscariot seemed to them to be the hero of the gospel. Within

the Sawi culture, however, existed a means of making peace that required a father to entrust one of his own children to an enemy father who would raise the child. This child was called a “peace child.” At a crucial juncture of tribal strife, we were able to present Christ as God’s “Peace Child.” The Sawi soon grasped the redemptive story of God as the greatest Father giving His Son to reconcile alienated people. Today, seventy percent of the Sawi profess faith in Jesus.

The Damal and the Hai

The Sawi are not the only tribe with a surprising redemptive analogy. Less than a generation ago, the Damal people of Irian Jaya were living in the Stone Age. A subservient tribe, they lived under the shadow of a politically more powerful people called the Dani. The Damal talked of a concept called hai. *Hai* was a Damal term for a long anticipated golden age, a Stone Age utopia in which wars would cease, men would no longer oppress one another and sickness would be rare.

Mugumenday, a Damal leader, yearned to see the advent of *hai*. At the end of his life, he called his son Dem to his side and said, “My son, *hai* has not come during my lifetime. Now you must watch for *hai*. Perhaps it will come before you die.”

Years later, missionary couples entered the Damal valley where Dem lived. After tackling the Damal language, they began to teach the gospel. The people, including Dem, listened politely. Then one day Dem, now a mature adult, rose to his feet and said, “Oh, my people, how long our forefathers waited for hIai. How sadly my father died without seeing it. But now, don’t you understand, these strangers have brought I to us! We must believe their words, or we will miss the fulfillment of our ancient expectation.”

Virtually the entire population welcomed the gospel. Within a few years congregations sprang up in nearly every Damal village. But that was not the end.

The Dani and Nabelan-Kabelan

The Dani, haughty overlords of the Damal, were intrigued by all the excitement in Damal villages. Curious, they sent Damal-speaking Danis to inquire. Learning that the Damal were rejoicing in the fulfillment of their ancient hope, the Dani were stunned. They too had been awaiting the fulfillment of something they called *nabelan-kabelan*. This was the belief that one day immortality would return to humankind.

Was it possible that the message which was *hai* to the Damal could also be *nabelan-kabelan* to the Dani? By then one of the missionary couples, Gordon and Peggy Larson, had been assigned to work among the Dani. Dani warriors noted that they often mentioned a man named Jesus who not only could raise the dead but Himself as well. Suddenly, things feel into place for the Dani as they had for the Damal. The word spread. In valley after valley, the once barbarous Dani listened to the words of life. A church was born.

The Asmat and the “New Birth”

The concept of “new birth” relates to Irian Jaya’s stone-age Asmat tribe through another redemptive analogy. Nicodemus, a learned Jewish scholar, had difficulty understanding what Jesus meant when He spoke of people being born again. Nicodemus asked, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter into his mother’s womb a second time and be born?” Yet the new birth of the gospel can be understood by Irian Jaya’s Asmat tribe. They have a way of making peace that requires children from two warring villages to pass through a symbolic birth canal formed by the bodies of a number of

men and women from both villages. Those who pass through the canal are considered reborn into the kinship system of their enemy's village. Rocked, lullabied, cradled, and coddled like newborn infants, they become the focus of a joyful celebration. From then on, they may travel freely back and forth between the two formerly warring villages, serving as living peace bonds. For centuries, this custom has impressed deeply upon the Asmat mind the vital concept: True peace can come only through a new birth experience!

Suppose God called you to communicate the gospel to the Asmat people. What would be your logical starting point? Let us assume you have learned their language and are competent enough to discuss the things that are dear to their hearts. One day you visit a typical Asmat man—let's call him Erypeet—in his longhouse. First you discuss with him the former period of war and the new birth transaction that brought it to an end. Then you say, "Erypeet, I too am very interested in new birth. You see, I was at war with an enemy named God. While I was at war with God, life was grim, as it was for you and your enemies. But one day my enemy God approached me and said, 'I have prepared a new birth whereby I can be born in you and you can be born again in Me, so that we can be at peace…'"

By this time Erypeet is leaning forward on his mat. "You and your people have a new birth too?" he asks. He is amazed to find that you, an alien, are sophisticated enough to even *think* in terms of a new birth, let alone *experience* one!

"Yes," you reply.
"Is it like ours?"
"Well, there are some similarities and there are some differences," you say. "Let me tell you about them…" And Erypeet understands.

Why the difference between Erypeet's and Nicodemus's responses? Erypeet's mind has been pre-conditioned by Asmat redemptive analogy to acknowledge man's need for a new birth. Your task is to convince him that he needs *spiritual* rebirth.

Do redemptive analogies like these occur by mere coincidence? No, because their strategic use is foreshadowed in the New Testament, and because they are so widespread, we can discern the grace of God at work. After all, our God is far too sovereign to be merely lucky.

The Yali and the Osuwa

Has a culture been found that is lacking concepts that form redemptive analogies? A formidable candidate for this grim distinction was the cannibal Yali culture of Irian Jaya described in *Lords of the Earth*. If ever a tribe needed a Christ-foreshadowing belief that a missionary could appeal to, it was the Yali. By 1966, missionaries of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union (now World Team) had succeeded in winning about twenty Yali to Christ. Priests of the Yali god Kembu promptly martyred two of the twenty. Two years later, they killed missionaries Stan Dale and Phillip Masters, driving about one hundred arrows into each of their bodies. Then the Indonesian government, also threatened by the Yali, stepped in to quell further uprisings. Awed by the power of the government, the Yali decided they would rather have missionaries than soldiers. But the missionaries could find no analogy in Yali culture to make the gospel clear.

Another missionary and I conducted a much belated "culture probe" to learn more about Yali customs and beliefs. One day a young Yali named Erariek shared with us a story from his past. He said, "Long ago my brother Sunahan and a friend named Kahalek were ambushed by enemies from across the

river. Kahalek was killed, but Sunahan fled to a circular stone wall nearby. Leaping inside it, he turned, bared his chest at his enemies, and laughed at them. The enemies immediately lowered their weapons and hurried away."

I nearly dropped my pen. "Why didn't they kill him?" I asked.

Erariek smiled. "If they had shed one drop of my brother's blood while he stood within that sacred stone wall—we call it an *osuwa*—their own people would have killed them."

Yali pastors and the missionaries working with them now have a new evangelistic tool. Christ is the spiritual *osuwa*, the perfect place of refuge. Yali culture instinctively echoes the Christian teaching that man needs a place of refuge. Ages earlier they had established a network of *osuwa* in areas where most of their battles took place. Missionaries had noticed the stone walls but had never discovered their full significance.

Using Indigenous Names for God

Another special category of redemptive analogy relates to usable names for God—aliases for Elohim—found in thousands of languages worldwide. Christians err whenever we too readily assume that pagans know nothing of God. In fact, a startling number of pagan cultures possess amazing clear concepts about a Supreme God who created all things. Scripture tells us to expect this because of God's general revelation both through creation and conscience. For example:

1. "Since the creation of the world," Paul the Apostle wrote, "God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being under-stood from what has been made, so that men are with-out excuse" (Rom 1:20). This belief, that men already know something about God even before they hear of either Jewish law or the Christian gospel, was a cornerstone of Paul's theology of evangelism. He expressed it in a Lycaonian town called Lystra, proclaiming that "in the past, He (God) let all nations go their own way; yet He has not left Himself without testimony. He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven," etc. (Acts 14:16, 17).

2. In his famous letter to Roman Christians, Paul wrote that "when Gentiles do by nature things required by the law, they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts" (Rom 2:14,15).

3. John the Apostle declared that Jesus Christ is "the true Light that gives light to every man" (John 1:9). And King Solomon wrote that God has "set eternity in the hearts of men." He added the cautionary statement that man of himself still "cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end" (Eccl 3:11). According to the Hebrew scholar Gleason Archer, Solomon's statement means that humankind has a God-given ability to grasp the concept of eternity, with all its unsettling implications for moral beings.

4. It was Solomon's father, King David, who penned the eloquent appreciation of God's universal testimony to Himself through creation that reads "the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the works of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the end of the world" (Ps. 19:1-4). David then focuses upon the sun, describing it as a "bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion" and a "champion rejoicing to run his course" (Ps 19:5,6). Perhaps more than any other scripture, this one fittingly introduces King Pachacutec.

Pachacutec's Mini-Reformation

Pachacutec may be history's finest example of what Paul, John, Solomon, and David meant in the above quotations. Pachacutec was an Inca who lived between A.D. 1400 and 1448. He was also the entrepreneur who designed and built Macchu Picchu, perhaps the first mountain resort in the New World. After the Spanish invasion of Peru, Macchu Picchu became a last sanctuary for the Inca upper class.

Pachacutec and his people worshipped the sun, which they called Inti. But Pachacutec became suspicious of Inti's credentials. Like King David, King Pachacutec studied the sun. It never did anything, as far as Pachacutec could tell, except rise, shine, cross the zenith, and set. The next day, the same thing—rise, shine, cross the zenith, set. Unlike David, who likened the sun to a bridegroom or a champion, Pachacutec said, "Inti seems to be but a laborer who has to perform the same chores daily. And if he is merely a laborer, surely he cannot be God! If Inti were God, Inti would do something original once in a while!

He thought again and observed, "Mere mist dims the light of Inti. Surely if Inti were God, nothing could dim his light!" Thus did Pachacutec tumble to a crucial realization—he had been worshipping a mere *thing* as creator!

But if Inti wasn't God, to whom could Pachacutec turn? Then he remembered a name his father had once extolled—Viracocha! According to his father, Viracocha was none other than a god who created all things. All things including Inti! Pachacutec came to a brisk decision. This Inti-as-God nonsense had gone far enough! He called an assembly of the priests of the sun, a pagan equivalent of a Nicene Council. Standing before the assembly, Pachacutec explained his reasoning about the supremacy of Viracocha. Then he commanded that Inti, from that time forward, be addressed as "kinsman" only. Prayer, he said, must be directed to Viracocha, the supreme God.

While generally ignoring Pachacutec, scholars have widely acclaimed Akhenaten, an Egyptian King (1379-1361 B.C.), as a man of rare genius because he attempted to replace the grossly confused idolatry of ancient Egypt with the purer, simpler worship of the sun as sole God. Pachacutec, however, was leagues ahead of Akhenaten in his realization that the sun, which could merely blind human eyes, was no match for a God too great even to be seen by human eyes. If Akhenaten's sun worship was a step above idolatry, Pachacutect's choice of an invisible God was a leap into the stratosphere!

Why have modern scholars, religious as well as secular, virtually ignored this amazing man? Perhaps it was because Pachacutec stopped short of an even greater achievement. One important measure of a man of genius is his ability to communicate his insight to "common" people. Great religious leaders from Moses to Buddha and Paul to Luther have all excelled in this skill. Pachacutec never even tried. Deeming the masses of his people too ignorant to appreciate the worth of an invisible God, he deliberately left them in the dark about Viracocha. Pachacutec's reformation, amazing as it was, because only a mini-reformation, limited to upper classes only. Upper classes are notoriously short-lived social phenomena. Less than a century after Pachacutec's death, ruthless conquistadors obliterated the upper classes of Pachacutec's empire and his reformation ended.

Was Viracocha really the true God, the God of creation? Or was her merely a figment of Pachacutec's imagination, an impostor? If Paul the Apostle had lived in Pachacutec's day, and if one of his missionary journeys had taken him all the way to Peru, would he have denounced

Pachacutec's insight as a delusion? Or would he have agreed that "Yahweh's name in this land is Viracocha." It's not difficult to deduce Paul's attitude toward this question. When he preached the gospel among Greek-speaking peoples, he did not impose a Jewish name for God—Jehovah, Yahweh, Elohim, Adonai or El Shaddai—upon them. Rather he placed his apostolic seal upon a two-hundred-year-old decision of the translators of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. They had given the God of the Jews a completely Greek name—Theos. Paul followed suit.

Interestingly, translators of the Septuagint did not try to equate the Greek god Zeus with Yahweh. Nor did Paul. Although Greeks esteemed Zeus as "king of the gods," he was also viewed as the offspring of two other gods, Cronus and Rhea. Hence the name Zeus could not qualify as a synonym for Yahweh, the uncreated. Later, the Latin cognate of Theos – Deus—was accepted as the equivalent of Yahweh for Roman Christians! And when Paul preached the gospel in Athens, he boldly equated Yahweh with an "unknown God" that was associated with a certain altar in the city. Paul said, "What you worship as something unknown I am about to proclaim to you!"

An Opportunity for the Gospel

A principle emerges. Contrary to the belief of Jehovah's Witnesses, there is nothing innately sacred about any particular combination of sounds or letters as a name for the Almighty. He can have ten thousand aliases, if need be, in ten thousand languages. It is impossible to talk about an uncreated Creator without meaning HIM. Anyone capable of protesting that "some of His attributes are missing" is responsible to fill them in! Any theological vacuum surrounding any culture's concept of God is not an obstacle to the gospel—it's an opportunity!

As it has spread around the world, Christianity has continued to confirm, from Paul's time to now, the concept of a Supreme God in a thousand human traditions:

- When Celtic missionaries reached the Anglo-Saxons in northern Europe, they did not impose upon them Jewish or Greek names for Deity. Instead they used Anglo-Saxon words like "Gott," "God" or "Gut."

- In 1828 American Baptist missionaries, George and Sarah Boardman, found the Karen people of southern Burma believing that a great God name Y'wa (shades of Yaweh) had long ago given their forefathers a sacred book! Also, the forefathers, rascals that they were, had lost it! But according to a persistent Karen tradition, one day a white brother would restore the lost book to the Karen people, bringing them back into fellowship with Y'wa. The tradition predicted that he would appear carrying black object under his arm. George Boardman, who had a habit of tucking his black, leather-bound Bible under this arm, became the white brother, and a hundred thousand Karen people were baptized as believers within a few decades!

- In 1867 Norwegian Lutheran missionary, Lars Skrefsrud, found thousands of Santal people in India wistfully regretting their forefathers' rejection of Thakur Jiu, the genuine God. Skrefsrud proclaimed that Thakur Jiu's Son had come to earth to reconcile estranged humanity to himself. The result: Within a few decades, over a hundred thousand Santal received Jesus Christ as their Savior!

- Presbyterian pioneers in Korea discovered a Korean name for God—Hananim, the Great One. Rather than sweeping Hananim aside and imposing a foreign name for God, they proclaimed Jesus Christ the Son of Hananim. Within some eight years, more than two and a half million Koreans have become followers of Jesus Christ!

- ❖ During the 1940's, Albert Brant of the Sudan Interior Mission found thousands of Gedeo tribesmen in Ethiopia believing that Magano, the Creator, would one day send a messenger to camp under a certain sycamore tree. Unsuspectingly, Albert camped under that tree and an awesome response to the gospel began, bringing 250 churches to birth in less than three decades.

These breakthrough narratives can be multiplied by the hundreds from the history of missions. Truly Paul, John, Solomon, and David were right! God has not left Himself without the witnesses of general revelation. How tragic that earlier generations were not swifter to obey the Great Commission. What might have happened if gospel messengers had helped Pachacutec to find in Jesus Christ the fulfillment of what he—because eternity was in his heart—knew must be true?

How many other Pachacutecs will die unconfirmed? How many generations of Pachacutecs will rise up in the judgment to join Ninevah and the Queen of Sheba in reproach of indifferent believers (Luke 11:31-32)? Let us strive to be—for our generation—the Boardmans, the Skrefruds, the Brants, who care enough to go and tell!

In our generation, the choice of language to refer to God is a crucial matter. For example, some Christians believe that Islam's Arabic name for God, Allah, should not be accepted as a viable synonym for Elohim. Let it be known that millions of Christians in Indonesia use Allah for God and Tuhan Allah for Lord God. Perhaps because of this, Indonesian Christians have been much more effective in winning Muslims to Christ than any other Christians. Let it also be known that Muslims in some Muslim nations, knowing the access the name Allah gives to the Muslim heart, are passing laws to forbid Christians from using it in reference to the gospel of Christ.

Concepts like the Sawi Peace Child, the Damal *hai*, the Dani *nabelan-kabelan*, the Asmat new birth and the Yali *osuwa* are at the heart of the cultures of humankind. When messengers of the gospel ignore, discredit, or obliterate distinctives like these, resistance to the gospel may harden into cultural concrete. But as redemptive analogy identifies and confirms the cultural components that result from God's influence through general revelation, the Bible itself, God's special revelation, can be lifted up as the consummate revelation of God, from God, and for God.

Hundreds of areas remain where the response to the gospel has been slight, or even non-existent. In these areas, sensitive probes of culture may discover wonderful possibilities for the penetration of the gospel through redemptive analogy.

Reflection Questions

1. Imagine yourself as a new missionary. How will you apply the strategy of looking for a redemptive analogy among the people you are working with?

2. How does the concept of general revelation affect how missionaries convey biblical truth in other cultures?

3. How can using indigenous names for God help communicate the special revealed truth of God's name as found in Scripture?

Missions and Money

By Phil Parshall – used with permission

Gary, an outstanding young missionary in a South Asian country, was thrilled to have a significant part in leading three middle-aged men to Christ. These hard working, low-income farmers from a Muslim background delighted n their opportunity to spend time each week drinking sweet tea and discussing their new-found faith with Gary. What a wonderful affirmation of Gary's calling it was to have fellowship with these first three believers in a district of several million Muslims.

One overcast January afternoon, the men arrived at Gary's small rented home with an urgent request. They complained of the bitterly cold winds that were relentlessly blowing through the cracks in their thatch huts. Though Gary had purposely adopted a simple lifestyle, it was still obvious to the believers that his two young daughters were comfortable wrapped in warm clothes. The spokesman for the group asked if Gary might share some blankets and castoff garments to help their children fight off the frigid winds that blew through their homes each evening.

How would you respond to these seemingly legitimate requests? What are the issues that complicate a response? Later in this article you will find Gary's reply to the men.

Biblical Perspectives
Ponder these Exhortations:

Luke 6:30: "Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back."

Luke 12:33: "Sell your possession and give to the poor."

1 John 3:17: "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need, but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?"

James 2:15-17, more specifically to Gary's dilemma: "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action is dead."

These are powerful scriptures usually met with exposition which undercuts the simple meaning of the text. I, too, am guilty. If I had followed these exhortations to their literal conclusion in Bangladesh, then I would have ended up standing naked in an open field!

One rather well-off missionary residing in a destitute Asian country sought to be a literalist. Each morning a huge crowd of unruly, poorly clothed beggars waiting impatiently at his gate for their daily allocation of rupees. Even then, the money given would only purchase a basic meal, certainly not enough to buy warm clothes for their shivering bodies. And then, one day the beggars arrived to find an empty home. The missionary had called it quits and returned to his homeland where he would no longer have to face such a hermeneutical dilemma. As for the beggars, their emotional reaction to sudden deprivation was more anger than appreciation for the assistance they had received for the past years.

There will be variations on the theme of money and missions, such as, who are the “Westerners”? Are they short-termers or those committed to multiple years on the field? Tentmakers are presented with a unique set of problems. They may be regarded as extremely wealthy, as well as excellent conduits to gainful employment. Urban versus rural living will place the Westerner in different relationship with his or her target audience. Ministering among the wealthy reduces the changes of financial hassles, while the poor exacerbate the potential conflict.

Money builds and money destroys. On the positive side, Western funding has assisted innumerable evangelism and social projects throughout history. The poor have profited physically and spiritually from such tangible acts of compassion. However, the downside is the insidious slide toward dependence on the part of the receiver. I have yet to see such a dependent relationship that I feel good about.

For many years in Bangladesh, I was the “boss” of ten clerical workers in our large correspondence school office in the capital city, Dhaka. I was also involved in several relief outreaches that assisted literally thousands of poor people in our beleaguered country. The end result of this interaction with those in some way subservient to me was that I was called “*Boro Sahib*,” the English equivalent being a “V.I.P.”

To me this was uncomfortable designation signifying dominance as well as relational distance. To the Bengalis, this was indicative of the fact that I was a power person from whom many good things could be obtained. After some years, my wife and I went to live in a rented house in a small town far from Dhaka. From the day this foreign couple arrived until we left, I was only referred to as “*Bhai*” or “brother.” With no employees and no trappings of ostentation, this “power person” had left behind all the vestiges of prestige. I was now much more at one with the Muslim people I had come to be incarnate among. I had been welcomed into the brotherhood. How good it felt!

Different Views Concerning Relationships and Money by: Joseph Cumming
Muslim and Western views on Money can be very different. These observations apply not only to Muslim cultures, but in many places of the non-Western world.

Muslim	Westerner
If a needy person receives gifts for a particular need, and then an even more pressing need arises, then it is legitimate to use those gifts for the more pressing need.	This is morally wrong unless explicitly authorized by the donor.
The way to refuse giving should not be by saying, “No.” The refusal must be indirect, so there is no embarrassment to the one asking.	It is appropriate to be truthful and say, “No.”
Rules should be honored, but to show mercy is more important because of the high value of maintaining good relationships.	Rules are rules. Period.
When you request and receive financial assistance or help with a job or strings pulled with government bureaucracy, this places certain obligations on you. You must become a loyal supporter of your patron.	A supporter only within ethical and moral boundaries. The healthiest, happiest friendships are those where money does not change hands.

Possible Solutions
There is no way I can hope to postulate definitive answers to this massive problem in the next few paragraphs. What I can hope to achieve is to make a few suggestions that might possibly be helpful to some.

Lifestyle Issues
This is a problem that refuses to go away. Even the most dedicated outsider finds it extremely difficult to downgrade his or her standard of living to that of the target audience within a poor context. Those who sincerely try often find the emotional and physical test too much to bear. At that point, they either transfer to a large city with its offered amenities or return to their home country.

For some, a mission compound left over from colonial days offers a sequestered alternative. Comfortable, secure housing arrangements are an oasis in the desert (sometimes literally). But I have never felt comfortable with such a solution. We are called to be light in the community. The paradox of this can at times be seen in the generator-lit homes of the foreigners while the local people sit in semi-darkness gathered around a small kerosene-powered lamp. Even if it is a financially expedient to occupy such compound housing, I feel it is time to redeploy our people and move into housing within the target community. It has been my family's privilege to have never lived in a cloistered Christian community during our missionary career.

Who is our target audience? If it is the wealthy, then lifestyle compatibility with them pretty well undercuts this as a problem. But a ministry to the poor exacerbates the complexity of the identification process. It seems prudent to me to enter one's ministry area at as low a financial profile as possible. Then, as necessary, move upward. Those who come in at a higher level seldom move downward. But emotional stability and physical well-being are of utmost importance. I have known missionaries who have held tenaciously to extreme simplicity only to be forced to return home shattered in mind and body. Such a scenario profits no one.

Support of Local Ministers
Westerners are often result-oriented people. They argue that so much more can be accomplished in church planting ministry by putting local people on salary. They are the one who know their people, are experts at their language, can live simply, and are agreeable to perform the tasks assigned to them by their financial patrons. More for less. What could be better?

Well… several things could be better. Dependance (for as long as the money lasts) is at the highest level. I can give many illustrations of angry nationals who have cursed the foreigner when he closed the valve on foreign funding. Then there is the perception of the minister on the part of the local non-Christian population, i.e., the target audience. They undervalue the propagator of a "foreign religion" who is only a paid vender, doing the bidding of an expat with lots of money.

The problems are daunting. In my own mission experience, my team found several ways to address this issue. One way forward for our team was to request the loan of a Muslim background believer (MBB) from Operation Mobilization (OM). This quality evangelizer knew Islam and he knew his people, including their folklore. He and his family lived very simply, as we Westerners also sough to do. And best of all, we were colleagues in ministry. OM provided the family with a stipend, thus being a more indirect source of funding. Because of his competence, we never heard Muslims assign him the "vendor" designation. In that geographical area there had never been a Muslim come to Christ. Today there are over 600 MBBs. This national believer was the sparkplug to all that happened.

In the Philippines, we were privileged to work with churches willing to be involved in church planning among the resistant. It was exciting to see Filipino Christians involved, no only in going, but also in supporting. Particularly thrilling to see was the Chinese Filipino Church taking on financial responsibility for non-Chinese evangelists.

Other Issues

But what about the unrelenting requests for loans in certain very poor countries? For years, I capitulated to those entreaties. Unfortunately, I lost both money and "friends". In the end, I decided to close down the loan business and only give grants. The amounts were decided on the basis of need, advice from others, and last but not least, by prayer. As much as possible, I tried to keep in sync with what the surrounding community was giving…plus a bit extra as I am, after all, the rich foreigner!

And finally, back to Gary. As he faced the new believers, he realized his gift of clothes would do three things: 1) keep their children warm; 2) signal to the onlooking Muslims that these three men had betrayed religion and society for material benefit; 3) activate a dependence syndrome that would not only stunt these men's spiritual lives, but would also hinder, if not curtail, a future movement to Christ in the area.

All the above was humbly communicated to the hopeful men who stood before Gary. They were assured of the ability of prayer-answering God to meet their needs. Without a great deal of enthusiasm, they returned to their village some three miles distant.

Gary prayed much over the next week. When the men came again, they joyfully told how the Lord had met their needs and that now all was well. In the ensuing decades these three men became the foundation of a group that now exceeds 500 baptized believers. In that area, dependency on foreign funds has been minimal.

No one size fits all. There will need to be much experimentation and adaptation in each context. But I am convinced this should be a front burner subject in our missiological discussions. Our approach determines whether we are building our foundation on rock or on sand.

Culture, Worldview, and Contextualization

By Charles H. Kraft — used with permission

A key question for Christians who work cross-culturally is, "What is God's view of culture?" For example, is Jewish culture created by God and therefore to be imposed on everyone who follows God? Or is there some indication in Scripture that God takes a different position? I believe we have our answer in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22, where Paul articulates his (and God's) approach to cultural diversity. Paul says, "While working with Jews, I live like a Jew" but "when working with Gentiles, I live like a Gentile." His approach, then, is to "become all things to all men, that I may save some of them by whatever means are possible."

The early Christians were Jewish. It was natural for them to believe that the cultural forms in which the gospel came to them were the right ones for everyone. They believed everyone who comes to Jesus must also convert to Jewish culture, but God used the apostle Paul, himself a Jew, to teach his generation and ours a different approach. In the above text, he articulates God's approach. Then in Acts 15:2 and following, we find him arguing fiercely against the majority position of the early church for the right of Gentiles to follow Jesus *within* their own socio-cultural contexts. God Himself had shown first Peter (Acts 10), then Paul and Barnabas, that this was the right way, by giving the Holy Spirit to Gentiles who had not converted to Jewish culture (Acts 13-14).

But the Church has continually forgotten the lesson Acts 15. We have continually reverted to the assumption that becoming Christian means becoming like us culturally. When, after New Testament times, the church required everyone to adopt Roman culture, God raised up Luther to prove that God could accept people who spoke German and worshipped in German ways. Then Anglicanism arose to show that God could use English language and customs, and Wesleyanism arose to let the common people of England know that God accepted them in their culture. So it has been that there are major cultural issues in the development of every new denomination.

But sadly, the problem persists. Communicators of the gospel continue imposing their culture or denomination on new converts. If, then, we take a scriptural approach, we should adapt ourselves and our presentation of God's message to the culture of the receiving people, not misrepresent God as some early Jewish Christians did (Acts 15:1) by requiring that converts become like us to be acceptable to God.

Culture and Worldview Defined

The term *culture* is the label anthropologists give to the structured customs and underlying worldview assumptions which govern people's lives. Culture (including worldview) is a people's way of life, their design for living, their way of coping with their biological, physical and social environment. It consists of learned, patterned assumptions (worldview), concepts and behavior, plus the resulting artifacts (material culture).

Worldview, the deep level of culture, is the culturally structured set of assumptions (including values and commitments/allegiances) underlying how a people perceive and respond to reality. Worldview is *not separate* from culture. It is *included* in culture as the deepest level of presuppositions upon which people base their lives.

A culture may be likened to a river with a surface level and a deep level. The surface is visible. Most of the river, however, lies beneath the surface and is largely invisible. Anything that happens on the surface of the river is affected by deep-level phenomena such as the current, the cleanness or dirtiness of the river, other objects in the river, and son on. What happens on the surface of a river is both a response to external phenomena and a manifestation of the deep-level characteristics of the river.

So it is with culture. What we see on the surface of a culture is patterned human behavior. But this patterned or structured behavior, though impressive, is the lesser part of the culture. In the depths are the assumptions we call *worldview*, on the basis of which people govern their surface-level behavior. When something affects the surface of a culture it may change that level. The nature and extent of that change, however, will be influenced by the deep-level worldview structuring within the culture.

Culture (including worldview) is a matter of structure or patterns. Culture does not *do* anything. Culture is like the script an actor follows. The script provides guidelines within which actors ordinarily operate, though they may choose on occasion to modify the script, either because they have for-gotten something or because some-one else changed things.

There are several levels of culture. The “higher” the level, the more diversity is included in it. For example, we may speak of culture at a multinational level as “Western culture” (or worldview), or “Asian culture,” or “African culture.” Such cultural entities include a large number of quite distinct national cultures. For example, with *Western culture* there are varies called German, French, Italian, British and American. Within *Asian culture* are varieties called Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. These national cultures, then, can include many *subcultures*. In America, for example, we have Hispanic Americans, American Indians, Korean American, and so on. Within these subcultures we can speak of *community cultures, family cultures* and even *individual cultures*.

In addition, the term “culture” can designate types of strategies (or coping mechanisms) used by people of many different societies. Thus, we can speak of entities such as a *culture of poverty, deaf culture, youth culture, culture of factory workers, taxi drivers’ culture,* even *culture of women*. Identifying people in this way is often helpful in working out strategies for their evangelization.

People and Culture

It has been common for both non-specialists and specialists to refer to culture as if it were a person. We often hear statements such as “Their culture *makes* them do it,” or “their worldview *determines* their view of reality.” Note that the italicized verbs in these statements give the impression that a culture behaves like a person.

The “power” that keeps people following their cultural script is something inside of people –the power of habit. *Culture has no power in and of itself*. People regularly modify old customs and create new ones, though the habits that result in great conformity are strong. It is important that cross-cultural witnesses recognize both the possibility of change and the place and power of habit.

The distinction we are making is embodied in the contrast between the words culture and society. Culture refers to the structure, but society refers to the people themselves. When we feel pressure to conform, it is the pressure of people (i.e., social pressure) that we feel, not the pressure of cultural patterning (the script) itself.

The chart below summarizes the distinction between people's behavior and the cultural structuring of that behavior.

People (Society)	Culture
Surface-Level Behavior What we do, think, say or feel, either consciously or unconsciously, mostly habitually but also creatively	**Surface-Level Structure** The cultural patterns in terms of which we habitually do, think, say or feel
Deep-Level Behavior Assuming, evaluating, and committing mostly habitually but also creatively: 1. Concerning choosing, feeling, reasoning, interpreting, and valuing. 2. Concerning the assigning of meaning. 3. Concerning explaining, relating to others, committing our-selves, and adapting to or deciding to try to change things that go on around us.	**Deep-Level Structure** (Worldview) The patterns in terms of which we carry out the assumptions, evaluations, and commitments of deep-level behavior. Patterns of choosing, feeling, reasoning, interpreting, valuing, explaining, relating to others, committing ourselves and adapting to or deciding to try to change things that go on around us.

Cultures and Worldviews Are to Be Respected

Cultural / worldview structuring functions both outside of us and inside of us. We are totally submerged in it, relating to it much as a fish relates to water. And we are usually as unconscious of it as a fish must be of the water or as we usually are of the air we breathe. Indeed, many of us only notice culture when we go into another cultural territory and observe customs different from our own.

Unfortunately, when we see others living according to cultural patterns and with worldview assumptions different from our own we often feel sorry for them, as if their ways are inferior to ours. We may seek ways to "rescue" them from their customs.

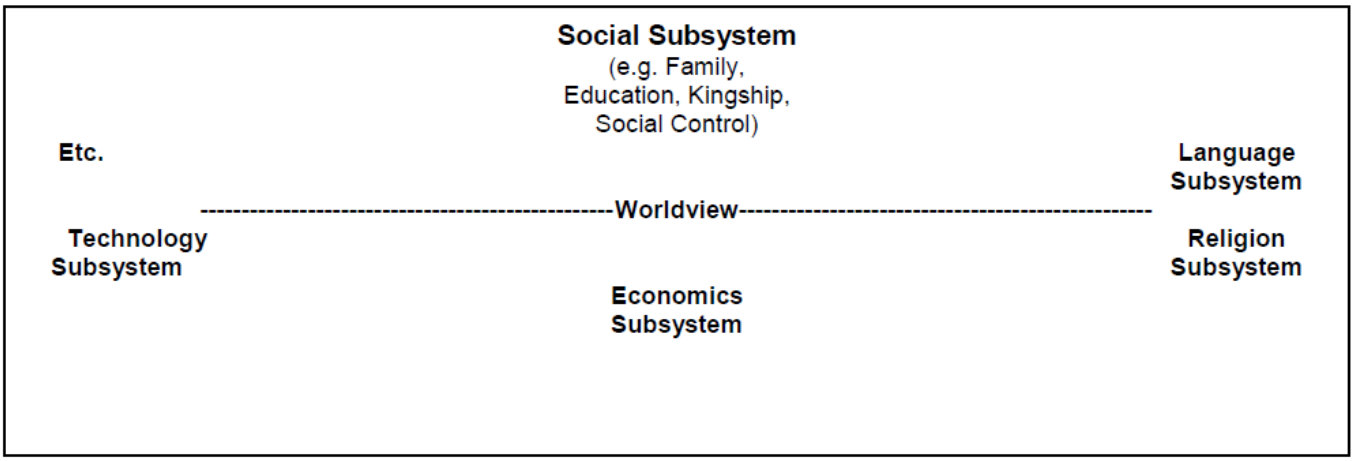
The way of Jesus is, however, to honor a people's culture and its incorporated worldview, not to wrest them from it. Just as He entered the cultural life of the Jews to communicate with them, so we are to enter the cultural matrix of the people we seek to win. Following Jesus' example, we note that working from within involves a biblical critique of a people's culture and worldview assumptions as well as acceptance of them as starting points. If we are to witness effectively, we have to speak and behave in ways that honor the only way of life they have ever known. Likewise, if the Church is to be meaningful to receiving peoples, it needs to be as appropriate to their cultural lives as the early Church was to the lives of first century peoples. We call such appropriate churches "dynamic equivalence churches" (Kraft 1979), "contextualized churches" or "inculturated churches."

The Subsystems of Culture

With worldview at the center influencing all of culture, we can divide surface-level culture in subsystems. These subsystems provide various behavioral expressions of worldview assumptions.

Missionaries may be tempted to replace traditional religion with the religious forms of Western Christianity. Christian witness, however, is to be directed at the worldview of a people so that it influences each of the subsystems from the very core of the culture. There are many cultural sub-systems, some of which are diagrammed in the chart on the following page. Truly converted people (whether in American or overseas) need to manifest biblical Christian attitudes and behavior in all of their cultural life, not just in their religious practices.

If we are to reach people for Christ and to see them gathered into Christ-honoring and culture-affirming churches, we will have to deal with them within their culture and in terms of their worldview. It is hoped that by understanding more of what culture and worldview are all about, we can deal with them more wisely than might otherwise have been the case.



Worldview and Culture Change

Just as anything that affects the roots of a tree influences its fruit, so anything that affects a people's worldview will affect the whole culture and, of course, the people who operate in terms of that culture.

Jesus knew this. When He wanted to get across important points, He aimed at the worldview level. Someone asked, "Who is my neighbor?" so He told them a story and then asked who was being neighborly (Luke 10:29-37). He was leading them to reconsider and, hopefully, change a basic value deep down in their system. On another occasion Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your friends, hate your enemies.' But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you…. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap your left cheek too (Matt 5:39,43,44, GNB)." Again the seeds were being planted for change at the deep worldview level.

Deep-level change frequently throws things off balance. Any imbalance at the worldview center of a culture tends to cause difficulty through the rest of the culture. For example, the U.S. believed at the worldview level that she could not be defeated in war, but then did not win in Vietnam. In the following years, a deep sense of demoralization rippled throughout the society, contributing greatly to the disequilibrium of the era.

Well-meaning people can cause major worldview problems when they introduce good changes and apply them at the surface level without due attention to the deep-level meanings people attach to them. For example, the missionary requirement that Africans with more than one wife must divorce the "extras" before they can be baptized leads both Christian and non-Christian Africans to certain

worldview assumptions concerning the Christian God. Among these are: God is against the real leaders of African society; God is not in favor of women having help and companionship around the home. God wants men to be enslaved to a single wife (like whites seem to be), and God favors divorce, social irresponsibility and even prostitution. None of these conclusions is irrational or far-fetched from their point of view. Though we believe God intends that each man have only one wife, this change was forced too quickly, unlike God's patient approach in the Old Testament where He took many generations to do away with the custom.

Even good changes, if they are introduced in a wrong way can lead to cultural degradation or even immorality. Among the Ibibio people of southern Nigeria, the message of God's forgiveness resulted in many people turning to the Christian God because He was seen as more lenient than their traditional god. The converts saw no need to be righteous, since they believed God would always forgive them of whatever they did. In aboriginal Australia, among the Yir Yoront people, missionaries introduced steel axes to replace the traditional stone axes. This had a powerful disruptive effect simply because the axes were given to the women and younger men, who traditionally were required to borrow axes from the older men. This change, though providing the people with better technology, challenged their worldview assumptions. It led to the destruction of the authority of the leaders, widespread social disruption and the near extinction of the people.

Contextualized (Appropriate) Christianity

The aim of Christian witness is to see people come to Christ and to be formed into groups we call churches that are both biblically and culturally appropriate. The process by which the church becomes "inculturated" in the life of a people has been called "indigenization," but now is more frequently referred to as "contextualization."

The contextualization of Christianity is part and parcel of the New Testament record. This is the process that the apostles were involved in as they took the Christian message that had come to them in the Aramaic language and culture and communicated it to those who spoke Greek. In order to contextualize Christianity for Greek speakers, the apostles expressed Christian truth in the thought patterns of their receptors. Indigenous words and concepts were used (and transformed in their usage) to deal with topics such as God, church, sin conversion, repentance, initiation, "word" (*logos*), and most other areas of Christian life and practice.

The early Greek churches were in danger of being dominated by Jewish religious practices because those who led them were Jews. God, however, led the apostle Paul and others to struggle against the Jewish Christians to develop a contextualized Christianity for Greek-speaking Gentiles. In order to do this, Paul had to fight a running battle with many of the Jewish church leaders who felt that it was the job of Christian preachers to simply imposed Jewish theological concepts on new converts (see Acts 15). These conservative Jews were the heretics against whom Paul fought for the right for Greek-speaking Christians to have the gospel expressed in their language and culture. We conclude from such passages as Act 10 and 15 that it is the intent of God that biblical Christianity be "reincarnated" in every language and culture at every point in history.

Biblically, the contextualization of Christianity is not simply to be the passing on of a *product* that has been developed once for all in Europe or America. It is, rather, the imitating of the *process* that the early apostles went through. To return to our tree analogy, Christianity is not supposed to be like a tree that was nourished and grew in one society and then was transplanted to a new cultural environment, with leaves, branches, and fruit that mark it indelibly as a product of the sending society.

The gospel is to be *planted as a seed* that will sprout within and be nourished by the rain and nutrients in the cultural soil of the receiving peoples. What sprouts from true gospel seed may look quite different above ground from the way it looked in the sending society, but beneath the ground at the worldview level, the roots are to be the same and the life comes from the same source.

In a truly contextualized church, the essential message will be the same and the central doctrines of our faith will be in clear focus, since they are based on the same Bible. The formulation of that message and the relative prominence of many of the issues addressed will differ from society to society, though. For instance, what the Bible says about family relationships, fear and evil spirits, and the advocacy of dance and prescribed rituals will be much more apparent in contextualized African Christianity than in America.

Though many non-Western churches today are dominated by Western approaches to doctrine and worship, it is not scriptural that they remain so. There are, of course, similar basic problems (e.g., the problem of sin, the need for a relationship with Christ) that peoples of all societies need to deal with, but those problems need to be approached in different, culturally appropriate ways for each cultural group. Christianity should be perceived as excitingly relevant to the problems people struggle with in their context.

Contextualizing Christianity is Very Risky

There are great risks involved in attempting to promote a Christianity that is relevant culturally and appropriate biblically. The risk of syncretism is always present. Syncretism is the mixing of Christian assumptions with those worldview assumptions that are incompatible with Christianity so that the result is not biblical Christianity.

Syncretism exists whenever people practice Christian rituals because they consider them magic, or use the Bible to cast spells on people or, as in India, consider Jesus just another of many human manifestations of one of their deities, or as in Latin America, practice pagan divination and witchcraft right in the churches, or insist that people convert to a different culture to become Christians. In America it is syncretistic, unbiblical Christianity that sees “the American way of life” as identical with biblical Christianity or assumes that by generating enough faith we can pressure God into giving us whatever we want, or that we should out of love and tolerance regard homosexuality and even homosexual “marriage” to go unopposed despite clear biblical condemnations.

There are at least two paths to syncretism. One is by importing foreign expressions of the faith and allowing the receiving people to attach their own worldview assumptions to these practices. The result is a kind of “nativistic” Christianity or even, as in Latin America, “Christo-paganism.” Roman Catholic missionaries, especially, have fallen into this trap by assuming that when people practice so-called “Christian” rituals and use “Christian” terminology, those behaviors have the same meanings that the missionaries ascribe to them.

The other way to syncretism is to so dominate a receiving people’s practice of Christianity that the surface-level practices and the deep-level assumptions are imported. The result is a totally foreign, unadopted kind of Christianity that requires people to worship and practice their faith according to foreign patterns. New believers develop a special set of worldview assumptions for church situations that they largely ignore in the rest of their lives. Their traditional worldview remains almost untouched by biblical principles. This is the kind of Christianity some evangelical Protestants have advocated, probably out of a fear of the first kind of syncretism. In many situations, this kind of Christianity

attracts some of those who are westernizing. But masses of traditional people find little or nothing in Christianity that meets their need, simply because it is presented and practiced in foreign ways to which they cannot connect.

Though the risk of syncretism is always present when Christians attempt to inculturate Christianity, it is a risk that needs to be taken in order that people experience New Testament Christianity. Whether in a pioneer situation or after a foreign brand of our faith has been practiced for years, the quest for a vital, dynamic, Biblical, contextualized Christianity will require experimenting with new, culturally and biblically appropriate ways of understanding, presenting and practicing the "faith which one and for all God has given to his people" (Jude 3, GNB). It will especially require attention to what is going on at the worldview level. To this end the insights of anthropologists into culture and worldview can be harnessed to enable us to advocate a Christianity that is truly contextualized, truly relevant, and truly meaningful.

Understanding Culture Aids Contextualization

Understandings of culture and worldview such as those presented above have helped us greatly in our attempts to understand what biblical and cultural appropriateness means. Among the understandings that have come from such studies are the following:

1. God loves people as they are culturally. The Bible shows us that He is willing to work within everyone's culture and language without requiring them to convert to another culture.

2. The cultures and languages of the Bible are not special, God-made cultures and languages. They are normal human (indeed pagan) cultures and languages, just like any of the more than 6,000 cultures and languages in our world today. The Bible demonstrates that God can use any pagan culture (even Greek or American) with its language to convey His messages to humans.

3. The Bible shows that God worked with His people in culturally appropriate ways. He took customs already in use and invested them with new meaning, guiding people to use them for His purposes and on the basis of new worldview understandings. Among such customs are circumcision, baptism, worship on mountains, sacrifice, the synagogue, the temple, anointing, and praying. God wants churches today to be culturally appropriate, using most of the customs of a people but attaching new meaning to them by using them for God's purposes. In this way, people get changed at the worldview level as well as at the surface.

4. God's work within a culture never leaves that culture unchanged. God changes people first, then through them the cultural structures. Whatever changes are to take place in the structures are to be made by the people themselves on the basis of their understandings of the Scriptures and God's workings in their lives, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, not pressured by an outsider.

5. We are to follow scripture and risk the use of receptor-culture forms. Though contextualization within a new culture risks a nativistic kind of syncretism, a Christianity that is dominated by foreign cultural forms with imported meanings is anti-scriptural and just as syncretistic.

Reflection Questions

1. Describe the difference between culture and worldview using Kraft's river illustration.
2. Explain the importance of the distinction between culture and society.
3. Why does Kraft describe contextualizing of Christianity as risky?

Culture Shock – Coping with it!

Used by permission of Culture Link*

Help, I'm Here! Why do I feel this way?

"You can't do this!" Mark's face turned red and the veins in his neck pulsated as he screamed at the man behind the counter.

"You people don't know how to run an airline! Why can't you keep to this schedule?" He tossed the published schedule across the airline counter and glared at the man behind it.

"We paid good money for our tickets, and now we have waited FIVE hours! In the States, I'd sue you for this!"

Could this be you?

Culture Shock—A Definition

A psychological disorientation that stems from unfamiliar cures and unmet expectations in a new culture.

Who is a Potential Candidate for Culture Shock?

You are! Culture shock happens to everyone. It is only a problem if it is not anticipated and recognized. Many untraveled people are skeptical about it and they assume it is like a homesick kid at camp. They are wrong. It is not reserved for the weak or incapable, and if you think it is, your potential for major culture shock is great! Culture shock also has little to do with intelligence.

What to Expect

"It's like taking an exam 24 hours a day… or like a low voltage buzz that irritates and builds stress throughout the day."

How to Deal With It

Learn what culture shock is, learn about yourself, learn about your host culture, and learn about your home culture. The more you know, the less jolted by the shock you will be.

Know Culture Shock

There are four phases. These phases are not sequential and are often repeated.

1) *The Romantic, Tourist Phase* – Everything is quaint, the euphoria of your new experience blurs the cultural barriers.

2) *"You've Lost that Loving Feeling" Phase* – The new culture no longer fascinates you. Curiosity gives way to frustration. Feelings of frustration, anger, and helplessness join with fatigue to produce the classic symptoms of culture shock.

3) *Recovery Phase* – Local ideas and practices don't seem strange any longer. Self confidence returns and negative feelings subside.

4) *Acceptance Phase* – Differences are understood and expected. Humor returns and you relax.

Know Your Host Culture

Go to your local library and research your country. Rent a travel video. Interview a national visiting your city. Interview a missionary that has served in that country. The more you know of another culture before entering, the lighter the shock.

Know Yourself

Remember, there is only one of you in this world and God has designed you this way on purpose. Don't try to make the people you meet in the new culture like you. Realize that people approach problem solving differently. Think about what type of problem solver you are. Are you an idealistic thinker who focuses on vision and outcome? Are you an observer or a participator? Basically, do what you can to understand yourself and remember that the people in your new culture will be different. Always keep in mind, "Different is not bad, it is just different."

Know Your Own Culture

Learn why you do the things the way you do in your own culture and be ready to explain them—but avoid comparisons! Your culture is just your culture. And your host country has a culture of its own.

Remember Your Role

You are a learner of the culture. It is your job to enculturate, not to change them. Spend a lot of time asking questions and learning. A learner attitude not only helps you become informed and adjust but communicates servanthood to your host culture.

Culture Shock Solutions

Mark felt outrage in the airport. He was used to a structured use of time. His host society was more accustomed to spontaneity—to focusing on the event rather than time. Mark's feelings of culture shock included a constant irritation over delays. His mission was characterized by delays on planes, trains, taxis, and anything else. In his disgust, he said, "No one in this country understands anything about time. I'm sick of it! I can't see why they can't get it right!"

If Mark had looked for the logic in local customs, he might have uncovered some facts to help him deal with these stresses. Could Mark have avoided all this stress? Maybe not all of it, but he could have reduced the amount of internal conflict and not let it control him. By studying the culture he might have learned that the airline personnel work off a bribe system. Or perhaps there are often problems with aircrafts and repairs that take hours to repair compared to in the states.

Culture shock is a reality. As you adjust to your new culture, keep an internal read on what phase of culture shock you may be feeling. Keep a learner attitude. Avoid judging and comparing. You will never be able to change a society's culture. The best advice is to know yourself, your culture, and

your host culture. When the stresses come, you will understand why and respond in a Christ-like manner.

* This article has been adapted by Culture Link from the article entitled Building an Anti-Shock Survival Kit, by Doug Pennoyer, Found in the Short-Term Mission Handbook, Berry Publishing Services, Inc.

Culture – Permanent or Temporary?

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NOTE: For STM trips – this will be completed in training session 4.

An important task for one who is trying to communicate cross-culturally is the need to separate the true gospel from that which is merely cultural or temporary. People should not have to become Americans—or first century Greeks—in order to become Christians.

Which of the specific practices and commands that appear in the New Testament are to apply at all times in all places? Which are merely temporary, needed at one particular time in one particular place, but not necessarily applicable at other times and in other places?

To get a handle on the problem, try this self-think exercise we've adapted from some material put together by Mont Smith, a former missionary in Ethiopia. We've listed 50 practices and commands that appear in the New Testament. In a sense, all are "Scriptural". The question is: Which are meant to be permanent (P)? Which are merely temporary (T)?

Think about each one, then circle the appropriate response. Of course, there will be some you're not too sure about (welcome to the mission field). Take your time. Switch items from category to category until you're more or less satisfied.

1. Greet one another with a holy kiss (Romans 16:16) ..... P T
2. Abstain from meat that has been sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:29) ..... P T
3. Be baptized (Acts 2:38) ..... P T
4. A woman ought to have a veil on her head (I Cor. 11:10) ..... P T
5. Wash one another's feet (John 13:14) ..... P T
6. Extend the right hand (left hand?) of fellowship (Gal. 2:9) ..... P T
7. Ordain by the "laying on of hands" (Acts 13:3) ..... P T
8. "It is indecent for a woman to speak in an assembly" (I Cor. 14:35) ..... P T
9. Have fixed hours of prayer (Acts 3:1) ..... P T
10. Sing songs, hymns and spiritual songs (Col. 3:16) ..... P T
11. Abstain from eating blood (Acts 15:29) ..... P T
12. Slaves, obey your earthly masters (Eph. 6:5) ..... P T
13. Observe the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:24) ..... P T
14. Do not make oaths (James 5:12) ..... P T
15. Anoint the sick with oil (James 5:14) ..... P T

16. Permit no woman to teach men (1 Tim. 2:12) ..... P T
17. Preach two by two (Mark 6:7) ..... P T
18. Go into Jewish synagogues to preach (Acts 14:1) ..... P T
19. Eat what is set before you asking no question of conscience (1 Cor. 10:27) P T
20. Prohibit women from wearing braided hair, gold or pearls (1 Tim. 2:9) ..... P T
21. Abstain from fornication (Acts 15:29) ..... P T
22. Do not seek marriage (I Cor. 7:27) ..... P T
23. Be circumcised (Acts 15:5) ..... P T
24. Women should pray with their heads covered (I Cor. 11:5) ..... P T
25. Drink communion from a single cup (Mark 14:23) ..... P T
26. Take formal religious vows (Acts 18:18) ..... P T
27. Avoid praying in public (Matt. 6:5-6) ..... P T
28. Speak in tongues and prophesy (1 Cor. 14:5) ..... P T
29. Meet in homes for church (Col. 4:15) ..... P T
30. Work with your hands (1 Thess. 4:11) ..... P T
31. Lift your hands when praying (1 Tim. 2:8) ..... P T
32. Give to those who beg from you (Matt. 5:42) ..... P T
33. Pray before meals (Luke 24:30) ..... P T
34. Support no widow under 60 years old (I Tim. 5:9) ..... P T
35. Say “Amen” at the end of prayers (I Cor. 14:16) ..... P T
36. Fast in connection with ordination (Acts 13:3) ..... P T
37. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic (Mark 6:9) ..... P T
38. Wives, submit to your husbands (Col. 3:18) ..... P T
39. Show no favoritism to the rich (James 2:1-7) ..... P T
40. Use unleavened bread for communion (Luke 22:13, 19) ..... P T
41. Cast lots for church officers (Acts 1:26) ..... P T
42. Owe no man anything (Rom. 13:8) ..... P T

43. Have seven deacons in the church (Acts 6:3) ..... P T

44. Don't eat meat from animals killed by strangulation (Acts 15:29) ..... P T

45. If anyone will not work, don't let him eat (2 Thess. 3:10) ..... P T

46. Worship on Saturday (Acts 13:14, 42, 44) ..... P T

47. Give up personal property (Acts 2:44-45) ..... P T

48. Have self-employed clergy (2 Thess. 3:7-8) ..... P T

49. Take collections in church for the poor (I Cor. 16:1) ..... P T

50. Long hair on a man is a disgrace (1 Cor. 11:14) ..... P T

Now that you're finished, get ready for the hard part. What principle did you use to decide which were permanent and essential and which were temporary and cultural? Since you made a separation, you must have used some standard. What was it? Remember that your principle must be one that can apply to every example in the above list.

- Does the context of the whole Bible support or qualify this command?
- Does the command deal with a formal or underlying meaning?
- Is the command time-bound?
- Is the practice actually commanded or merely recorded as a description on what early Christians did?
- Are the commands related specifically to Jewish life?

These, then are a few questions to begin your search for the permanent gospel. Of the 50 commands listed above, most Christians in seminaries where this has been used can agree on six or seven that are permanent. If you have more than eleven in the "P" category, you'd probably better start looking for more principles that aim for the spirit rather than the letter of the law.

Appendix F: Sharing your Testimony

- How to share your testimony
- Testimony Worksheet
- Sharing through an interpreter

  Note: These readings come from a dominant "Personal Salvation Point in Time" point of view -- do not consider this resource prescriptively. **Emphasis on what God is doing NOW in your life.**

How to share your testimony

("Discipleship Journal", issue sixty, pp. 63-69)

HOW TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." 1 Peter 3:15

One of the most effective tools you have for sharing your faith is the story of how Jesus Christ gave you eternal life and how He has enriched your life. The Apostle John wrote, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard" (1 John 1:3), testifying about his relationship to Jesus Christ.

When the Apostle Paul stood before King Agrippa (Acts 26), he spoke simply, logically, and clearly about his life before salvation, how he met Christ, and what his life was like after conversion. Paul's testimony takes three or four minutes to read aloud in a conversational manner.

By following the steps outlined in this article, you will learn how to tell others in the same manner about how you came to know Christ. The choice of the right words, the flow of your story, and knowing how to begin and how to end are all important.

Testimonies can be prepared on many subjects and tailored to various audiences. The kind of testimony outlined here is designed to give to a non-Christian. It will be best suited for sharing one-on-one or in a small group.

The purpose of preparing a testimony is not to memorize it and give it verbatim, but to help you put into words some of the important and interesting details of your conversion. A testimony serves primarily as a "door opener", not a "convincing tool". Many people are not ready to be convinced that they need Christ, but one can often be led to talk about the gospel after hearing a personal testimony.

BEFORE, HOW, AND AFTER

Paul's testimony in Acts 26 is a biblical model you can follow in writing your own personal testimony. Paul's format in Acts 26 is:

- Lead-In—verses 2-3
- Before—Verses 4-11
- How—Verses 12-20
- After—Verses 21-23
- Close—Verses 24-29

Here are practical suggestions for developing the before, how and after sections in your personal testimony.

1. Before:

    A. Many people's actions spring out of their unsatisfied deep inner needs. What were one or two of your unsatisfied deep inner needs before you came to know Jesus Christ?

Some examples of inner needs are:

* Lack of Peace
* Something missing
* Desire for Control
* Lack of security
* Lack of significance
* No motivation
* Fear of Death
* No meaning to life
* Loneliness
* Lack of purpose
* No real friends

B. Non-Christians are usually trying to satisfy their deep inner needs through unsatisfactory solutions. In the past, what unsatisfactory solutions did you use to attempt to meet those deep inner needs? As you develop your testimony, list positive as well as negative solutions you may have tried. Some examples are:

* Marriage/family
* Drugs/alcohol
* Money
* Hobbies/entertainment
* Wrong friends
* Work
* Sports fitness
* Education
* Sex

2. How:

A. Describe the circumstances that caused you to consider Christ as the solution to your deep inner needs. Identify the events that led to your conversion. In some cases, this may have taken place over a period of time.

B. State specifically the steps you took to become a Christian. If there is a particular passage of Scripture that applies here, you may want to use it. Usually, you will simply paraphrase it.

C. Include the gospel clearly and briefly. The gospel includes:

* All have sinned
* Sin's penalty
* Christ paid the penalty
* Must receive Christ

3. After:

A. State how Christ filled or is filling your deep inner needs. In the before, you ex-pressed your needs and how you tried unsuccessfully to meet them. You now want to briefly

show the difference that Christ has made in your life.

B. Conclude with a statement like: “But the greatest benefit is that I know for certain that I have eternal life.” The person you talk to will tend to comment on the last thing you say. Often it is natural to move from the testimony into a clear presentation of the gospel.

CHOOSE YOUR TESTIMONY FORMAT

Read the sample testimonies that follow. Find the format that best fits your own story. You will use the Testimony Worksheet (at the end of this article that corresponds to this format).

Format 1: *Adult Conversion*
You trusted Christ as an adult. You have a distinct before, how, and after.

Format 2: *Early Conversion, Adult Full Commitment*
You made a decision for Christ as a child, but your life was characterized by spiritual immaturity—a lifestyle similar to that of a non-Christian—until you reached a point of crisis and recommitted your life to Christ. Evaluate whether your early conversion experience was genuine. If you conclude it was not genuine, then use Format 1 as your model.

Format 3: *Early Conversion, Consistent Growth*
You grew up with Christian parents and have a strong church background. You may have very little before.

WRITE OUT YOUR TESTIMONY

The Testimony worksheets provide questions that will help you get started in writing out your testimony. Select the appropriate worksheet and jot down thoughts for each question on a separate piece of paper. This will give you a basis from which to write sentences and paragraphs about your own experience.

As you write your first draft, refer again to the sample testimony that is most like your own story. Note how the person began the testimony and how he or she made the transitions between the main points. In addition, follow these guidelines:

1. Make it sound conversational. Avoid literary sounding statements. Use informal language.

2. Share about what happened to you, don’t preach about what should happen to them. Say “I” and “me”, not “you”. This helps keep the testimony warm and personal.

3. Avoid religious words, phrases, and jargon. Don’t assume the listener knows what you mean by terms such as sin, accepted Christ, or even Christian.

4. Generalize so more people can identify with your story. Don’t name specific churches, denominations, or groups. Avoid using dates and ages.

5. Include some humor and human interest. When a person smiles or laughs, it reduces tension. Humor is disarming and increases attention.

6. One or two word pictures increase interest. Don’t just say, “Bill shared the gospel with me.” You might briefly describe the setting so a person listening can visualize it.

7. Explain how Christ met or is meeting your deep inner needs, but do not communicate that all your struggles and problems ended at conversion.

8. Sound adult, not juvenile. Reflect an adult point of view even if you were converted at an early age.

9. Avoid dogmatic and mystical statements that skeptics can question, such as “I prayed and God gave me a job”, or “God said to me”.

10. Simplify—reduce “clutter”. Mention a limited number of people and use only their first or last names. Combine information when you can.

PRACTICING YOUR TESTIMONY

After you have written out your testimony, you may want to have another Christian read it and make suggestions for improvement. Ask them to point out any areas that you need to explain further and to make sure the gospel is presented clearly. Then, when you have a final draft that you like, outline your testimony on a 3 x 5 card. Practice giving your testimony to a friend in four minutes or less. Sharing your testimony with your small group would also be an excellent opportunity to practice and receive feedback.

LEADING INTO YOUR TESTIMONY

After you feel comfortable giving your testimony, you may begin to wonder,

“When do I share it with a non-Christian?” “How do I direct the conversation so it will lead to presenting my testimony?” You may find the following suggestions helpful:

1. Include some “small talk” before discussing spiritual matters. Discuss family, job, hobbies, interests, etc.

2. Be alert for expressed needs such as family problems or stress on the job. You can use these to show how Christ has helped you through some to the same areas.

3. Discuss past concerns and needs in your life. “We used to struggle in our marriage relationship”, or, “I used to allow the pressures at work to get to me. Then I discovered something that made a tremendous difference in my life.”

4. Discuss contemporary situations in the news or in your areas. “I saw on TV that drugs are epidemic in our country. It seems that people are trying to find something that satisfies, so they are turning to drugs. These same people are saying it does not work.”

5. Build relationships with them. It may take 10 minutes or 10 days or ten months—but build relationships.

6. Don’t condemn them for living like non-Christians, they are non-Christians. Your objective is to share how they can have a better life in Christ.

7. Avoid dogmatic “religious” statements. “Jesus is the answer to all your problems.” He is, but they don’t even know who He is, much less what He can do in their lives.

8. Avoid arguments on moral issues. You can expect non-Christians to have conflicts with clear

biblical teaching. Remember they do not have a valid base from which to make correct moral decisions.

THE CLOSE

When you have shared your personal testimony, you may want to conclude with a statement that causes the person to reflect on what you have just shared. What you will say will depend on how this person has been responding to what you have shared. If their response seems positive, continue to ask leading questions like:

1. “Bill, has anything like this ever happened to you?”
2. “Mary, do you know for certain whether you have eternal life?”
3. “Do you have an idea what eternal life is?”
4. “May I share with you **someday** how I know for certain that I have eternal life?”
5. “May I share an illustration with you that explains how a person can know for certain that he has eternal life?”

Testimony Worksheets

Format 1: Adult Conversion

- Before:
  - What was a deep inner need in your life before you met Christ?
  - Give some examples of how you tried to meet or fulfill that need with unsatisfactory solutions.
- How:
  - Describe the circumstances that caused you to consider Christ.
  - State how you trusted Christ. (Briefly include the Gospel).
- After:
  - Give an example of how Christ met or is currently meeting your deep inner needs.
  - End with a statement to the effect that you know for certain that you have eternal life.

Example:

Before: A few years ago I found myself lacking purpose in my life. Something was missing. Nothing seemed to fill the void. I had majored in electrical engineering in college and got a great job when I graduated. I kept striving for one promotion after another, thinking that the next promotion would be the one that would satisfy me. But it never did. I began working longer and longer hours, giving myself to my profession. This began to have a negative effect on my family. I kept telling my wife I was only doing it for her and the kids, but I knew otherwise. What started out as the "ideal" marriage was coming apart at the seams. It got to the point that I did not want to go home at night. "Happy Hour" was more fun than arguments.

How: In my next job, I was asked to attend an engineering seminar with David and Jack from work. David seemed to have a certain something that was missing in my life.

On the way home from the seminar David told me about how Christ had changed his life and had given him a whole new reason for living. Many of the things he said seemed to be directed right at me. He talked about having been successful in business but that he was always falling short of his goals and expectations. Then he said that the answer to his frustration was to have personally committed his life to Jesus Christ. He had admitted to God that he was living in disobedience and had turned control of his life over to God. He mentioned that the Bible said Christ had died on the cross so we could be forgiven for everything we had ever done wrong. I had heard this before, but now it seemed to make a lot more sense.

A couple of days after I returned home, I took a walk down by the lake near our house. I prayed and confessed to God some of the things I had done that I knew had hurt and displeased Him. I asked Christ to come into my life and take over, because I wasn't doing a very good job with it by myself.

After: Well, there was no flash of light or earthquake, but I do know that I felt as if a large weight was lifted from my shoulders. Not everything is perfect now, but I do feel as if I have a whole new purpose for living. God has given me a whole new set of priorities to live by. But the greatest thing of all is that I know for certain that I have the gift of eternal life.

Format 2: Early Conversion, Adult Deeper Commitment

- Before:
  - What was a deep inner need you were trying to fill?
  - Give some examples of how you tried to fill that inner need through unsatisfactory solutions.
- How:
  - Briefly describe the situation in which you made a deeper commitment to Christ.
  - Refer to your conversion experience. State how you trusted Christ. Briefly include the gospel.
- After:
  - State how Christ is currently meeting your deep inner needs.
  - End with a statement to the effect that you know for certain that you have eternal life.

Example:

Before Full Commitment: Not too long ago you could have characterized my life as lacking any real inner peace. Everything around me seemed to be in utter turmoil. Nothing I did would ease the tension in my life. It didn't seem as if anything could fill the longing that was growing in my heart. I thought I could fill that void by getting involved in activities. I joined the health spa, took tennis lessons, was involved in transporting our children to all their various activities. I considered going back to work part-time. Then my husband received a promotion, and we were transferred to another city. If I had felt the pressure before, the move just added to the intensity. It seemed that the only relief I could gain was by taking tranquilizers, but that was only temporary, and it scared me to realize that I was beginning to depend on them for relief.

How: We had gotten out of the habit of attending church over the years, but the Johnsons invited us to go to church with them, so we started going. After we had attended for a couple of months, we decided to participate in a Bible Study discussion group. There we met people who were fun but took their Christianity seriously. They began to challenge us to really commit our lives to Christ.

We reviewed some things I had heard while growing up: that we were all breaking God's laws and deserved to be separated from Him, but that God had provided the way to restore that relationship with Him. That provision was the death of His only Son, Jesus Christ.

What I needed to do about it was acknowledge my disobedience to God and turn from it and ask Christ to come into my life as my Savior and Lord. So I asked Christ to take over my life.

After: It wasn't until we got involved in that mid-week Bible Study that I really understood what it meant to be com-mitted to Jesus Christ. It was there that I learned that I could not gain inner peace in my life if I was going to try to run my own life. As a result of the Bible Study I made a whole new commitment to Christ. The inner peace that I was striving for so desperately was finally there. But the greatest thing of all is that I know for certain that I have a personal relationship with God and have eternal life.

Format 3: Early Conversion, Consistent Growth

- Before:
  - State the deep inner needs you see people trying to fill.
  - Describe how you see people trying to satisfy those needs.
- How:
  - Explain why you never experienced this problem.
  - Refer to your conversion experience. State how you trusted Christ. Briefly include the gospel.
- After:
  - Illustrate how Christ met your is meeting your deep inner needs.
  - End with a statement to the effect that you know for certain that you have eternal life.

Example:

Before: As I look around me I see people feverishly trying to fill voids in their lives. Men are giving themselves to their jobs, and in the process sacrificing their families. A number of my fellow workers seem to be trying to find meaning in their lives, but just when they think they have attained what they want, they realize these things are not meeting their deepest need. I find myself being involved in many of these same activities, but I am finding satisfaction. What is the difference?

How: I realize that I'm not reacting to life the way many people do for a good reason. I have something in my life that has given me peace and purpose that many others do now have. I have discovered that a personal relationship with Jesus Christ fills the voids that many people are trying to fill with activities and things that just don't satisfy.

As I was growing up, my parents were very active in church. Because they were active, they figured that I should be also. So every Sunday, there we were: What was real to them was just a game to me. Then one summer I attended a church summer camp. This changed my whole view of "religion". I discovered at this camp that Christianity was more than a religion, it was a personal relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ. In the evenings our discussions centered around who Jesus Christ was and what He did. They were interesting to me. One day after we had finished sports my counselor asked me if I had ever personally committed by life to Jesus Christ or if I was still thinking about it. We sat down and talked. He explained from the Bible what I would need to do to become a real Christian. I saw that I had done many things wrong and that the penalty was eternal death! I saw that Christ had died on the cross to set me free from that penalty. I prayed with my counselor right there and committed my life to Jesus Christ.

After: As I grew physically, I also grew spiritually. I find that when I try to do things my way and leave God out of the picture I have the same struggles as everyone else. But when I let Him be in control, I experience a peace that can only come from Him. But the greatest thing of all is that I know for certain that I have eternal life.

Religious Words – Possible Substitutes

- Believe/Accepted—Trust or relied on Christ
- Sin—Disobedience, breaking God's laws, turned my back on God
- Went forward—Decided to turn my life over to God
- Under the blood—God forgave the wrongs I had done
- Saved/Born Again—Became a real Christian
- Christian—Christ follower, committed believer

Sharing Through an Interpreter

Used by permission of Culture Link

Keep the following in mind as you speak using an interpreter:

1. Speak slowly.
2. Speak to the audience (look at them), not the interpreter.
3. Speak using short, simple phrases. Stop after each phrase to allow the interpreter to translate.
4. Speak loud enough for the interpreter to hear you clearly.
5. Practice your story with someone and have them repeat what you say or rephrase what you say. This exercise helps you adjust to using short phrases.
6. Avoid using colloquial phrases (slang).
7. Visual gestures or aids can be useful. Make sure the gesture is appropriate for the culture.
8. If your interpreter doesn't understand, rephrase the sentence. Otherwise, move on so you will not embarrass him or her.
9. If you are addressing theological or technical information, ask if the audience understands or needs clarification. Or ask them a question about what you said. This assures you are communicating clearly.

Appendix G: Language Learning

- Language Learning – When Your Mouth Won't Work
- Language Sheets
- Language Booklets links

Language Learning – When Your Mouth Won't Work!

Used by permission of Culture Link

Reactions

In language learning there are usually two reactions of people participating in a cross-cultural ministry mission. The first is the *jump in with both feet* type person. This person will attempt to say anything. They try to figure out everything and enjoy doing it. A lot of the time they aren't the best language learners. They are just willing to try.

The second type is the *I wouldn't try if you paid me a million dollars*. These people are either embarrassed to hear unknown sounds from their mouths or they don't want to try until they know they have it perfect. By holding back, you will never learn a language.

Granted, in a short period of time, you will not become fluent. However, by trying to learn your host culture's language, the following things are accomplished:

- Value is shown to the host for their language and culture.
- Relationships are built because the host loves to help you learn.
- You are introduced to what a career missionary goes through to learn a language.
- You grow personally as you attempt a new task.
- You may find you're a whiz at this stuff!

Remember:

- Your sense of humor. Learn to laugh at your blunders and learn from them.
- Language learning is not a competition. Don't get caught in the comparison trap with other team members.
- A little at a time. Learn a little and use it a lot.
- Have fun!

Language Worksheets

Utilize these sheets. These are designed for basic conversational phrases. Remember, your goal is to learn and use it! Don't worry if you're not fluent in two weeks. Have fun!

Language Sheets

Used by permission of Culture Link

Before you go on your mission, work with a missionary or national, use a book or software, or website or any other means to translate the following items. Practice what you learn. Your host culture will be so impressed that you can say anything!

Numbers: 1-20 and multiples of 10

1 –
2 –
3 –
4 –
5 –
6 –
7 –
8 –
9 –
10 –
11 –
12 –
13 –
14 –
15 –
16 –
17 –
18 –
19 –
20 –
30 –
40 –
50 –
60 –
70 –
80 –
90 –
100 –
500 –
1000 –

Basic Phrases About Yourself

Hello

Goodbye

My name is

I have a

- Brother
- Sister
- Husband
- Wife
- Child/ren

I live in America.

I live in the state of

I enjoy

Basic Phrases About Your Host

Hello, what is your name?

How old are you? (If appropriate to ask)

Where do you work?

Where do you live?

Do you speak English?

Survival Phrases

Where is the bathroom?

Please

Thank you

Excuse me

I'm lost. Where is (the hotel, the church)?

I feel sick.

Where is the hospital?

I need a doctor.

How much is this?

Songs

Having a song in the national tongue is an effective tool for presentations.

Appendix H: Packing, Travel, and Health

- Health
- Jet Lag
- Packing
- The Art of Traveling
- Travel Tips

Health

Used by permission of Culture Link

Verify the Water is Safe

Upon arrival in the country, check with a missionary to see if the water is safe. If in doubt or maybe just for safety, drink bottled water. Avoid ice cubes as they are usually made from tap water. Also, if ordering water in a restaurant, have them open the bottle at the table. This way you are certain tap water hasn't been poured in the bottle.

Avoid Uncooked Food

Meat or vegetables need to be cooked. The same water from the tap is used to wash and process vegetables. Make sure they are cooked and avoid salads. Don't eat uncooked meat. In fact, it's best to have all meat cooked at least medium.

Fruit

Eat fruit that you can peel. Otherwise, the fruit may have been washed with the tap water.

Medications

Bring all needed medications with you. Do not assume your host country will have what you need. Also, bring your renewal prescriptions in case you lose what you need.

Sunscreen

Be very careful in the sun. Just walking through a town can give you too much sun if you are not accustomed to the exposure.

Digestive Products

It is important to have some product for diarrhea and constipation. It has recommended that Pepto Bismol is one of the most effective remedies to prevent and relieve diarrhea.

Hand Towelettes and Toilet Paper

Bring hand towelettes, as washing facilities are not always available and may not be stocked with toilet paper or towels.

Notify the Team Leader

If you have any medical problems, let the team leader know. A trip is not the time to be shy.

Watch Out

If any of the following occur: diarrhea lasting more than 72 hours, bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramps or pain, vomiting, chills, and/or painful urination or discharge.

Jet Lag

Don't let it drag you down!

Memory loss and the effects of fatigue can make some international travelers think they are losing their minds. But they're merely suffering from what millions of world travelers refer to as the curse of air travel—jet lag. After crossing numerous time zones, the body's internal clock needs resetting. The problem, however, is that few travelers have the luxury or the desire to wait for the body to reset itself naturally.

But there's hope. Researchers have formulated techniques to help minimize or eliminate the effects of jet lag. Here are some tips and techniques for beating jet lag on your next international flight.

Light Treatments

Dr. Alfred Lewy of the Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland found that exposure to sunlight at certain times of the day helps the body clock reset itself. According to lab studies, light can advance or delay the internal body rhythms by as much as twelve hours.

- After traveling east through one to six time zones, go outdoors early in the morning. If traveling east through 6 to 12 time zones, spend time in the sun in the middle of the day.
- Travelers going west should do the opposite. Get afternoon sunlight exposure after crossing up to six time zones, morning sunlight for twelve time zones. The number of hours of exposure should equal the number of time zones crossed. This method, in effect, tricks the body's clock into adjusting to the new time zone.

Additional Tips

- A few days before you leave, begin going to bed a little earlier each night. During your flight get as much sleep as you can.
- Because dehydration causes many of the jet-lag side effects, avoid coffee, teas and other caffeinated drinks. Instead drink plenty of water and fruit juice.
- Eat lightly on your flight. On the first few days of your trip, don't eat rich or exotic foods so that your energy will be used to adjust to your new surroundings rather than food digestion.
- Try to exercise on long flights to help alleviate such common discomforts as backaches, swollen legs and feet and general fatigue. Stretch at regular intervals and walk up and down the aisles of the plane periodically.
- Finally, take it easy on the day you arrive so you can take advantage of your trip at a leisurely pace and establish a routine in sync with the local time.

Packing

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1. You are limited to one bag plus one carry-on bag. Remember, in most cases you will be carrying your own luggage, so pack accordingly.

2. Take only the clothing and other items that you need. A good rule is to pack for one week. Wearing the same clothes during your trip is a small price to pay for the freedom you gain by packing lightly. Remember, as you enter another culture, you are being watched, now is not the time to make an international fashion statement.

3. It is a good idea to pack a change of clothes in your carry-on bag in case your luggage does not make it to your destination. With that in mind, you should also pack your toothbrush as well as other necessities.

4. Pack any liquid items in sealed bags. If one of those items were to break or spill in your suitcase, you have the fragrant smell of your shampoo or Pepto-Bismol on your clothes for the remainder of the mission.

5. Try to borrow rather than buy new clothing if possible. Please do not go into debt to go on the mission. If you are asked to wear items you do not own, check with a few friends.

6. If you buy new shoes, please break them in before you leave! You will be a much happier team player if you do.

7. Remember to leave room for souvenirs. If your suitcases are packed tightly, you may have to leave things behind in order to make room for newly purchased international items.

NOTE: You may end up doing this anyway. Many items are not available overseas, and you may find yourself wanting to give things away. With that in mind, you may want to pack only those “things” to which you are unattached.

The Art of Traveling

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Travel Lightly – Remember, you are not traveling for people to see you. Take only what you need and leave your fancy clothes at home.

Travel Expectantly – Every place you visit is a surprise package waiting to be opened. Untie the strings with an expectation of high adventure.

Travel Hopefully – To "travel hopefully", wrote Robert Lewis Stevenson, "is better than to arrive."

Travel Humbly – Visit people and places with respect for their traditions and ways of life, as different as they may be from your own.

Travel Courteously – Consideration for your fellow travelers and for all you meet along the way will enhance your pleasure.

Travel Gratefully – Show appreciation for the many things done by others for your enjoyment and comfort.

Travel With an Open Mind – Leave your prejudices at home.

Travel with Curiosity – It's not how far you go, but how deeply you go that mines the gold of the experience**.**

Travel Patiently – Take the time to understand people in other countries—especially where there are language barriers. Learn a few words, if only to say "hello" and "good-bye". The nationals will love you for it.

Travel With the Spirit of a World Citizen – You'll discover people are basically much the same the world over. Appoint yourself an "Ambassador of Good Will" wherever you go.

Travel Tips

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1. Travel lightly—what you pack, you carry! See packing tips.
2. Think through what items should be in your one “carry-on” bag. This may be the only bag that makes it to your destination. If your luggage gets lost or delayed, which items would you need? Those items should be packed in your carry-on bag. Medication? Remember to pack one change of clothes in that bag if possible (or at least one change of undergarments). NOTE: Airlines do limit the size of this bag to one that can be stored under the seat in front of you or in the overhead bin. If your bag will not fit, it will be checked as luggage.
3. Limit the amount of valuables you take with you. As you pack, ask this question: “Can I live without this?” If the answer is no, leave it home. Sentimental or favorite items, such as a gift (a special gift, an heirloom), or pictures should be left home.
4. Clean out your wallet. Only take necessary identification or credit cards with you. It is advisable to secure some type of special “pouch” for carrying money, credit cards and/or passport. These can generally be purchased at luggage stores and department stores. Keep credit card numbers (along with the telephone number of the credit card company) apart from those actual items. The companies will need to be notified immediately if they are stolen.
5. When traveling as a team, select a baggage coordinator. He/she will be responsible for movement of all luggage to and from all points. The team responds to the coordinator in the movement and protection of luggage.
6. Each piece of the group luggage should have some highly visible tag on it that separates it at a glance.
7. Do not leave bags unattended. Hold all bags tightly in a crowd as well. There are people who make a living seeking out other’s personal belongings. If you have a layover in an airport and want to sleep, put your bags under your head or place your arm or leg through the handles. This makes it more difficult for it to be stolen.
8. Remember your manners while you are traveling. Be considerate of and courteous to those around you. North Americans have a bad international reputation of being loud and obnoxious. When traveling as a group, this is an easy reputation to keep as excitement levels are high. Try not to live up to this reputation.
9. Copy all passports and give to the team leader before departure. This will be helpful if a passport is lost or stolen. You may want to put a copy of your passport in your own luggage.
10. Have your health insurance information with you in case of an emergency.
11. Give important travel information to family members.
12. If there is a waste receptacle next to the toilet, this is generally a clue that toilet paper is meant to be thrown away. Not all international water systems are designed to handle paper waste.
13. Bring any and all medications you must have.
14. On long distance flights, airline air-conditioners have a tendency to dry the mucus membranes in your nose which may cause nose bleeds. Bring along a washcloth that you can we in the airplane lavatory and place it over your nose and mouth as you sleep. You may look silly, but you will feel much better when you land.

Appendix I: On Field Training

- On Field Training Checklist
    - Note: This is a tool to help team leaders plan for the daily team meetings and the primary training topics Gateway recommends.
- Training 1 – Host Orientation
- Training 2 – Continued Language Study
- Training 3 – Continued Ministry Prep
- Training 4 – Worldview and Missions
- Training 5 – The Kingdom of God
- Training 6 – The Task Remaining
- Training 7 – God and the North American Heart
- Training 8 – Missions at your Doorstep
- Training 9 – Debrief from your Host
- Training 10 – Debriefing your Team

Note: Many trainings have multiple articles – team leaders will choose which articles team members will engage with and be ready to have discussions on.

TEAM LEADER'S ON-FIELD TRAINING CHECKLIST

**Recommended Training Sessions*

Date	Initial	Team Meeting Training/Challenge	Ideal Time
		*Orientation by Host National/Pastor/Missionary & Team Leader	Soon after arrival
		*Continued Language Study	2nd Day
		*Continued Ministry/Project Preparations	2nd Day
		Worldview/Missions—Biblical Perspective of Missions	
		*The Kingdom of God	
		The Task Remaining	
		God Wants to Change the North American Heart	
		The Mission Field at Your Doorstep	
		*A Message from Your Host's Heart	Last Evening
		*Debriefing Session (Training 10 articles)	Last Evening

Training 1 – Orientation by Host National/Pastor/Missionary & Team Leader

Allow for your Host to share their rules and guidelines for:

- The Country
- The State/Province/Region
- The City/Village
- The facilities where you are lodging/eating/ministering

As needed, share material from Appendix M for this country regarding:

- Living Accommodations
- Food
- Clothing
- Customs and Etiquette

Training 2 – Continued Language Study

Go through the basics again of your host language. Try the following exercises:

- Team Leader repeats key words for greetings, 'please', 'thank you', 'you're welcome', popular foods, other common words and phrases, etc.
- Team Members pair off and greet each other and respond back appropriately
- Team Members ask the 'W' questions to each other and respond back appropriately
- Also use any other language resources you may have to brush up on the language

Training 3 – Continued Ministry/Project Prep

Dramas, Songs, Testimonies

- Review the plan for your ministry project(s) as a team making sure that everyone knows their roles.
- Practice any dramas and songs that your team will be doing in worship services and other settings. Assign opportunities for testimonies in these same settings.

Training 4 – Worldview/Missions – Biblical Perspective of Missions

The team leader will choose which 2-3 articles team members are to read through before this On-Field Session. They will lead a discussion and/or use the questions provided at the end of each article as the basis for teaching and discussion.

- Is God Colorblind or Colorful?
- The Power of a Biblical Worldview
- The Church in God's Plan
- Discovering the Holy Spirit's Work in a Community
- Insider Movements

Is God Colorblind or Colorful?

The Gospel, Globalization, and Ethnicity – by Miriam Adeney,

Mission Frontiers May-June 2010 (Excerpted by permission from any article by the same name in the fourth edition of the Perspectives Ready (William Carey Library, 2009))

Isabell Ides was 101 years old when she died last June. A Makah Indian, a member of a whale-hunting people, she lived in the last house on the last road on the farthest northwest tip of the United States. Isabell was known far and wide because she loved and taught Makah culture and language. Hundreds of people learned to weave baskets under her hands. Several generations learned words in their language from her lips. Young mothers brought her their alder-smoked salmon. After chewing a bit, she could tell whether their wood was too dry. Archaeologists brought her newly excavated 3,000-year-old baskets ,and she could identify what the baskets were, how they were made, and how they had been used. “It’s like losing a library,” an anthropologist said at her funeral.

Isabell also taught Sunday School at the Assembly of God church on the reservation. She attributed her long life to her Christian faith.

Did Isabell’s basketry matter to God, as well as her Sunday school teaching? How important was her ethnic heritage to the Kingdom’s big picture? This question reverberates as we explore Globalization.

Creative Destruction

In the spring of 2001, representatives of 34 nations gathered in Quebec to discuss a free trade agreement that would cover the whole of the Americas. There were many worries. How can there be a level playing field between the US or Canada and Honduras or Bolivia, between some of the richest and some of the poorest countries on the planet? Won’t the small ones be gobbled up? Even Brazil, Latin America’s largest economy, was skittish.

Into this discussion, U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman, Alan Greenspan, dropped the phrase “creative destruction.” Yes, he said, more open global trade means some “creative destruction.” Businesses will close. Jobs will be lost. “There is no doubt,” Greenspan stated, “that the transition to the new high-tech economy, of which rising trade is a part, is proving difficult for a large segment of our work force…. The adjustment process is wrenching to an existing work force made redundant largely through no fault of their own.” But such trauma is just part of the price of progress. As is often said, you can’t make an omelet without breaking eggs. You can’t garden without pruning. You can’t use the computer without pressing the delete button now and then. You cannot train as an athlete without sloughing off bad habits.

Honing, sharpening, wedding out, paring down—these are positive terms. So Greenspan spoke of the “creative destruction” inherent in globalization. But, he added, “History tells us that not only is it unwise to try and hold back innovation, it is also not possible.”

Ethnicity is one arena of destruction. In today’s global system, local ethnic values are being trampled. Cultural values are more than commodities. They are parts of heritages on which we cannot put a price. Yet, like endangered species, cultural values are being threatened. How should we respond when globalization drowns ethnicity?

A Place in the Story

What is God's view of ethnicity? God created us in his image, endowed us with creativity, and set us in a world of possibilities and challenges. Applying our God-given creativity, we have developed the cultures of the world.

In the beginning, God affirmed that it was not good for humans to be alone. Humas were made to live in communities of meaning. So God gave his blessing to cultural areas such as the family, the state, work, worship, arts, education, and even festivals. He gave attention to laws which preserved a balanced ecology, ordered social relations, provided for sanitation, and protected the rights of the weak, the blind, the deaf, widows, orphans, foreigners, the poor, and debtors.

He affirmed the physical word, out of which material culture is developed. He delighted in the very soil and rivers that He gave his people. It was "a land which the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deut 11:12).

In the picture language of the Old Testament, God gave people oil to make their faces shine, wine to make their hearts glad, friends like iron to sharpen them, wives like fruitful vines, and children like arrows shot out of their bows. Economic, social, and artistic patterns combine to make up a culture. This is the context within which we live. It is where we were designed to live. Global systems may immerse us in virtual realities—media, packaged music, the stock market, sports scores, and news flashes—in which great tragedies are juxtaposed with beer ads. Yet if we are absorbed in the global or virtual level, we miss out on the real rhythms of nature and society. Seed time and harvest, and the health of our soil, trees, and water. Friendship, courtship, marriage, parenting, aging, and dying. Creation, use, maintenance, and repair. There are rhythms to living in God's world. These are expressed locally, through specific cultural patterns. Knowing these helps us know ourselves, our potentialities and our limits, and the resources and sequences that weave the fabric for happy choices. They cannot be known at the abstract, global level. Discipling a child, for example, is not virtual. Being fired from a job is not a media experience. Having a baby is not a game. Coping with cancer is not abstract.

…Our Creator delights in colors. He generates smells, from onion to rose. He shapes every fresh snowflake. He births billions of unique personalities. Is it any surprise if he programs us with the capacity to create an amazing kaleidoscope of cultures to enrich the world?

Cultures contain sin and must be judged, as we will discuss in the following section. But ethnic pride is not automatically sin. It is like the joy parents feel at their child's graduation. Your child marches across the platform. Your chest hammers with pride. This is not pride at the expense of your neighbor, whose face also glows as his child graduates. No, your heart swells because you know your child's stories. The sorrows he has suffered. And the gifts that have blossomed in him like flowers opening to the sun. You yourself have cried and laughed and given away years of your life in the shaping of some of those stories.

At its best, ethnicity is an expansion of this good family pride. Ethnicity is a sense of identification with people who share a culture and a history, with its suffering and successes, heroes and martyrs. Like membership in the family, ethnicity is not earned. It is a birthright, received whether you want it or not.

Human beings were created to live in community. In today's world, we still feel that need. "Even when our material needs are met, still our motivation… emotional resilience… and moral strength... must come from somewhere, from some vision of public purpose anchored in a compelling image of social

reality," according to anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Being a world citizen is too vague to provide this motivation and strength, says Geertz. World citizenship makes the common person feel insignificant. Even national citizenship may breed apathy. But when you are a member of an ethnic group, you have celebrations which give zest, values which give a cognitive framework, action patterns which give direction to your days, and associational ties which root you in a human context. You have a place in time in the universe, a base for the conviction that you are part of the continuity of life flowing from the past and pulsing on into the future. You are in the story.

When Ethnicity Becomes an Idol

God ordained culture. But customs that glorify God are not the only reality that we observe around us. Instead of loveliness, harmonious creativity, and admirable authority, we often see fragmentation, alienation, lust, corruption, selfishness, injustice, and violence cultivated by our culture. No part remains pure. Science tends to serve militarism or hedonism, ignoring morals. Art often becomes worship without God. Mass media is full of verbal prostitutes. Businessmen pull shady deals. Politicians fill their own pockets. Workers do shoddy work. Husbands deceive their wives. Wives manipulate their husbands. Children ignore their parents as persons.

We are not only created in God's image. We are also sinners. Because we have cut ourselves off from God, the cultures we create reek with evil. We are called, then, not only to rejoice in the patterns of wisdom, beauty, and kindness in our culture, but also to confront and judge the patterns of idolatry and exploitation.

Sometimes ethnicity is turned into an idol. Like other idols of modern society—money, sex, and power, for example—ethnicity is not bad in itself. When we exalt it as though it were the highest good, however, ethnicity becomes evil. Racism, feuds, wars, and "ethnic cleansing" result. When ethnicity becomes an idol, it must be confronted and judged.

Implications for Mission

Ethnicity counters the dehumanizing bend of globalization. Even at its best, economic globalization tends to treat cultural values as commodities. Ethnicity reminds us to keep faith with our grandparents and with our human communities. It is a vital counterbalance. What does ethnicity mean for mission? We will suggest four applications.

1. Affirm the Local

First, mission should affirm local cultures. We do not do this uncritically. Working with and under local Christians, we judge patterns of idolatry and exploitation, as explained above. Yet we love the local culture. We receive it as a gift of God. And while we live in that place, we adapt gladly to those dimensions of local values that are wholesome….

We patronize local businessmen and businesswomen. We encourage local artists, musicians, and writers, rather than routinely importing foreign books or translating them.

We stay in locally owned hotels and homes. We learn from the lore of local herbalists. We safeguard local forests. We gain skills in local sports and games. We make efforts to be present at local parties and funerals. We empathize with local social reformers. If we are missionaries, we discipline our thoughts so that we are not preoccupied with our homeland's cultural patterns. Specific heritages matter. Even the 20th century epic *The Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien, 1954) affirms the local. Columnist Mike Hickerson observes:

> *The Lord of the Rings* suggests that God's victory on Earth (or Middle-Earth) is incomplete unless and until the victory fills the "small places". The final battle between good and evil is not some gigantic historic battle –like the destruction of the Death Star—but rather a small fight, followed by a small reconstruction of a very small place. The Good News fills every valley…. In their return to the Shire, the Hobbits continued their mission to its proper conclusion. Without their humble work among their own humble folk, evil would have retained a stronghold in Middle-Earth. The global is important, and so too is the local.

In missionary training programs, this emphasis must be made. There is a tendency for missionaries from dominant cultures to assert their ethnic heritage as though it were God's pattern for everybody. Western missionaries do this. Chinese and Korean missionaries do it in Central and Southeast Asia. Latinos do it in indigenous communities….

2. Be Pilgrims

Many people have several ethnic identities. Consider this situation: On the west coast of America, earlier generations of Asians were prevented by law from marrying Caucasians. Quite a few Filipino immigrants married Native Americans. Picture three adult children in such a family today. One identifies primarily as a Filipino, the second as a Native American, and the third as an American. But all three switch identities from time to time.

Furthermore, cultures change continually. In the process, new identity combinations emerge. The renowned Wing Luke Museum is re-opening this week in my home city, Seattle, Washington. Reportedly it is the only pan-Asian-Pacific American museum in the USA. What is an Asian-Pacific-American? "Not a race, ethnic group, or nationality," according to Jack Broom in the *Seattle Times*. "It's a census category that historically combined people from more than 40 countries making up a vast portion of the globe, stretching from Tahiti to Pakistan, Japan to Indonesia, Hawaii to India."

Fourteen percent of my county's population is Asian Pacific American. In spite of the *Seattle Times'* disclaimer, this is a significant ethnic category, a measurable group with enough identity to support a noted museum. In a nesting hierarchy of ethnic identities, it constitutes one level. The *Times* article goes on to say that the high numbers "reflect the Northwest's perch on the Pacific Rim."

Multiple identities are not unusual. Spanish speakers in the USA grew by 50% from 1980 to 1990. They now make up 30% of the population of New York City. Most speak English as well. In the same decade, the number of Chinese speakers in the U.S. increased by 98%. Four-fifths of these people continue to prefer speaking Chinese at home even though most speak English.

At the core, ethnic identity rests on self-ascription as a member of a shared culture, a shared community, a shared heritage. In a multiethnic society, you may not see much difference between the economic, social, and worldview patterns of people whose parents came from different countries. They may shop at the same stores and make jokes about the same sports events.

What matters is not the depth of observable difference but the depth of the identification with distinctive communities. A people's history, for example, is their private property. The Jews have their history. The Chinese have their history. African-Americans have their history. Nobody can take this from them. It is their heritage. When the history involves suffering, and when heroes have arisen in the midst of that suffering, communal ties are even stronger.

Heritage matters, but a lot of people have more than one, and are at various points on an identity continuum. Some balance several identities. People may not put this into words, or even into conscious thought. But they know when they feel uncomfortable, when they feel crammed into inappropriate categories, into boxes that don't fit. It is important to respect the way people identify themselves at any particular time; however, doing so may scramble our categories or lists of people groups. Individuals from the same ancestry—even siblings—may choose to identify differently.

What is the identity of the refugee immigrant? The bi-racial child? The Navaho who wonders whether home is in the reservation or the city? The cosmopolitans and the youth who buy and wear goods from everywhere and who read, listen to, and watch media from everywhere? Who are their people? Are they destined to be global nomads?

Wherever they are, the gospel offers them a home. God doesn't stereotype us. He meets us each as the exceptions that we are, with our multiple and overlapping identities, our unique pilgrimages, our individual quirks. God doesn't slot us into pigeonholes, Whether we have permanently lost our community, or are temporarily adrift, or have patched together bits of several heritages, God welcomes us into his people. The gospel offers us a home beyond the structures of this world.

Local cultures are gifts of God, but they are never enough. Yes, like Jeremiah, we "seek the welfare of the city" where we find ourselves (Jer 29:7, NASB). Yet, like Abraham, we know that his is not our final resting place. We remain pilgrims, seeking the city "whose builder and maker is God" (Heb 11:8-10, KJV).

3. Build Bridges

In 1964, when he was 14, Zia entered a school for the Ibind in Afghanistan. He became a joyful Christian. Over the next years, he learned to speak the Dari, Pushtu, Arabic, English, German, Russian, and Urdu languages, and to read these languages where Braille script was available. During the Russian occupation of Afghanistan, Zia was put in charge of the school for the blind. Later, because he would not join the Communist Party, he was thrown into prison. He escaped to Pakistan in the disguise of a blind beggar, which was his actual state.

In Pakistan, because Zia was translating the Old Testament, he was offered a scholarship to go to the United States to study Hebrew. He declined the opportunity. Why? He was too busy ministering locally. Although he didn't think he had time to extract himself to learn Hebrew, he did learn Urdu as his seventh language in order to reach Pakistanis. Eventually he was martyred.

Zia represents the millions of Christian witnesses over the centuries who have discovered that the gospel links us with the globe. We begin locally, but we do not stop there.

Today the world desperately needs people like Zia. Economic and technological globalization connect us at superficial levels. Societies must have people who can make deeper connections. Thomas Friedman explores this idea in his powerful book, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree,* where the Lexus represents the global economy and the olive tree represents local traditions. Clifford Geertz writes about the tension between epochalism and essentialism, between the need to be part of the contemporary epoch versus the need to maintain our essential identities, to know who we are. Manuel Castells in *The Rise of the Networked Society* argues that although a networked globe means an integration of power, this happens on a level increasingly divorced from our personal lives. He calls it "structural schizophrenia" and warns, "Unless cultural, political, and physical bridges are deliberately built…we may be heading toward life in parallel universes whose times cannot meet."

Who can build bridges? What movement spans nations, races, genders, *ethne*, rich and poor, illiterates and Ph.D.'s? It is an awesome thing to realize that there are scarcely any people more suitably poised to connect interculturally than the church universal.

When civil ties break down, it is often believers who can lead societies across bridges of reconciliation, reaching out ot clasp hands with brothers and sisters on the other side. Our loyalties do not stop at the edges of our culture. We are pilgrims. WE can step out into the margins. Indeed, that has always been the Christian mandate. Abraham was called to be a blessing to all the families of the earth (Gen 12:1-3). David sang, "May all the peoples praise you, O God" (Ps 67:3,5). Pau was propelled by a passion for the unreached peoples (Rom 15:20-21). John vibrated with a vision of peoples and tribes and kindreds and nations gathered together around the throne of God at the end of time (Rev 4-5).

Making cross-cultural connections has been our mandate from the beginning. Our involvement in globalization is rooted not in economics but in God's love for his world. We cannot be isolationists, content in our cocoons. The love of God compels us to step outside our boundaries. Where there is conflict, we step out as peacemakers. Where the gospel is not known, we step out as witnesses. Global connections also make it possible for us to step out to serve the Church of Jesus Christ worldwide more swiftly and comprehensively than ever before.

To whom much has been given, from them much is required. Are we building bridges?

4. Nurture Ethnic Churches

Finally, we must consider distinct ethnic churches in our own communities. Some people ask: "If 11:00AM on Sunday is the most segregated hour in America, aren't ethnic churches racist? Certainly they foster evangelism and fellowship. But just because something succeeds doesn't make it right. The devil has lots of success, too."

How can we answer? In this chapter, we have laid the foundation for arguing that ethnic churches are justified not only for pragmatic reasons—because they work—but also because they are rooted in the doctrine of creation. In God's image, expressing God-given creativity, people have developed different cultures. These cultures offer complementary glimpses of beauty and truth, and complementary critiques of evil.

Every church must welcome people of every race and culture. Some people flourish in multicultural churches. Other treasure their own tradition. For them, culture remains important in worship. They pray in their heart language, with meaningful gestures, ululations, and prostrations. Their culture will affect the way they do evangelism, discipling, teaching, administration, counseling, finances, youth work, leader training, discipline, curriculum development, relief, development, and advocacy. Their theologians complement other cultures' understanding of the Bible.

Separate congregations are not bad. What is bad is a lack of love. This lack of love is too often found in churches in which the majority of the members are from the subculture at the top of the power hierarchy. Wealthier, more powerful churches do have special obligations….

In this context, ethnic churches have great value. Like a mosaic, like a kaleidoscope, the whole spectrum of cultures—and ethnic churches—enriches God's world. Just as strong, healthy families are the building blocks for strong healthy communities, so strong ethnic churches can be the building

blocks for strong multicultural fellowships. It is when we learn commitment and cooperation at home that we are prepared to practice those skills at large.

Ethnic churches are a good place to begin global mission work too. We can partner with international Christians who live in our own cities—students, businessmen, temporary visitors, refugees, immigrants. Many represent relatively “unreached” peoples. Many regularly return to their homeland to help dig wells, set up clinics, teach in Bible schools, publish hymnbooks and training textbooks, etc. We can pray with them, help them grow to maturity as Christ’s disciples, and reach out together to their peoples.

When ethnicity is treasured as a gift but not worship as an idol, God’s world is blessed, and we enjoy a foretaste of heave. Let us keep that vision before us.

The Church in God's Plan

By: Howard A. Snyder -- used with permission

God has a cosmic plan, a master plan of redemption. He intends to bring about far more than filing heaven with saved souls. The Bible speaks of a divine plan for the whole creation, and the Church has a central role in that plan. The Bible shows what the Church is and defines its mission.

Master of a Great Household

God's cosmic plan is stated most concisely in the first three chapters of Ephesians. Paul speaks of "the will of God" (1:1), "his pleasure and will" (1:5), "the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ" (1:9). Paul repeatedly says God "chose," "appointed" and "destined" us according to his will.

Note especially Ephesians 1:10. The word sometimes translated "plan" is *oikonomia*, which comes from the word for "house" or "household." It refers to the oversight of a household, or to the plan or arrangement for household management. The idea "is that of a great household of which God is the Master and which has a certain system of management wisely ordered by Him."

Paul here sees God's plan as a cosmic strategy having to do with all creation. God's plan is "to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (1:10, RSV). Five times in Ephesians Paul speaks of "the heavenly realms." God is the "Father of all who is over all and through all and in all," and Christ has "ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe" (4:6,10).

Reconciliation: Not Just "Plan B"

But what is God's master plan? Simply this: *that God may glorify himself by uniting all things under Christ.* "God's plan is to unite and reconcile all things in Christ so that people can again serve their maker."

God's plan is for the restoration of his creation, for overcoming the damage done to persons and nature through the Fall. God's design to reconcile all things may seem merely to fulfill his original intention at creation. But this is to speak humanly, from our underside view of reality; we must not suppose that God's cosmic plan for reconciliation is "Plan B," a second-best, back-up plan that God thought up because he failed at creation. For God's eternal plan predates both the Fall and the creation; it existed in the mind of God "before the creation of the world" (Eph 1:4).

This plan includes not only the reconciliation of people to God, but the reconciliation of "all things in heaven and on earth" (Eph 1:10). Or, as Paul puts it in Colossians 1:20, it is God's intention through Christ "to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." Central to this plan is the reconciliation of persons to God through the blood of Jesus Christ. But the reconciliation won by Christ reaches to all the alienations that resulted from sin—alienation from ourselves, between people, and between humanity and the physical environment. As mind-boggling as the thought is, Scripture teaches that this reconciliation even includes the redemption of the physical universe form the effects of sin as everything is brought under its proper headship in Jesus Christ (Rom 8:19-21). Or as the *NIV* suggests in translating Ephesians 1:10, God's purpose is "to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ." The implication is stunning: under Christ's Lordship everything is to be brought to a greater fullness than it experienced before the Fall.

Paul places our personal salvation in cosmic perspective. We are permitted no either/or here. No spiritual tunnel vision. The redemption of persons is the center of God's plan, but it is not the circumference of that plan.

The Church in God's Cosmic Plan

A remarkable phrase occurs in Ephesians 3:10. God's cosmic plan, Paul says, is that "through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms."

Let us look closely at this passage: In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus (Eph 3:4-6).

The mystery, now made known, is that Gentiles as well as Jews may share in God's promised redemption. In fact, Jew and Gentile are brought together into "one body." Through Jesus Christ, as Paul had explained already, God has "made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the diving wall of hostility." So all Christians are one body, "one new man." This was "through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility" (Eph 2:14-16).

Note the two dimensions here. Jewish and Gentile believers are reconciled both to God and to each other. They have joined in a reconciling relationship to Jesus that transcends and destroys their old hostility toward each other. No longer enemies, they are now brothers and sisters.

What then is the mystery of God's plan? It is that in Christ, God acts so powerfully that He can overcome hatreds and heal hostilities. Jew and Gentile are "reconciled to God in one body." The mystery is not merely that the gospel is preached to Gentiles; it is that through this preaching, Gentile believers are now "heirs together" and "members of one body."

God's plan for the Church extends to the fullest extent of the cosmos: His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph 3:10-11).

By God's "manifold wisdom" the Church displays an early fullness of what Christ will accomplish at the conclusion of all the ages. The spectacle is to reach beyond the range of humanity, even to angelic realms. The Church is to be God's display of Christ's reconciling love, bringing Jew and Gentile together as brothers and sisters in the community of God's people. But Jew and Gentile only? Was the miracle of the gospel exhausted by the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in the first century A.D.? Certainly not! There is more to the mystery of God's plan. The initial, historic reconciliation shows us that God reconciles all alienated persons and peoples to Himself through the blood of the cross. It started with the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile and extends to free and slave, man and woman, black and white, rich and poor (Col 3:10-11; Gal 3:28). It will ultimately extend to "every family on heaven and earth" (Eph 3:15).

The Biblical Vision of the Church

The Bible says the Church is nothing less than the Body of Christ. It is the Bride of Christ (Rev 21:9), the flock of God (1 Pet 5:2), the living temple of the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:21-22). Virtually all biblical

figures for the Church emphasize an essential, living, love relationship between Christ and the Church. This underscores the key role of the Church in God's plan and reminds us that "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph 5:25). If the Church is the body of Christ—the means of the head's action in the world—then the Church is an indispensable part of the gospel and ecclesiology is inseparable from soteriology. Therefore, to adopt what might be called an "anti-church stance" would be to dilute the very gospel itself and at the same time to demonstrate a misunderstanding of what the Bible means by "the Church."

The Bible shows the Church in the midst of culture, struggling to be faithful but sometimes adulterated by unnatural alliances with paganism and Jewish legalism. In Scripture the earthly and heavenly sides of the Church fit together in one whole and do not leave us with two incompatible churches or with a split-level view of the Church. The Church is one; it is the one Body of Christ that now exists both on earth and "in the heavenly realms" (Eph 1:3, 2:6, 3:10). This view of the Church is sharply relevant for the modern age for reasons which are basic to the biblical view of the Church.

First*, the Bible sees the Church in cosmic/historical perspective*. The Church is the people of God which God has been forming and through which he has been acting down through history. In this sense the Church has roots that go back into the Old Testament, back even to the Fall. Its mission stretches forward into all remaining history and into eternity. This horizontal line is the historical dimension.

The cosmic dimension reminds us that our space-time world is really part of a larger, spiritual universe in which God reigns. The Church is the body given to Christ, the conquering Savior. God has chosen to place the Church with Christ at the very center of His plan to reconcile the world to himself (Eph 1:20-23).

The Church's mission, therefore, is to glorify God by continuing in the world the works of the Kingdom which Jesus began (Matt 5:16). This both justifies and demands the Church's broader ministry "to preach good news to the poor…to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19).

Second, *the Bible sees the Church in charismatic, rather than in institutional, terms*. While the Church is, in a broad sense, an institution, it is more fundamentally a charismatic community. That is, it exists by the grace (*charis*) of God and is built upon by the gifts of grace (*charismata*) bestowed by the Spirit. As seen biblically, it is not structured the same way a business corporation or university is, but is structured like the human body—on the basis of life. At its most basic level it is a community, not a hierarchy; an organism, not an organization (1 Cor 12; Rom 12:5-8; Eph 4:1-16; Matt 18:20; 1 Pet 4:10-11).

Third, *the Bible sees the Church as the community of God's people*. Here the cosmic and the charismatic are united, and we see the Church as both within the world and as transcending the world. Since the Church is the people of God, it includes all God's people in all times and in all places, as well as those who have now crossed the space-time boundary and live in the immediate presence of God. But the people of God must have a visible, local expression, and at the local level the Church is the community of the Holy Spirit. As Samuel Escobar has said:

> God calls those who become His people to be part of a community. So the new humanity that Christ is creating becomes visible in communities that have a quality of life that reflects Christ's example.

The Church finds its identity in this unified, complementary rhythm of being a people and a community, both within a city or culture and within the larger world-wide context.

The biblical figures of body of Christ, bride of Christ, household, temple or vineyard of God, and so forth, give us the basic idea of the Church. Any contemporary definition must be in harmony with these figures or models. But these are metaphors and not definitions. I believe the most biblical definition is to say the Church is the *community of God's people*. The two key elements here are the Church as a people, a new race or humanity, and the Church as a community or fellowship—the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit.

The Community of God's People

These twin concepts emphasize that the Church is, in the first place, people—not an institutional structure. They emphasize further that the Church is no mere collection of isolated individuals, but that it has a corporate or communal nature which is absolutely essential to its true being. And finally, these truths show that being a community and a people is a gift from God through the work of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is not produced by human techniques or plans. The Church is constituted as the people of God by the action of Jesus Christ, and this reality opens the door to the possibility of true and deep community. Here the figure of the body takes on added meaning, including both the fact of community and the fact of peoplehood.

This concept of peoplehood is firmly rooted in the Old Testament and underlines the objective fact of God's acting throughout history to call and prepare "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God" (1 Pet 2:9; cp. Ex 19:5-6). The Greek work for "people" is *laos*, from which comes the English "laity." This reminds us that the whole Church is a laity, a people. Here the emphasis is on the *universality* of the Church—God's people scattered throughout the world in hundreds of specific denominations, movements and other structures. It is the inclusive, worldwide, corporate reality of the multitude of men and women who throughout history, have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. This fact celebrates the moving of God in history to constitute a pilgrim people and is especially related to the concept of the covenant. *Seen in cosmic/historical perspective, the Church is the people of God.*

On the other hand, The Church is a community or fellowship, a *koinonia*. This emphasis is found more clearly in the New Testament and grows directly out of the experience of Pentecost. If peoplehood underlines the continuity of God's plan from Old to New Testament, community calls attention to the "new covenant," the "new wine," the "new thing" God did in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the Spirit's baptism at Pentecost. The emphasis here is on the locality of the Church in its intense, interactive common life. *Seen as a charismatic organism, the Church is the community of the Holy Spirit.*

The Church as community emphasizes the local, temporal life of the Church in a given cultural context. Here we come down from the ethereal heights to the nitty-gritty business of Christians living together, sharing a common life. Here also we discover the basic fact that true community is essential for effective witness. And here too, as a result, we face the problem of wineskins—the necessity of dealing with practical structures in order to permit and encourage true community.

It is critically important—especially in a worldwide, multicultural situation such as the Church faces today—to be clear that the essence of the Church is people, not organization; that it is a community, not an institution. The great divide in contemporary thinking about the Church is located precisely

here. Biblically, the Church is the community of God's people, and this is a spiritual reality which is valid in every culture. But all ecclesiastical institutions—whether seminaries, denominational structures, mission boards, publishing houses or what have you—are not the Church. Rather, they are supportive institutions created to serve the Church in its life and mission.

They are culturally bound and can be socio-logically understood and evaluated. But they are not themselves the Church. And when such institutions are confused with the Church, or seen as part of its essence, all kinds of unfortunate misunderstandings result, and the church is bound to a particular, present cultural expression.

The Church is the Body of Christ, the community of the Holy Spirit, the people of God. It is the community of the King and the agent in the world of God's plan for the reconciliation of all things. God's agent of the Kingdom must not be considered just one means among many. For from the cross to eternity it remains true that "Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her to make her holy…and to present her to himself as radiant Church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish" (Eph 5:25-27).

Reflection Questions

1. God's plan is described in terms of reconciliation and at the same time, a subjugation under Christ's headship. Are these contradictory ideas? How are they integrated in Ephesians?

2. Is the Church the result of reconciliation; or is it the agent of reconciliation?

3. Why does Snyder define the Church as a community? What other options are there? Why is this an important understanding for advancing the gospel?

Discovering The Holy Spirit's Work in a Community

By: T. Wayne Dye - used with permission

Pete is a missionary to a tribal community. He has become deeply concerned with the problems of polygamy, betel nut chewing, and smoking. But the local people aren't too concerned about these things. They care more about avoiding discord in the village. Disobeying husbands, refusing hospitality, ignoring leaders, denying clan obligations, and showing anger are far more serious sins in their eyes.

Pete is frustrated. He is becoming convinced that he is beholding a serious lack of obedience to God among the new believers. From what he sees, several have even fallen into sexual sin. He reasons that since he can't see the evidence of repentance that he expects, they can't be trusted to hear the Spirit of God speaking to them.

Pete's problem begins with a perspective that began long before he arrived in this village. Pete had something of a prophet's role at home. His leadership was valued among his peers. In most situations he had been able to judge between right and wrong. He had learned to discern the spiritual roots behind problems and to effectively exhort his peers to follow God's ways.

Pete now lives in a community that holds a different worldview and recognizes different priorities about right and wrong. He doesn't understand this. Perceiving himself as the most trained and "spiritual" person around, Pete feels that he should trust the spiritual intuition he developed in his home culture and preach and teach against the sins in the new culture.

Pete is working under assumptions about how God's Spirit deals with the sins of individuals and communities—assumptions that are more likely to weaken, rather than strengthen, the new community of believers. However, his job (in fact the job of every missionary) is to trust that the Holy Spirit is already working in the lives of the people, to carefully observe and understand how He is working and to cooperate with it.

The Role of the Holy Spirit

Missionaries must understand how God's Spirit implants His standard, His way of holiness, into the heart of a community. They must learn to faithfully listen to the Word of God. As they do, God's Spirit enlightens them. "Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good, and is pleasing to Him, and is perfect." (Romans 12:2, TEV). The Spirit uses the Word in this way to bring individuals and communities to Christian maturity. The missionary must train himself to recognize this process by which the spirit works and be patient with it.

The Role of the Community

Every community has a standard of right and wrong. Depending on the worldview, beliefs and values in the culture, this standard may be closer or farther from what the Bible teaches. There is evidence, though, that some core concepts of right and wrong are indeed universal and can be found in the values of communities that have never heard Judeo-Christian teaching. Prohibitions against lying, stealing, murder, and adultery are virtually universal, although what exactly constitutes each sin varies from community to community. We saw this in parts of Papua New Guinea and the Philippines which had not yet been affected by Christian teaching. Alan Beals described a similar set of moral

norms in a Hindu village in India. In all three locations the ancestral rules were similar to the Ten Commandments.

The role of culture and community in conditioning our understanding of sin is seen in Romans 14. In the Roman church some people were vegetarians because they had formerly worshiped idols by eating sacrificed meat. Others were Jewish Christians who ate meat but insisted on keeping Jewish holy days. Their different cultural backgrounds resulted in these disagreements about behavior.

Paul responded that it is not the act itself that is important, but the underlying character of one's relationship with God (v. 17). A person must do what he or she believes is pleasing to God (vv. 12, 18, 22-23). Different people will choose to take different and maybe even opposite actions to please God (v. 2-3, 5-6). This is why Paul taught that it is wrong to be contemptuous of those who follow rules that seem irrelevant to us; we should not feel more spiritual than those who don't follow our own ideals of Christian behavior (v.10). Put another way, each of us is answerable to God. Only the Master knows exactly what He wants each servant to do.

All this sounds like moral relativism, but it is actually quite different. Moral relativism allows each individual to choose what is right and wrong for herself or himself based on pragmatics or simple preference. In contrast, the Bible contains universal principles intended to shape our consciences; people cannot decide their own moral rules.

The evils in a particular community may be easy for a new missionary to see but not for the members of that community. They may be quite concerned about following certain behaviors yet be unconcerned about others. They may treat moral issues as civil or even as personal matters that do not concern them spiritually. In such a community, the state of the people's conscience can be a poor reflection of God's ultimate goal for them. But as they respond to God, He is able to revolutionize their understanding of what is good and right.

Progressive Conviction and Change

Anyone who has followed Christ for long has experienced the Holy Spirit convicting him or her of behavior that they had not realized was sinful. This is not a once-for-all experience. God repeatedly and progressively leads individuals through a process of transformation to become increasingly like Christ. In a similar way, God moves by His Spirit and speaks by His word to bring about gradual changes in a community of believers. We find that the Holy Spirit brings conviction for particular sins in different sequence from one people to another.

As the Holy Spirit convicts and teaches individuals and communities, eventually whole societies can change toward greater justice, mercy, and moral uprightness. Throughout history, reforms in society have been instigated as many Christians responded to the Word of God together. An example of this is how God moved to expose the slave trade as sin among the British people. John Newton is known as the writer of "Amazing Grace." For years he was a Christian slave ship captain and did not recognize that slavery was inherently evil. It was long after his conversion that he recognized that his involvement in the slave trade was wrong. He then assisted William Wilberforce in his work to abolish slavery.

Pete was trying to correct sins that God was not yet convict the local community about. He ignored other sins that were real problems for them. In effect, Pete was unintentionally taking the role of the Holy Spirit for these people. He would have been far more effective if he had made efforts to listen to

how the Holy Spirit was convicting the people and cooperated with his work in the lives of individuals and in the entire people group.

While there were believers who responded to Pete's preaching, they still faced difficult problems. Because what they heard from Pete did not match what they felt they were hearing from God, they became confused and faced a long struggle in learning what God wanted for them. Some communities may even slavishly try to obey everything the missionary suggests or does, which might include brushing their teeth and putting flowers on the dinner table. Christian action separated from the context of local understanding of right and wrong prevents the Holy Spirit from developing the new believers' ability to hear and obey His voice.

This confusion delays the development of an indigenous church. A leading pastor in Yaounde, Cameroon once explained some difficult moral issues faced by his church. Cameroonian Christians disagreed deeply with Western Christians about standards of Christian living. As a result of these cultural misunderstandings, some Africans left the church and formed their own independent movements. Even worse, other Cameroonians, determined to follow the missionary, responded in ways that actually violated their internal sense of right and wrong. The vitality of their faith was lost.

Pointing People to the Bible

New believers need to be introduced to the whole range of Scripture. They must learn to consider the Bible as their final authority.

Teaching needs to emphasize the principles God wants people to follow about loving their neighbor, forgiving each other, peaceful interaction, and respect in the family. Instead of teaching these principles, the human tendency is to substitute rules about foods, ceremonies, rituals, times, and places. Paul states the principle clearly in Romans 14:17-18: "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men."

What we observed in the Bahinemo church made this passage come alive. After the majority of people in Wagu village came to Christ, we urged them to go to God for wisdom and direction regarding how they should act, what they should or should not do, which ceremonies could be kept or dropped, dealing with sin, etc. We taught them to pray and go to God's Word. We gathered passages that were not yet translated on topics for which they were seeking answers. We tended to be impatient about some activities we knew were displeasing to God, but we carefully avoided telling them our opinion. We wanted the leaders and everyone to develop a relationship with God and learn to hear His voice, rather than following us.

They focused on loving each other and making peace with their brothers. They looked at different aspects of their ceremonies and took out those rituals that caused pain or could be associated with any spirit beings. They kept the aspects of the ceremonies that brought unity, beauty, joy, and peace. They revived a lost art of village court to solve conflicts rather than yelling and fighting about issues. They could not see any scripture against polygamy, but decided it was selfish for the older men to have several wives when the men under 30 had none. They did not require anyone to divorce (which was unheard of in the group), but they forbade anyone to marry a second wife if there was a single man without a wife. This rule drastically cut the rate of adultery and promiscuity in the village. After 15 years all the young men had wives and most of the polygamy was gone by the natural process of death.

A missionary must be a learner in the community he serves. He must study the ethical and spiritual values of his host community and compare those with both the Bible and the values of his own culture. This will sensitize him to the way the Spirit is convicting and teaching this new community so he can reinforce it. As more and more people become believers, he can help them as a group to discover God's will for them. As he directs new believers to the Word of God, they will be able to work out their own salvation "with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12).

Biblical Absolutes vs Moral Relativism		
	Biblical/Universal Absolutes	**Moral Relativism**
Final Authority	God	Individuals
Purpose of Scripture	To be obeyed	To be taken as advice
Source of moral instruction	The Bible	Community

As the Holy Spirit Works to Transform….

- Learn the ethical system of the community to which you are sent. Go beneath the surface and learn value systems and meanings. Uncover the belief system of what's right and wrong in that community.

- Compare your findings with your own community. Then compare both communities with the Bible. Be sensitive to the strengths and weaknesses in both communities. This helps you to overcome blind spots and ethnocentrism.

- Without going against your own conscience, learn to live a loving life by the cultural standards of the people among whom you are serving. Live a life that everyone will see is good.

- Encourage believers to respond whenever the Holy Spirit convicts them. Teach patiently about God's standards for things which, though cultural, are in conflict with the Bible. Pray that you will be able to accept the aspects of the community which, although they bother you, are not incompatible with the Christian faith.

- Expect the Holy Spirit to steadily open the eyes of the believers and eventually to transform their community. Keep getting feedback from the community of believers about how He is working in their lives. Learn to trust the insights they get as they listen to God.

- Teach new believers to obey and rely on the Holy Spirit. Teach them how to keep their consciences clear so that the Holy Spirit can continue to teach them new truths. Expose them to the Bible, not just the "pre-digested" Bible that comes from you. Teach them to find for themselves principles in the Bible for wise and truly Christian answers.

Reflection Questions

1. Summarize Pete's problem, and what he should do differently.
2. What is the distinction between moral relativism and biblical absolutes, as applied to conviction of sin?
3. Using Dye's illustration of his work with the Bahinemo church, describe how a missionary would help new believers learn to consider the bible as their final authority.

Insider Movements: Retaining Identity and Preserving Community

By: Rebecca Lewis (used with permission)

Insider movements can be defined as movements to obedient faith in Christ that remain integrated with or inside their natural community. In any insider movement there are two essential dynamics:

1. Continued community. The gospel takes root within pre-existing communities or social networks in such a way that no new social structures are needed, invented, or introduced. Believers are not gathered from diverse social networks to create a "church." Instead, believers in the pre-existing community become the main expression of "church" in that context.

2. Retained identity. Believers retain their identity as members of their socio-religious community while living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible.

Take a closer look at these two dynamics:

Dynamic One: Pre-Existing Communities Become the "Church"

How can the gospel take root within pre-existing communities in such a way that the community or network becomes the main expression of "church" in that context? To understand why this factor is important in insider movements, let's contrast planting a church with implanting a church.

Planting Churches

Typically, when people "plant a church" they work to create a new social group. Individual believers, often strangers to one another, are gathered together into new fellowship groups. Church planters try to help these individual believers become like a family or a community. This pattern of "aggregate church" planting can work well enough in individualistic Western societies. However, in community-based societies, when believers are taken out of their families into new social structures the affected families usually perceive the new group as having "stolen" their family member. The spread of the gospel is then understandably opposed.

"Implanting the Gospel"

In contrast to how churches are planted, insider movements can be considered to be "implanted" when the Gospel takes root within a pre-existing community. Like yeast, the Gospel spreads within the community. No longer does a newly formed church group try to become like a family. Instead, believers within their pre-existing family or community network gradually learn how to provide spiritual fellowship for each other. This network of believers within their family and community forms the core of an implanted church. The strong relational bonds already exist; what is new is their commitment to Jesus Christ. Implanted movements are not necessarily more "contextualized" than planted churches. Even if the new church is very close to the culture, the creation of a new structure often unnecessarily distances believers from their families.

Continuing Communities: Is it Biblical?

Households such as those of Cornelius, Lydia, and the Philippian jailer became the relational core of many of the churches that we see in the New Testament. These and other examples feature families and larger social communities following Christ together.

Some have seen the redemption of pre-existing communities as fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that in his descendants all the families would be blessed (Gen 12:3, 28:14). When entire families and clans are not broken apart, but instead transformed and fulfilled by Christ, the larger society in which these movements flourish can be blessed and transformed in significant ways. The Gospel is not seen as a threat and thus it flows more easily into neighboring relational networks.

Dynamic Two: Believers Retain Their Socio-Religious Identity

In many countries today, it is almost impossible for a new follower of Christ to remain in vital relationship with their community without also retaining their socio-religious identity. In these places, the word "Christian" is not understood as referring to sincere believers in Jesus Christ. Instead, the term "Christian" calls to mind a socio-religious-political category. One's religious identity (Muslim, Christian, Hindu, etc.) is often written on one' s identity card at birth. Changing one's identity from "Muslim" or "Hindu" to "Christian" is usually seen as a great betrayal of one's family and friends. Making such a change is often illegal or impossible, or at best, thought to be quite scandalous.

Nevertheless, the gospel can spread freely in such places through insider movements. Insider believers have a new spiritual identity, living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible, but they retain their socio-religious identity.

Retaining Identity: Is it Biblical?

Does one have to go through Christianity to enter God's family? The New Testament addresses a nearly identical question: "Do all believers in Jesus Christ have to go through Judaism in order to enter God's family?" It is important to realize that for both questions, the nature of the gospel itself is at stake. The "Kingdom Circles" diagram below illustrates the issue.

The woman at the well at first refused Jesus' offer of eternal life because as a Samaritan, she could not go to the temple or become a Jew. But Jesus distinguished true faith from religious affiliation, saying God was seeking "true worshipers who worship the Father in spirit and truth" (John 4:19-24). Realizing that Jesus was "the Savior of the world" (v. 42) and not just of the Jews, many Samaritans in her town believed. Based on what Jesus had told the woman at the well, it is very likely that these new followers retained their Samaritan community and identity.

Later, the Holy Spirit revealed to the apostles that the Gentile believers did not have to go through Judaism in order to enter God's family. In Antioch, Jewish believers were telling Gentile believers they must comply with Jewish culture and traditions to be fully acceptable to God. Disagreeing, Paul brought this issue to the lead apostles in Jerusalem. The issue was hotly debated because the Jews had believed for centuries that conversion to the Jewish religion was required to be part of the people of God. But the Holy Spirit showed the apostles they should not "burden" Gentile followers of Christ with Jewish religious traditions (Acts 15).

To make this decision, the apostles used two criteria: the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles coming to Christ and the guidance of Scripture. First, they heard that the Holy Spirit had descended on Gentile believers who were not practicing the Jewish religion. Second, they realized the Scriptures had predicted that this would happen. These two criteria were sufficient for the apostles to conclude that God was behind this new movement of believers who were retaining their Gentile cultural identity. Therefore, they did not oppose it or add on demands for religious conversion. If we use the same two criteria today, insider movements affirm that people do not have to go through the religion of Christianity. Instead, they only need to go through Jesus Christ to enter God's family.

Paul wanted people to understand that this truth has been part of the gospel from the beginning. He pointed out that God promised Abraham that all people groups would receive the Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ alone (Gal. 3:8-26). As a result, when Peter and Barnabas consented to the demand of traditionalists that Gentiles be required to follow their Jewish religious customs, Paul publicly rebuked them for "not acting in line with the truth of the gospel" (Gal 2:14-21).

Paul warned that to add religious conversion to following Christ would nullify the gospel. He also affirmed that not through any religion, but "through the gospel the Gentiles are made heirs together in the promise of Christ Jesus" (Eph 3:6). Therefore, a person can gain a new spiritual identity without taking on a "Christian" label and without affiliating with the traditions and institutions of Christianity.

Let the nations be glad that they too have direct access to God through Jesus Christ! This is the power of the gospel!

Kingdom Circles

A simple diagram can help distinguish between socio-religious identity and the altogether essential spiritual identity of believing in and following Jesus Christ.

If the Kingdom of God can be represented as a circle of those who are obedient, believing followers of Jesus Christ, we can portray the idea that only some of those who were participants in Judaism in New Testament times were Jewish people following Christ as Lord and therefore had entered the Kingdom of God (A). Not everyone who was Jewish in that day became part of the Kingdom of God (B).

Many Gentiles of that day followed Jesus Christ as Lord and entered the Kingdom of God (C). It's important to note that many Gentiles did not follow Christ or enter the Kingdom (D). But one way to portray the issue facing church leaders in Acts 15 was this: Is it necessary for Gentiles to "go through" Judaism in order to enter the Kingdom of God (E)?

Figure 1

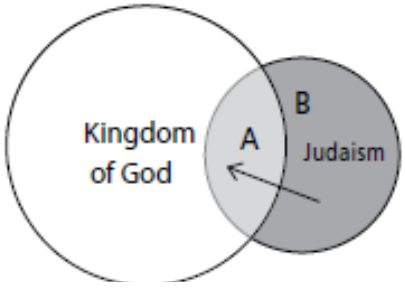
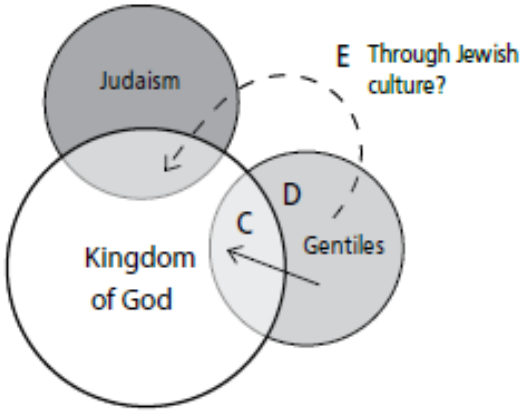


Figure 2



If we ask the same question today, we will have to begin by recognizing that while many people who adhere to Christian culture and family traditions have obediently believed in Christ and have entered the Kingdom of God (F), many others are Christians in name only and have not entered the Kingdom of God, even though they may be members in good standing of Christian churches (G). This raises a similar question: Is it necessary for people with a non-Christian identity to "go through" Christian identity and culture in order to become part of the Kingdom of God (H)? How this

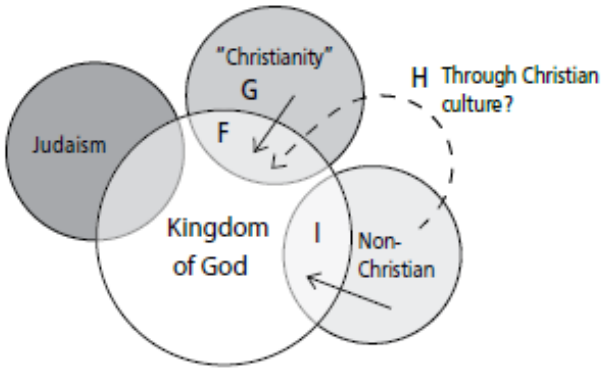


Figure 3

question is answered helps us recognize that many people with a non-Christian socio-religious identity may be entering the Kingdom of God by becoming wholly devoted, obedient believing followers of Jesus Christ while retaining their socio-religious identity and community relationships (I).

Three Types of Christward Movements

By: Rick Brown and Steve C. Hawthorne

Three distinct types of movements to Christ have been described in the last century: “people movements,” “church planting movements” and “insider movements.”

Insider Movements

Becky Lewis defines insider movements as having two essential dynamics: continuing community and retained socio-religious identity. Her definition helps us see what is similar and different in the three different kinds of movements.

All three types of movements rightly claim to describe the gospel flourishing within pre-existing social networks or natural communities. All three celebrate the hallmark of new spiritual identity as members of the kingdom of God and disciples of Jesus Christ. But there are differences when we look closely at how the two dynamics of community and identity are seen to work. Let’s consider each of the three kinds of movements with these two dynamics in mind.

People Movements

People movements were identified by J. Waskom Pickett in the 1930s in India, although he called them “mass movements.” They were later analyzed and popularized by Donald McGavran in the 1950s. The basic phenomenon observed as the decision by whole communities to become Christians together. Although the focus was Christ—McGavran often referred to them as “Christward movements”—the intact social network was expected to leave behind their former socio-religious affiliation in order to take on a traditional Christian social identity. People movements are still occurring, although they are rarely publicized.

With respect to community, people movements are famous for encouraging entire families, clans, tribes and caste communities to become Christians together. With respect to religious affiliation and identity, they are expected to make a clear break. McGavran often spoke of the need to “Christianize” whole peoples.

Church Planting Movements

Church planting movements were noticed and designated in the 1990s. The most prominent feature of these movements is ongoing multiplication, enhanced by radically simple church structure and empowered by natural leaders of the community, who sustain and extend the movements.

Within “reached peoples” in which there is a respected Christian identity, church planting movements have been documented to bring millions of people to vibrant faith. They have also exploded among many unreached people settings in which they usually create new church structures. Even though the churches are usually simple house groups with non-professional “lay” leadership, they are generally viewed as totally new social structures within the larger community. According to David Garrison, believers “make a clean break with their former religion and redefine themselves with a distinctly Christian identity.”

Training 5 – The Kingdom of God

The team leader will choose which 2-3 articles team members are to read through before this On-Field Session. They will lead a discussion and/or use the questions provided at the end of each article as the basis for teaching and discussion.

- A Perfect Pearl
- Beyond Duty
- Building for the Kingdom
- The Kingdom of God in the Life of the World
- The Mission of the Kingdom
- Evangelism, the Leading Partner

A Perfect Pearl

A small gospel can be a beautiful thing

David Neff posted 12/16/2008 on Christianity Today

Is our gospel too small? From what Jesus says, I think that God likes small. Small and hidden, actually.

The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. It is like yeast. It is like a perfect pearl. It is like finding just one lost sheep. Or just one lost coin. It belongs to little children and others who were "small" in the estimation of Jesus' contemporaries.

God likes small beginnings. He likes to work in hidden ways that are easily overlooked. He loves any lost individual, even when he has 99 percent of the others safely under his care. He passionately cares for the socially unimportant whom others trample as they rush toward worldly prominence.

In 2008, the third and final series of Christian Vision Project essays challenged the smallness of our gospel. But that doesn't mean that the small is necessarily bad. *Small*, doesn't mean "insignificant' or "of no consequence". Indeed, the Good News of Jesus Christ is the most consequential news bulletin in the history of the world. And the individuals for whom he died are, as the sold Sunday school songs says, his "precious jewels".

Last January, Mark Labberton began this final series of Christian Vision Project essays by comparing the gospel many of us live by to a bland bowl of lima beans. "Many have the impression," he wrote, "that the gospel is small, smooth, and tasteless."

When I re-read Labberton's essay, I began to think of a different kind of "small" food. I though of *tapas*, the small portions of intensely flavored dishes that have long served as appetizes in Spain. Over the last quarter century they have become an entire cuisine in some American restaurants. The first time friends invited me to a tapas restaurant, I was not intrigued. It was the 1980s, and American culture still celebrated the all-you-can-eat buffet. The idea of going to a restaurant to eat small portions didn't seem special to me. But my first tapas bites were a revelation. An epiphany. The intense tastes of garlic or cumin or chilies brought such a rush of flavor that it reoriented my whole approach to eating. This was food that count not be wolfed down unthinkingly, like the 1950s American cuisine of my youth: tuna noodle casserole, Jell-O salad, mashed potatoes. These little dishes demanded that I nibble slowly, chew thoughtfully, and savor.

Hear the parable of the tapas menu. God offered us something that could have been small, obscure, and forgettable. He didn't offer us some grand universal principle. His gift was the life and death (and resurrection!) of just one person in a small country repeatedly crushed and occupied by foreign powers. He does not give us love or peace or brotherhood. He gives us Jesus, who died like a common criminal.

But when we pay attention to the small thing God gives us, it changes our entire approach to life. We see the world differently. What had seemed insignificant now demands our full attention. What had seemed ordinary now seems interesting. What had seemed a dead end now promises great potential—the redemption of the whole world.

Keep It Extravagant

In the gospel, there is always a paradoxical tension between the small and the great, between the local and the universal, between the tightly closed bud and the open bloom. But we should never act as if the smallness of the gospel justifies small-mindedness or a miserly spirit. Labberton wrote: “When prominent Christian voices call for protests and boycotts over things like our freedom to say ‘Merry Christmas,’ the gospel seems very small indeed.”

In his April article for the Christian Vision Project, Richard Mouw asked us to consider Kosuke Koyama’s challenge: “We all have to decide whether we have a generous God or a stingy God.” But generosity of spirit does not always mean big, and stingy does not always mean small.

Before I ate tapas, the idea of small servings seemed stingy. After I tasted tapas, these exquisitely crafted dishes seemed extravagant. I know that God can work in small ways and at the same time be extravagantly generous. And I know that bigness (certain totalitarian regimes come to mind) can be stingy.

Indeed, in this life we need God to be generous with us in small ways. It can be disastrous to our health to say “supersize me” at the fast-food restaurant. The annals of those who win large sums in the state lottery are a record of greed, poor planning, and the indulgence of ne’er-do-well friends. Similarly, God’s outsized blessings would be too much for most of us to handle this side of entire sanctification.

But, as Mouw wrote, we must expect God to be generous to people and in situations where we would not be so inclined. One insight from the “Loving God and Neighbor Together” dialogue between Muslims and Christians held this July at Yale University was the difference between our understandings of love, compassion, and mercy.

The Christian participants had been taught by Jesus that love should be indiscriminate—just as the mercy shown by the Good Samaritan was conditioned on nothing other than the wounded man’s need. That may not be the way we generally behave, but it is the way we have learned to think of ourselves. It is the standard against which we measure ourselves.

The Muslim participants startled us Christians by talking about the limits their religion brought to their compassion. Orphans, widows, and others in need through no fault of their own deserve compassion, they said. But in Islamic ethics, there was no obligation to help the person whose drunkenness or gambling or otherwise unwise behavior put them in difficulty.

Reflecting on what I heard those Muslim leaders say, the tension was not between a generous God and a stingy God, as Koyama puts it, but between mercy that was defined and conditioned by justice (the Muslim view) and justice that was conditioned and defined by mercy (the Christian view).

Keep it Simple

To ask, “Is our gospel too small?” begs for a writer to say, yes it has been too small and we need to stretch it. It was a surprise, therefore, when I read David Fitch’s September Christian Vision Project essay, “Missional Misstep.” Fitch told a cautionary tale about the dangers of having too big a gospel, about packing the gospel with so much good news that it its hard to remember what the headline is. The gospel touches every dimension of life, every sphere of existence. It has implications for family life, for political life, and for economic life, both personal and societal. It has implications for the way we relate both to well-adjusted friends and to the suffering masses around the world. But if we confuse the implications with the core message, we can easily forget what the story is about. And if

we compensate for past sins of reductionism by offering theologically unlearned individuals greater complexity than they can grasp, we will be witnessing only to ourselves.

Fitch wrote that his congregation “had successfully preached the life of Christ and his mission,” but “in the process” had “made church members timid in the actual task of leading people to Christ.” Fitch called for a new evangelistic tool that would not be reductionistic. It would have to be simple to succeed, but it would also need to “lead the new believer in the back-and-forth motion between the bigness of God’s salvation for the world and what he wants to do ‘for us’: forgive our sins and shape us in the image of his Son.” It would also have to “function from within the context of the community’s life, because it is only here that the words and pictures we share take on flesh and make sense.”

James Choung’s four-circles diagram (see his Christian Vision Project interview in the July issue) attempts to do that. It presents the bigness of God’s salvific plan for the whole world and not just the message of salvation for an individual. It inspires potential converts by calling them to a mission at the same time it calls them to salvation. It lets the potential convert know that his is buying into something bigger than a repentance-for-forgiveness transaction, and that the forgiven life requires a commitment to God’s mission.

But Choung’s evangelistic tool (like others before it) has emerged in the context of university ministry. Careful attention must be given to cultivating similar efforts in congregational contexts. It is primarily through congregations that Christians are called to live the life of mission.

It’s Not about You and Me

Fitch and Choung are right to want to simplify (that is, to focus) the gospel message without being reductionistic. But as we balance the bigness of God’s purpose with the smallness of his chosen means, we should not forget the cultural context in which the events of God’s Good News played out.

When we say that the eternal Son of God became a Palestinian Jew from Nazareth, who lived and died near the end of the Second Temple period, we recognize that God chose to speak his central Word of revelation in the context of a previously revealed system of wisdom and worship. The Jewish context of Jesus’ life and death is not inconsequential. Jesus could not have just as easily been a Roman or an ancient Briton. As recent New Testament scholarship has taught us (especially that of N.T. Wright), Jesus’ mission and message was as the Messiah of Israel. Near the beginning of his public ministry, the prophet John the Baptist announced Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This cannot be understood apart from the revelation of God in Israel’s system of sin sacrifices. Also at the beginning of his ministry, Jesus proclaimed the arrival of God’s rule. This, too, cannot be understood apart from prophetic promises made to Israel.

At *Christianity Today*, we sometimes worry about evangelical slippage on what have been the key identifying beliefs of the movement. Part of that slippage has been a growing tendency to play down Jesus’ embodiment of the sacrifices that foreshadowed him. Early Christianity made much of the correspondence between Jesus, the sacrifices, and the promises of redemption through the prophets. When we proclaim Jesus’ death and resurrection apart from those Jewish foreshadowings, it can seem almost anti-Semitic. Jesus himself did not do so. He began with the house of Israel. The early church struggled to discover the right balance of continuity and discontinuity with its Israelite heritage. When a teacher like Marcion tried to purge the Scriptures of references to that legacy, the church treated him as a heretic. Marcion de-Judaized the gospel for philosophical reasons. We are tempted

instead to ignore the divinely revealed frame of Jesus' gift to us because the sacrificial theme is culturally distasteful. Are we less culpable than Marcion?

Others set aside the talk of sacrifice because the imagery seems overly familiar and they want to give renewed attention to other legitimate dimensions of the gospel, such as Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom or the equally central message of Jesus' resurrection and his victory over death. Still others associate the sacrificial language with the individualistic emphasis it has been given—the Lamb who takes away the sins of you and me rather than the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.

Your gospel is too small if it is always about you. My gospel is too small if it is always about me. We must grasp the universal character of "one man's" redeeming sacrifice, just as we grasp the cosmic repercussions of the Resurrection. Charles Wesley almost held it all together. The bulk of his enduring hymn, "Christ the Lord is Risen Today," focuses on Christ's triumph over death and the grave and his consequent heavenly rule. He devoted several couplets, however, to pain, blood, suffering, redeeming work, and a salvation "procured" by his pain. "But the pains that he endured.../ Our salvation has procured… / Who did once upon the cross… / Suffer to redeem our loss. … / Love's redeeming work is done, … / Fought the fight, the battle won, … / Lo! The Sun's eclipse is over … / Lo! He sets in blood no more, Alleluia!"

In the theological vision of Charles Wesley, small intersects large because he knows Jesus to be our "head" in whom we also die, rise, and reign. "Soar we now where Christ hath led, … / Following our exalted Head, … / Made like him, like him we rise, … / Ours the cross, the grave, the skies. …"

The Wesleys had a large-and-small gospel. They had no difficulty connecting Christ's universal triumph with the particular events of Good Friday and Easter, and no difficulty connecting the redemption of the world with the redemption and transformation of individuals. And while the reformation of society didn't make it into a famous Wesley hymn, it was a crucial part of the evangelical revival that blossomed from their ministry.

God has a small-and-large gospel. We must always let the largeness be God's. His grand story makes our individual stories bigger as they take on meaning in his kingdom. Our efforts at evangelization must always build his kingdom, not ours. Our plans for church growth must always follow his yeasty patterns of growth, not the driven growth of corporate-style goal setting. God's mission must always enlarge our vision, but we must be content to be part of the small things he is always doing.

Beyond Duty

By Tim Dearborn (used with permission)

We often focus on the question:

"What must we do to obey the Great Commission, make disciples of all nations, and hasten the return of our Lord?" This is the wrong beginning point, for it locks us into a human-centered perspective. If we begin with the human-centered orientation, we continually feel constrained by insufficient resources—and the tasks are far greater than we can possibly fulfill.

Biblical priorities reflected again and again in Scripture ask us to begin instead with these questions:

- Who is the triune God?
- What is God doing in the world?
- How are we to participate with God in his redemptive purposes?

Mission is ultimately not a human response to human need. The Church's involvement in mission is its privileged participation in the actions of the triune God.

A Singular Passion

Lack of interest in mission is not fundamentally caused by an absence of compassion or commitment, nor by a lack of information or exhortation. And lack of interest in mission is not remedied by more shocking statistics, more gruesome stories, or more emotionally manipulative commands to obedience. It is best remedied by intensifying peoples' passion for Christ, so that the passions of his heart become the passions that propel our hearts.

Mission must never have first place in the Church's life. The Church is to have but one Lord—one passion—the One in whom all the fullness of God dwells, who has reconciled all things to himself (Col.1:19-20). If the Church today is in need of a conversion, it is always and only to Jesus Christ. We must say an emphatic, "No!" to lesser gods who clamor for our allegiance, and a living and joyous, "Yes!" to the One in whom all creation is summed up.

It is insufficient to proclaim that the Church of God has a mission in the world. Rather, *the God of mission has a Church in the world*. Grasp this inversion of subject and object, and participation in God's mission will become a joyous, life-giving privilege. Miss it, and mission involvement will eventually degenerate into a wearisome, overwhelming duty.

If the Church is faithful to the gospel, then its focus, passion, and delight are always and only Jesus Christ. Once our hearts beat in time with that of our Lord, we can experience a joyously passionate engagement in mission.

Mission's Integrating Theme

So many conflicting and competing mission cry for our attention. We're so easily drawn and quartered by the pull of divergent needs and calls. Without a central understanding of the biblical emphasis on the kingdom of God, our terminology becomes one of "I bring you bad news of sad problems."

Efforts to provoke interest in mission are often based on bad news—natural catastrophes, complex humanitarian disasters, unreached people groups, oppressed and exploited minorities, urban or suburban problems, and civil wars.

Woven into the fabric of our Christian faith is good news! And yet we've made mission the discussion of bad news and unmet needs. Do any of these sound familiar?

- Thousands of people every day are slipping into Christless eternities.
- 34,000 children die every day from malnutrition and preventable illnesses.
- There are thousands of unreached people groups without a church.
- More Christians have been killed for their faith in 20th century than in all others combined.
- Genocide, ethnic cleansing, illiteracy, homelessness, poverty, oppression…the list goes on and on.

Sad News of Unsolvable Problems

I must confess I once challenged and provoked people into mission using statistics similar to those mentioned above. I'm not at all suggesting that these are not real needs. The point is this: How shall we respond to these needs?

Good-hearted people always want to respond with compassion and kindness. We worked ourselves into exhaustion with exhortations to give more, do more, be more, care more, serve more, love more, sacrifice more. As fruitful as this could be, something always seemed to be missing.

My church members—including myself—often seemed exhausted. Missionaries we sent seemed overwhelmed by the arduous duty and responsibility on their shoulders.

Materials written to motivate the church in mission are filled with descriptions of tasks we must perform, responsibilities to be carried out, our Lord's commandment and commission to the church; and the desperate needs of the unreached, undernourished, and oppressed. And so the Church moves out in mission from a sense of duty, obligation, and responsibility to attempt these tasks.

Not surprisingly, this commitment to the missionary enterprise of the Church produces exhausted servants. The tasks are so great and our resources appear to be so small. Yes, we must confront huge problems and fundamental issues—but in the context of a coming kingdom, not in the context of ever-deepening chaos. Missions is not ultimately our response to great need.

No wonder the church and many organization's supports are increasingly disinterested in mission! People cannot handle relentless exposure to catastrophes and crises. This is not the gospel. The gospel is good news of great joy!

The Kingdom of God is Good News of Great Hope

We are witnesses to great hope, not merely grievous hurt. This should be deeply woven into our psyche as Christians. Scripture tells us, "since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us give thanks" (Heb 12:28).

Frankly, we have not set our hearts toward hope. We look at the world and it seems to us that everything is being shaken. Everything seems to be teetering on the brink of disaster—and yet the undergirding news in Scripture is that we have a kingdom that cannot be shaken. The author of Hebrews affirms this, saying, "…we who have taken refuge might be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us. We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul" (Heb 6:18-19).

Christ's Great Victory

If we have this utterly reliable anchor, this certain and steadfast hope, then it is actually blasphemous to focus our missionary communication on descriptions of the great void of unmet needs in the world. P.T. Forsyth makes the statement that: "The weakness of much current mission work is that [we] betray the sense that what is yet to be done is greater than what [Christ] has already done. The world's gravest need is less than Christ's great victory."

If we understand biblical faith, we will understand that what Christ has already accomplished is far more determinative, significant, complete, and important than anything yet to be done.

In my work with World Vision and discussions with its leaders, we have begun to recognize that sometimes we've inadequately represented mission in our well-intentioned promotional and fundraising activities. We've perfected the art of portraying truly heart-rending stories, and providing people with pictures and descriptions of real crises, needs, and disasters. God has used our best efforts, though flawed, and his people have responded from compassionate hearts. However, if Forsyth is right—and the Bible is emphatic in its documentation of the truth of his statement—then we must change how we communicate mission opportunities. Instead of relying entirely on presentations of need, we must being inviting people to participate in God's work by making known to all people the "mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet 2:9).

Privileged Participation—Not Exhausted Action

Without this news of great hope and full confidence in a completely sovereign God, we will have the sense of mission as an exhausting human enterprise. We'll feel as though we've been handed a mandate, a commission and a duty, and that the job is completely up to us. This inevitably leads to burnout. Mission was never intended to be an exhausting human enterprise. Mission is our privileged participation in the lifegiving action of the triune God.

Seeking First the Kingdom

Jesus invites us to participate in what God is doing in bringing his kingdom. But what does that look like? We all know Matthew 6:33: "Strive first for the kingdom of God." If the kingdom was so central to Jesus' life and ministry, then we cannot afford to be fuzzy about its meaning and significance.

Look at what Jesus said about the kingdom of God:

- The kingdom of God was the subject of Jesus' first message when he told the people that the Kingdom of God is at hand (Mark 1:15, Luke 4:18).
- The kingdom was also the subject of his last message (Acts 1:1-8).
- Jesus himself said the kingdom was the goal, the intention, and the purpose of all his teaching (Luke 8:10).

- Even Jesus' miracles were called "signs of the kingdom."
- We all know the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done."
- Jesus even goes so far as to say that the end of this age will not come until the gospel of the kingdom has been proclaimed to all ethnic groups (Matt 24:14).

Signs of the Kingdom

Without this integrating vision of the kingdom of God, mission involvement can degenerate into competition among our own programs, ambitions, and desires. When the kingdom of God is the goal of all we do, then competing calls and opposing ambitions fade under the sound of the King's marching orders. To engage in mission is to participate in the King's business.

God Himself brings his Kingdom to fruition. He establishes it—not us. God chooses to let us share in his work. We are not told in Scripture that we bring, cause, or create the Kingdom. We are called by the Spirit of God to participate with him in building God's kingdom, but the responsibility is his. This is not merely a semantic issue. These terms mean the difference between something that is life-giving, or something that can be death-dealing. We have a pivotal role in the coming kingdom of God. The Spirit of God is sent to manifest signs of the Kingdom through us. But the work remains God's.

Signs of Kingdom Life

Jesus' miracles were signs of kingdom life. Because he chose to limit himself to time and space, he could cast out only a few demons, and feed only a few people miraculously. In comparison to the population of the world at the time, relatively few were privileged to see Jesus in action. Only those living in Palestine and specifically around Galilee had the opportunity to experience a part of what the kingdom was about. But Jesus' reputation began to spread, so that when he came to a new town, people brought the afflicted to him for healing. Every act of healing illustrated the message, "The kingdom of God has come near...to you" (Luke10:9). All of God's fullness is on the way. Whole towns and regions were transformed by the hope of the kingdom.

In a similar way, the late Mother Teresa, for example, only cared for about 200,000 people in Calcutta, but all 18 million people in that city knew that life could be different because of her example. In fact, her good works have come to be known in the global village and have impacted the world.

God desires that we be living signs of the kingdom, to provide visual aids of what life will look like one day when the kingdom is fully here. We will not bring the kingdom or build the kingdom, but our privilege is to live out previews of "coming attractions," revealing what this kingdom will look like.

Both Hands of the Gospel

The King seeks to restore the well-being and wholeness of his creation. The Church is not to be an underground railway to heaven, hiding people on earth until they can escape to glory. Nor is the Church to be another philanthropic organization, kindly doing good works and dispensing aid to those in need. Rather, the Church is the Body of Christ, consciously and explicitly participating in the establishment of his reign on earth. The Church is to be consciously and explicitly Christ's, regardless of the activity.

Therefore, we extend both hands of the gospel: the hand inviting people to repentance, faith, and eternal reconciliation with God through Christ Jesus, and the hand manifesting deeds of mercy and

compassion, extending the goodness of God's Kingdom on earth. One is not a means to the other. Both are equally significant to life in the eternal kingdom as described by Scripture.

No Longer a Somber Duty

To engage in mission is to participate in the coming of the kingdom of God. When the King and his kingdom are the unifying, controlling source and goal of all we do, then competing calls and opposing ambitions fade under the sound of the King's marching orders. Participation in God's mission is no longer a somber duty. It becomes a joyous privilege and an adventure of passion and hope.

Reflection Questions

1. In the long run, can it be counterproductive to provoke interest in mission by moving people to be concerned with human need?
2. What does Dearborn mean by "signs of the kingdom?"
3. How can missions become a joyous passion instead of a duty?

Building for the Kingdom, Our Work is Not in Vain

By: N.T. Wright (used with permission)

Many people, faced with the challenge to work for God's kingdom in the present, will at once object. "Doesn't that sound," they will ask, "as though you're trying to build God's kingdom by your own efforts?" Well, if it does sound like that, I'm sorry. It wasn't meant like that. Perhaps some further clarification is needed.

Let's be quite clear on two points. First, God builds God's kingdom. But God ordered His world in such a way that His own work in that world takes place through one of his creatures—the human beings who reflect his image. That, I believe, is central to the notion of being made in God's image. God intends His wise, creative, loving presence and power to be reflected—imaged, if you like—into his world through His human creatures. He has enlisted us to act as his stewards in the project of creation. Following the disaster of rebellion and corruption, he has built into the gospel message the fact that through the work of Jesus and the power of the Spirit, He equips humans to help in the work of getting the project back on track. So the objection about us trying to build God's kingdom by our own efforts, though it seems humble and pious, can actually be a way of hiding from responsibility and keeping one's head down when the boss is looking for volunteers.

Second, we need to distinguish between the final kingdom and the present anticipation of it. The final coming together of heaven and earth is, of course, God's supreme act of new creation for which the only real prototype—other than the first creation itself—was the resurrection of Jesus. God alone will sum up all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth. He alone will make the "new" heavens and the "new" earth. It would be the height of folly to think that we could assist in that great work.

But what we can and must do in the present, if we are obedient to the gospel, if we are following Jesus, and if we are indwelt, energized and directed by the Spirit, is to build for the kingdom.

Our Present Labors Are Not in Vain

A verse that has always struck me in this connection is 1 Corinthians 15:58. Paul has just written a lengthy discussion of the resurrection in great detail. How might we expect him to finish such a chapter? By saying, "Therefore, since you have such a great hope, sit back and relax because you know God's got a great future in store for you"? No. Instead he says, "Therefore, my beloved ones, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

By this he means that what you do in the present—by painting, preaching, singing, sewing, praying, teaching, building hospitals, digging wells, campaigning for justice, writing poems, caring for the needy, loving your neighbor as yourself—will last into God's future. These activities are not simply ways of making the present life a little less beastly or a little more bearable until the day when we leave it behind altogether. They are part of what we may call building for God's kingdom.

By such labors you are not oiling the wheels of machine that's about to roll over a cliff. You are not restoring a great painting that's shortly going to be thrown on the fire. You are not planting roses in a garden that's about to be dug up for a building site. You are—strange though it may seem, almost as hard to believe as the resurrection itself—accomplishing something that will become in due course part of God's new world. What you do in the Lord is not in vain.

Two Extremes: Triumphalism and Defeatism

There are two extremes toward which Christian people tend to slide. To begin with, there are those who declare that if Jesus is the true revolutionary then the single main Christian task is to build the kingdom here on earth through social, political, and cultural revolution. Alas, this social gospel (as it used to be called) has singularly failed to deliver the goods in the century or so since it was advocated in this modern form. An enormous amount of good has been done: social conditions have been improved vastly, though how much is due to Christian work and how much to other influences is hard to say. But we are still a fragmented, frightened, and battered world.

At the other end of the scale there are those who declare that nothing can be done until the Lord returns and everything is put to rights. The forces of evil are too entrenched, and nothing save a great apocalyptic moment of divine power can address them or change the deep structures of the way things are. This kind of dualism breeds very effectively within societies where injustice can be seen and named, but it is politically inconvenient to do anything about it. Such a view says that we will get on with the real business of the gospel, which is saving souls for the future world. We will look after the people at the bottom of the pile, but we won't do anything about the structures that put them there and keep them there. This kind of dualism banishes the continuing healing activity of the Father from the world he made, of the Son from the world of which he is already the Lord, and of the Spirit from the world within which he groans in travail.

Neither of these views begins to do justice to Paul's injunction to be "steadfast and immovable" in doing the work of the Lord because in the Lord our labor "is not in vain." The universal early Christian belief was that Jesus had already demonstrated publicly to be Israel's Messiah and the world's true Lord through his resurrection. That, as we've seen, is part of the whole point of the Christian story. If we believe it and pray, as he taught us, for God's kingdom to come on earth as in heaven, there is no way we can rest content with major injustice in the world. We must recognize, as the second view does, that the final putting to rights of everything does indeed wait for the last day. We must therefore, avoid the arrogance of triumphalism of the first view, imagining that we can build the kingdom by our own efforts without the need for a further great divine act of new creation. But we must also agree with the first view that doing justice in the world is part of the Christian task, and we must therefore reject the defeatism of the second view, which says there is no point in even trying.

The Kingdom of God in the Life of the World

By: Lesslie Newbigin (used with permission)

When the risen Jesus said to the apostles, “As the Father sent Me, so I send you,” and showed them His hands and His side, He was identifying the mission upon which He sent them with the way of the cross (John 20:19-23). And that way was—in one aspect—the way of total protest against the established powers.

To announce the imminence of the Kingdom, to announce that God’s reign of justice is about to break into the world, is necessarily to be on a collision course with the presently reigning powers. But this breaking in of God’s reign does not take the form of a successful political movement to remove the reigning powers and replace them with rulers who will faithfully execute God’s justice. It takes the form of a shameful and humiliating defeat, which, however, in the event of the resurrection is interpreted to chosen witnesses as the decisive victory of God’s Kingdom. He reigns from the tree. So, as the apostle says, the principalities and powers have been unmasked, and their pretensions to wisdom shown to be false; they have been disarmed, but they have not been destroyed. They still exist and still have a function, but one which is authorized and therefore limited by the justice of God manifested in Jesus.

To accept this sending—this mission defined by the scars of the passion—must mean that the missionary church will continue that protest against or unmasking of the hypocrisy, cruelty, and greed which infects the exercise of all political power. Yet, at the same time, the missionary church will accept the fact that the visible end of that road is a cross. Only beyond the cross, beyond all earthly programs, beyond death, will that victory of the justice of God be made manifest.

Unless the radical otherworldliness of the gospel message is acknowledged, the real role of the church in politics will be hopelessly compromised. Instead of a movement of radical protest, suffering and hope, there will merely be a naïve and ineffectual utopianism. The reign of God, which is the subject of the gospel message, is not the end product of political development; every attempt to confuse the two results in disappointment and disillusionment.

One can make the point very simply (perhaps crudely) by considering the Beatitudes. Why are those who are poor, oppressed, persecuted, hungry, and meek called happy? Simply because it is they who, in the new age, will be rich, free, and joyful. Most of them will still be poor and hungry, oppressed and tearful for all their earthly lives. They are happy because something infinitely good is promised to them in the new world. This is unpopular doctrine—“pie in the sky when you die.” However, the point is that this otherworldliness is what the teaching of Jesus clearly seems to imply.

What, then, is its relation to the mission of the church in the world? Not quietism. Not passive submission to the rule of injustice and greed and hypocrisy. The earthly ministry of Jesus is the sufficient refutation of such a conclusion. Or it ought to be—for it must be confessed that the church has often preached quietism, in the times when churchmen were in the seats of power.

Jesus, according to Saint John, was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, not to submit to them. His whole ministry is portrayed in the Gospels as a mighty onslaught on the works of the devil—whether these took the form of sickness and demon possession among the people, or of hypocrisy, cruelty, and hardheartedness among the rules. And His whole ministry is interpreted as the breaking in of the reign of God into the life of the world, to release those whom Satan has bound.

To quote the title of a famous book, His was “the faith that rebels.” No sick person brought to Jesus was ever told to accept his sickness as God’s will. Jesus was always moved to act—moved, it seems, both by pity and by anger, because Satan had so grievously oppressed God’s children. Right to the very end, His hand is stretched out to heal. Even on the cross, He speaks the word that brings release to a dying murderer. And yet, as the mocking spectator said, He who saved others could not, or did not, save Himself. At the end—but only at the end—there is a cry of submission: “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.”

The coming of the Kingdom lies in His Father’s hands, on the other side of death and defeat. The earthly ministry of Jesus is not the launching of a movement that will gradually transform the world into the Kingdom of God. It is, rather, a showing forth, within the confines of the present age, of the reality which constitutes the age to come—the reality of God’s reign.

And so when the risen Jesus says to His disciples, “As the Father sent Me, so I send you,” and shows them His hands and His side, He is commissioning them to continue what He came to do: to embody and to announce, within the limits of the present age, subject as it is to sin and death, the reality of the new age, of God’s reign of justice and mercy.

With that commissioning goes also the empowering of the Holy Spirit—so that, by the same Spirit whose anointing enabled Jesus to do works of healing and deliverance, the Church could likewise be empowered. But the outcome will not be a successful program for the progressive transformation of this present world into the new world.

“He showed them His hands and His side.” The breaking into history of the kingly power of God will indeed create happenings which challenge the powers that oppress and dehumanize, which unmask the pretensions of principalities and powers. Yet the ultimate sign of the Kingdom in the life of this world is the cross—the cross of Him who in the resurrection is manifested as Lord over all powers, even the power of death.

Reflection Questions

1. Newbigin warns against confusing the reign of God and political movements. What is his concern, and what, according to him, should be the character of Christian protest against corrupt political power?
2. What is quietism, and why is the church not to be quietist, according to Newbigin?
3. Explain the significance of “faith that rebels” as Newbigin illustrates it in Jesus’ ministry.

The Mission of the Kingdom

By: Ralph D. Winter (used with permission)

Most people interested in missions are staggered by the unusual span of concern and mission strategy reflected in Carey's pioneering ministry in India. The very breadth of Carey's classical outreach leads us to ask what Carey might "see" today as the full range of God's concerns in mission. That kind of *sight* is something our optic nerves do not handle. "The eyes of the heart" (Eph 1:18) are quite apparently not the eyes of our heads. To what extent did Carey's breadth reflect *the mission of the Kingdom*?

With his kind of special insight, the Lord's Prayer itself may very well suddenly take on new and unusual meaning: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10). What does "Thy Kingdom come" mean? Ponder, if you will, how different it seems to be from a conventional evangelistic activity in which people are "invited to accept Christ." Only when we emphasize that He is Savior *and Lord*, do we add an element of authority and governance that draws in the Kingdom concept.

We note that in an instance where Jesus is accused of calling on the powers of Satan's domain, He claims rather the coming of God's Kingdom: "If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you" (Luke 11:20). Apparently a Kingdom "not of this world" (John 18:36) is still a powerful presence that can "*come*," that can physically banish the powers of Satan. Later, Jesus said, "This Gospel of *the Kingdom* will be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the Gentiles and then the end shall come" (Matt 24:14). He may have been talking about the coming of the Kingdom in the same sense—that is, the coming of the power and presence of God into and "upon" human situations dominated by Satan.

Let us not suppose that our modern cities represent the final form of the kingdom of God. It is righteousness that exalts a nation, not skyscrapers. William Carey's activism in so many directions is more indicative of Carey's sense of God's righteousness and glory than it is of any kind of secular utopia. William Carey cared more about the restoration of justice, the concept of right and wrong, a sense of God's creative good, an expression of His love and the reestablishment of His good name. This is less and more than building a city, a school, or a hospital. Medical missions are not primarily a "bait" to attract people to Christianity but a concrete means of portraying more accurately the true nature of a loving God.

Thus, Evangelicals are justly suspicious of assumptions that human efforts can successfully "build the Kingdom of God" on earth. Even Hitler might have claimed to be doing just that (The Nazis, in fact, were the first to detect a link between smoking and cancer and actually do something about it.) To make the world a safe place for either fascism or democracy is not exactly what Jesus meant when he talked about the fortress of Satan being unable to resist the advance of the church (Matt 16:18). More likely He was talking about Gospel triumph over evil rather than a social/political achievement of earthly prosperity.

John said, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose: that He might destroy *the works of the devil*" (1 Jn 3:8). We don't think much about precisely what are *the works of the devil*.

According to Gregory Boyd (see Chapter 16), one reason is that our Christian tradition imbibed some harmful paganism in Augustine's time, a perspective rendering the salt and light of the Christian mission "strangely passive" in the presence of evil. This syncretistic strand in our tradition may

explain how a medieval Mother Superior could leave untouched a worm burrowing into her forehead. One day, when it fell out as she bent over, she returned it because her theology urged her to believe that God is behind all suffering and that suffering calls for *resignation* rather than *resistance*. Protestant ministers once opposed smallpox vaccination on the same grounds—that it would interfere with Divine Providence. Some Hindus (and Americans) will not kill any form of life no matter how evil or destructive to other life. Is the Kingdom of God an active, aggressive, expanding, conquering power that does not merely endure evil but is set to "destroy the works of the devil?"

If so, we must think more clearly about what those "works" actually are. This won't be quick and easy since, it would appear, the Evil One is more successful at working unseen and unnoticed than in withstanding frontal spiritual warfare. William Carey knew nothing about germs, good, or evil. He did not live in "a world of largely invisible predators" as someone has said. Can Carey guide us now?

A major hurdle exists partly because our theological tradition emerged before we had become aware of the world of vicious and destructive microbes. Are they the work of Satan? Modern Christians have finally dared to insist that nature reveals "intelligent design." Are we also prepared to recognize "intelligent *evil* design" and risk our lives to kill off—totally eradicate—evil-working parasites that drag millions down in terrible suffering and death? *Is our God misrepresented if we don't?*

Jonathan Edwards died experimenting with smallpox vaccine. Did that kind of vision die with him? Do our missionaries tell people (their actions speaking louder than their words) that God's Kingdom has no power over tiny evil? Or, that we can give people beds to lie on while they die but we cannot fight the source of their disease? Would Carey have fought back at the microbial level, had he known what we know?

Until recently I have never thought much about the growth or non-growth of world population and the degree to which Satanically inspired "war and pestilence" has depressed it. In the 2,000 years from Abraham to Christ, world population increased from 27 to 200 million—0.1% per year. Horrendous war and pestilence must have held the growth rate down to that!

Shortly before A.D. 2000, war and pestilence had been greatly reduced—though not banished—such that the global population rate was 1.7%, growing 17 times as fast as the ancient rate. At that point, in order to slow global growth to the ancient rate, 96 million people would have to die per year—in addition to all the people already being killed off by genocide and disease and all other factors. Thus, by A.D. 2000, "the works of the devil" in the form of war and pestilence had been significantly reduced. But, is the total eradication of evil microbes part of, and essential to, the task of winning souls and reaching unreached people? Is the mission of the Kingdom that broad? If so, is it not ominous that neither our sermons nor conventional missiology seriously reflect this dimension of the task? Do we know what it means to "destroy the works of the devil?" Is that a mission frontier?

Evangelism, The Leading Partner

By: Samuel Hugh Moffett (used with permission)

The New Testament uses the word *evangelize* in what seems to be a shockingly narrow sense. A whole cluster of verbs, actually, is used to describe evangelism: “preaching the word” (Acts 8:4), “heralding the kingdom” (Luke 9:2) and “proclaiming the good news” (Luke 4:18, 8:1). But in essence, what all these words describe is simply the telling of the good news (the gospel) that Jesus the Messiah is the saving King. Evangelism is the announcement of Christ’s kingdom. However, it is more than an announcement—it is also an invitation to enter that kingdom, by faith and with repentance.

What Evangelism is Not

Evangelism, therefore, is not the whole of the Christian mission. It is only a part of the mission. Jesus and the disciples did many other things besides announce the kingdom and invite response. Evangelism is not worship or sacraments. “Christ did not send me to baptize but to evangelize,” said Paul (1 Cor. 1:17).

And it is not church growth or church planting. The planting and growth of the Church are surely goals of evangelism and its hoped-for results. But evangelism does not always produce a church or more members for it.

Neither is evangelism confined to apologetics. Paul says “We try to persuade” (2 Cor 5:11) but insists that he was sent to tell the good news “without using the language of human wisdom” (1 Cor 1:17,20). Finally, evangelism in the New Testament was not confused with Christian service, or Christian action and protest against the world’s injustices. A revealing and disturbing incident in the Book of Acts tells how Greek-speaking Jews among the early Christians rose as a minority group to complain of discrimination in the distribution of funds. The reply of the apostles seems almost callously narrow: “We cannot neglect the preaching of God’ word to handle finances” (Acts 6:1,2 TEV). Of course, they did immediately proceed to do something about the injustice. But they did not call it evangelism.

In Kingdom Context

In the context of the kingdom, however, the evangelistic proclamation was never so narrow that it became isolated from the immediate pressing needs of the poor, the imprisoned, the blind, and the oppressed.

Here I am reminded of Korean evangelism. I asked a pastor in the Philadelphia area why his church was growing so fast. He replied, “When Koreans come in, first I get them jobs; I teach them some English; I help them when they get in trouble with their supervisors; I invite them to church, and then I preach to them the gospel.”

That is putting evangelism into context. But if there is anything worse than taking the text out of context, it is taking the context without the text. Just as Christ’s salvation is never to be isolated from the immediate, real needs of the people, neither is it to be identified with those present needs. When Jesus quoted the Old Testament about “good news to the poor” and “freedom for the oppressed,” he did so on his own terms. His salvation is not Old Testament *shalom*, and his kingdom is not Israel.

There is nothing quite so crippling to both evangelism and social action as to confuse them in definition or to separate them in practice. Our evangelists sometimes seem to be calling us to accept

the King without His kingdom; while our prophets, just as narrow in their own way, seem to be trying to build the kingdom without the saving King.

More than Balance

There was a time when most Christians believed that evangelism was the only priority. They were wrong. Then the Church swung too far the other way. The only Christian priority for some has been social justice through reconstruction. That, too, is an important priority, but it is not the only one. And when they made it the only clear mission of the Church, the result was a disaster. In trying to speak to the world, they almost lost the Church.

Others tried to restore the balance by pointing out that "Christ mediates God's new covenant through both salvation and service…Christians are called to engage in both evangelism and social action." But even that is not enough. What the Church needs for the future in mission is more than balance. It needs momentum. Not an uneasy truce between faith and works, but a partnership.

Now in most practical, working partnerships, there must be a leading partner, a first among equals, or nothing gets done. Which should be the leading partner in mission: evangelism or social action?

I submit that what makes the Christian mission different from other commendable and sincere attempts to improve the human condition is this: in the Christian mission our vertical relationship to God comes first. Our horizontal relationship to our neighbor is "like unto it" and is just as indispensable, but it is still second. The leading partner is evangelism.

This is not to exalt the proclamation at the expense of Christian action. They belong together. But it does insist that, while without the accompanying deeds the good news is scarcely credible, without the word the news is not even comprehensible! Besides, the real good news is not what we in our benevolence do for others, but what God has done for us all in Christ. Evangelism, as has been said, is one beggar telling another where to find Bread.

The supreme task of the Church, then, now and for the future, is evangelism. It was the supreme task for the Church of the New Testament. It is also the supreme challenge facing the Church today.

Half the World Unreached

The determining factor in developing evangelistic strategies, I believe, is that evangelism moves always in the direction of the unreached. "It must focus on those without the gospel." More than one-half of the world's people are still without the simplest knowledge of the good news of God's saving love in Jesus Christ. There is no greater challenge to evangelism in mission than that. Christians are rightly concerned about the grievous imbalances of wealth and food and freedom in the world. What about the most devastating imbalance of all: the unequal distribution of the light of the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ?

I am not overly addicted to statistics. But what does it say about a "six continent approach to evangelism," for example, to find that most of our church mission funds still go to ourselves on the sixth continent, which is between 70 and 80 percent at least nominally Christian? Africa, however, is perhaps 40 percent Christian by the same rough and imprecise standards. And Asia, which holds more than one-half of all the people in the world, is only three to four percent even nominally Christian.

In the last ten years, the number of non-Christians that has been added to the population of Asia is greater than the entire present population of the United States (450 million, compared to 300 million). Treating all six continents as equals for strategical purposes is a selfish distortion of the evangelistic realities of the world.

One last thought. There is an unexpected bonus to keeping the definition of evangelism simple. It means that anyone can get into the act. One of the happiest lessons I ever learned about evangelism came not from a professional evangelist but from a watermelon vendor.

It was in a Korean village, and my wife came up to ask the vendor how much a watermelon cost. He was so surprised at finding a long-nosed foreigner who spoke Korean that at first he was struck dumb. He even forgot to tell her the price. There was something more important he wanted to say. He asked, “Are you a Christian?” And when she replied, “Yes,” he smiled all over. “Oh, I’m so glad,” he said, “because if you weren’t I was going to tell you how much you are missing.”

If more of us were so happy about what we have found in the Lord Jesus Christ that we couldn’t wait to tell those who have not found him how much they are missing, we would need to worry no longer about the future of evangelism.

Reflection Questions

1. In what ways does Moffett suggest that evangelism is to be the “leading partner” in Christian ministry among the poor? Do you agree or disagree?

2. What relationship exists between the imbalance of the distribution of wealth and food and the distribution of the light of Jesus? What is the primary reason cited by the author for the imbalance of the distribution of basic needs and the good news?

Training 6 – The Task Remaining

The team leader will choose which 2-3 articles team members are to read through before this On-Field Session. They will lead a discussion and/or use the questions provided at the end of each article as the basis for teaching and discussion.

- The Bridges of God
- Identity with Integrity
- The Challenge of the Cities
- State of World Need
- A Church in Every People

The Bridges of God

By: Donald A. McGavran (used with permission)

Much study has been devoted to world evangelization. We know the answers to many questions about the propagation of the gospel. But what is perhaps the most important question of all still awaits an answer. That question is: *How do peoples become Christian?*

This article asks how clans, tribes, castes—in short, how *peoples*—become Christian. Every nation is made up of various strata of society. In many nations each stratum is clearly separated from every other. The individuals in each stratus intermarry chiefly, if not solely, with each other. Their intimate life is therefore limited to their own society, that is, to their own people. They may work with others, they may buy from and sell to the individuals of other societies, but their intimate life is wrapped up with the individuals of their own people. Individuals of another stratum, possibly close neighbors, may become Christians or Communists without the first stratum being much concerned. But when individuals of their own kind start becoming Christians, that touches their very lives. How do chain reactions in these strata of society begin? *How do peoples become Christian?*

Here is a question to which not speculation but knowledge must urgently be applied. The question is how, in a manner true to the Bible, can a Christian movement be established in some class, caste, tribe, or other segment of society which will, over a period of years, so bring groups of its related families to Christian faith that the whole people is Christianized in a few decades? It is of the utmost importance that the Church should understand how peoples, and not merely individuals, become Christian.

The Unfamiliar in People Movements

Individualistic Westerners cannot without special effort grasp how peoples become Christian. The missionary movements is largely staffed by persons form the West or by nationals trained in their ideas, and while evangelization has been carried on with correct enough views on how individuals have become Christian, there have been hazy or even erroneous views on how peoples become Christian.

Western Individualism Obscures Group Processes

In the West, Christianization is an extremely individualistic process. This is due to various causes. For one thing, in Western nations here are few exclusive subsocieties. Then too, because freedom of conscience exists, one member of a family can become Christian and live as a Christian without being ostracized by the rest of the family. Furthermore, Christianity is regarded as true, even by many who do not profess it. It is considered a good thing to join the Church. A person is admired for taking a stand for Christ. There have been no serious rivals of the Church. Thus, individuals are able to make decisions as individuals without severing social bonds.

Again, with the disruption of clan and family life that followed the Industrial Revolution, Westerners became accustomed to do what appealed to them as individuals. As larger family groupings were broken up through migration, the movement of rural folk to the cities, and repeated shifts of homes, people came to act for themselves without consulting their neighbors or families. A habit of independent decision was established. In the Christian churches this habit was further strengthened by the practice of revival meetings appealing for individual decision to the accompaniment of great emotion. Indeed, the theological presupposition was not merely that salvation depended on an

individual act of faith in Christ (which is unquestioned), but also that this act was somehow of a higher order if it were done against family opinion (which is dubious). Separate individual accession to the Church was held by some to be not only a better, but the only valid way of becoming a Christian. Had the question arisen as to how peoples became Christian, the answer would have been given that it was by individual after individual becoming soundly converted.

There tended to be little recognition of the Social organism which is a people or of the desirability of preserving the culture and community life—indeed, of enhancing them—through the process of conversion. The social factor in the conversion of peoples passed unnoticed because peoples were not identified as separate entities, but rather as aggregates of individuals whose conversion was achieved one by one.

However, a people is not an aggregate of individuals. In a true people, intermarriage and the intimate details of social intercourse take place within the society. A true people is a social organism which, by virtue of the fact that its members intermarry very largely within its own confines, becomes a separate race in their minds. Since the human family, except in the individualistic West, is largely made up of such castes, clans, and peoples, the Christianization of each nation involves the prior Christianization of its various peoples as peoples.

Because of the intense battle against race prejudice, the concept of separate races of men is discredited in many circles. Missionaries often carry this antipathy to race into their work in tribes and castes who marry within their people and have an intense racial consciousness. To ignore the significance of race hinders Christianization. It makes an enemy of race consciousness, instead of an ally. It does no good to say that tribal peoples ought not to have race prejudice. They do have it and are proud of it. It can be understood and should be made an aid to Christianization.

What to Do and What Not to Do

To Christianize a whole people, the first thing not to do is snatch individuals out of it into a different society. Peoples become Christians where a Christward movement occurs within that society. Bishop J. W. Pickett, in his important study Christ's Way to India's Heart, says:

> "The process of extracting individuals from their setting in Hindu or Moslem communities does not build a church. On the contrary it rouses antagonism against Christianity and builds barriers against the spread of the gospel. Moreover, that process has produced many unfortunate, and not a few tragic results in the lives of those most deeply concerned. It has deprived the converts of the values represented by their families and friends and made them dependent for social support to the good life and restraint on evil impulses upon men and women, their colleagues in the Christian faith, with whom they have found it difficult to develop fellowship and a complete sense of community. It has sacrificed much of the convert's evangelistic potentialities by separating him from his People. It has produced anemic churches that know no true leadership and are held together chiefly by common dependence on the mission or the missionary."

Obviously the Christianization of a people requires reborn men and women. A mere change of name accomplishes nothing. While the new convert must remain within his people, he must also experience the new birth. "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, not on earthly things" (Col 3:1-2). The power of any People Movement to Christ depends in great measure on the number of truly converted person in it. We wish to make this quite clear. The Christianization of

peoples is not assisted by slighting or forgetting real personal conversion. There is no substitute for justification by faith in Jesus Christ or for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Thus a Christward movement within a people can be defeated either by extracting the new Christians from their society (i.e., by allowing them to be squeezed out by their non-Christian relatives) or by the non-Christians so dominating the Christians that their new lie in Christ is not apparent. An incipient Christward movement can be destroyed by either danger.

The Group Mind and Group Decision

To understand the psychology of the innumerable subsocieties which make up non-Christian nations, it is essential that the leaders of the churches and missions strive to see life from the point of view of a people to whom individual action is treachery. Among those who think corporately, only a rebel would strike out alone without consultation and without companions. The individual does not think of himself as a self-sufficient unit, but as part of the group. His business affairs, his children's marriages, his personal problems, or the difficulties he has with his wife are properly settled by group thinking. Peoples become Christian as the group-mind is brought into a life-giving relationship to Jesus as Lord.

It is important to note that the group decision is not the sum of separate individual decisions. The leader makes sure that his followers will follow. The followers make sure that they are not ahead of each other. Husbands sound out wives. Sons pledge their fathers. "Will we as a group move if so-and-so does not come?" is a frequent question. As the group considers becoming Christian, tension mounts and excitement rises. Indeed, a prolonged informal vote-taking is under way. A change of religion involves a community change. Only as its members move tighter does change become healthy and constructive.

Groups are usually fissured internally. This has a definite bearing on group decisions. If in some town or village there are 76 families of a given people, they may be split into several sub-groups. Often such divisions are formed by rivalries between prominent men. They may be geographical or economic. Group thinking usually occurs at its best within these sub-groups. A sub-group will often come to decision before the whole. Indeed, a sub-group often furnishes enough social life for it to act alone.

Peoples become Christian as a wave of decision for Christ sweeps through the group mind, involving many individual decisions but being far more than merely their sum. This may be called a chain reaction. Each decision sets off others and the sum total powerfully affects every individual. When conditions are right, not merely each sub-group, but the entire group concerned decides together.

Terms Defined

We call this process a "People Movement." "People" is a more universal word than "tribe," "caste," or "clan." It is more exact than "group." It fits everywhere. Therefore in this article we shall speak of People Movements to Christ.

The Characteristic Pattern of the Great Century

Latourette has given the name "the Great Century" to the time between 1800 and 1914. He says, "When consideration is given to the difficulties which faced it, in the 19th century, Christianity made amazing progress all around the world. It came to the end of the period on a rapidly ascending curve. Its influence on culture was out of all proportions to its numerical strength. It had an outstanding role

as a pioneer in new types of education, in movements of the relief and prevention of human suffering and in disseminating ideas."

How did Christianization proceed during the Great Century? This is a most important question because most of our present thinking is colored by the missionary effort of that century. The Great Century created a new method to meet a new situation. Both situation and method are worthy of our closest study.

The New Situation Described: The Gulf of Separation

Missions were carried on from the ruling, wealthy, literate, modern countries which were experiencing all the benefits of political and religious freedom, an expanding production, and universal education. By the 19th century, the West had progressed while the East had stood still, so that there was a great gap between them. Western missionaries went to poor, illiterate, medieval, and agricultural countries. While it is true that missionaries tried to identify themselves with the people, they were never able to rid themselves of the inevitable separateness which the great progress of their homelands had imposed upon them.

This gulf became very clear in the living arrangements which European and American missionaries found necessary. Their standard of living at home was much higher than that of the average citizen on the mission fields. Servants were cheap and saved much domestic labor. The people of the land generally walked, but the missionary was accustomed to a conveyance and so he used one. The color of his skin also set him apart. He was a white man, a member of the ruling race. The Western style of cooking agreed with him, whereas, the Eastern style did not; so in matters of food there also came to be a great gulf between him and the people of the land.

There were practically no bridges across this gulf. There was nothing even remotely similar to the Jewish bridge over which Christianity marched into the Gentile world. Staggering numbers of people lived on the fertile plains of Asia, but not one of them had any Christian relatives! Even in the port cities there were none. The normal flow of the Christian religion simply could not take place. Separated by color, standard of living, prestige, literacy, mode of travel, place of residence, and many other factors, the missionary was, indeed, isolated from those to whom he brought the message of salvation.

The missionaries did learn the languages of the country and learned them well. They served the people with love, taught their children, visited in their homes, went with them through famines and epidemics, ate with them, bought from them and sold to them, and more than any other group of white men in the tropics, were at one with them. Thus, it will be said, this emphasis on the separateness of the missionary is exaggerated. To the student of the growth and spread of religions, however, it is apparent that these casual contacts described above are just that—casual contacts. They are not the living contracts, the contacts of tribal and race and blood, which enable the non-Christian to say, as he hears a Christian speak: "This messenger of the Christian religion is one of my own family, my own people, one of us." Casual contacts may win a few individuals to a new faith, but unless these individuals are able to start a living movement within their own society, it does not start at all.

The separateness we describe seemed likely to last a long time. It existed in an unchanging world, where the dominance of the West and the dependence of the East seemed to be permanent.

Missionaries thought, “There will be centuries before us, and in a 400-year relationship like that of Rome to her dependent peoples, we shall gradually bring these peoples also in the Christian faith.”

When the churches and their missionaries have no living approach, how do they go about the Christianization of peoples?

If there is any aspect that is typical of modern missions, it is the mission station with its gathered colony. Missionaries facing the gulf of separation built mission stations and gathered colonies of Christians.

They acquired a piece of land, often with great difficulty. They built residences suitable for white men, and then they added churches, schools, quarters in which to house helpers, hospitals, leprosy homes, orphanages, and printing establishments. The mission station was usually at some center of communication. Extensive tours were made from it into the surrounding countryside. It was home to the missionary staff, and all the activities of the mission took place around the station. Here the missionaries gathered converts. It was exceedingly difficult for those hearing the good news for the first time to accept the Christian religion. They knew nothing of Christianity except that it was the religion of the white men. Those who did become Christians were usually forced out of their own homes and came to live at the mission colony, where they were usually employed. Orphans were sheltered. Slaves were bought and freed. Women were rescued. Healed patients became Christian and usually came to live at the mission station. They formed the gathered colony.

This kind of mission approach took shape out of the individualistic background typical of much of Protestantism in the 18th and 19th centuries. For converts, leaving father and mother invested their decision with a particular validity. To gather a compound full of Christians out of a non-Christian population seemed a good way to proceed. Frequently it was also the only possible way. The universal suspicion and often the violent hostility with which Christianity was regarded would have forced into the gathered colony pattern even those who consciously sought integration.

This, then, was the pattern which was characteristic of most beginnings in the Great Century. We call it the exploratory mission station approach, but from the point of view of the resulting churches, it was the exploratory gathered colony approach.

The Road Branches According to Response

This beginning was adopted by practically all missions. It may be thought of as a road running along a flat and somewhat desolate plain and then dividing with one branch continuing along the plain and the other climbing the green fertile hills. Whether missions continued on the flat accustomed road (of the gathered church approach) or ascended the high road by means of the People Movement Approach depended on the response given to the Christian message by the population and on the missionaries’ understanding of that response.

Where the number of conversions remained small decade after decade, the mission remained the dominant partner and the Mission Station Approach continued and was strengthened. It was strengthened because the gathered colony furnished Christian workers so that the mission could expand mission healing, mission teaching, and mission preaching. Where the number of conversions mounted steadily with every passing decade, there the Church became the dominant partner and the mission started using the People Movement Approach. Scores of thousands became Christians.

These two ways of carrying on mission work are distinct and different. The People Movements will be described in the next section. The remainder of this section will be devoted to describing the way in which the exploratory phase gradually turned into the permanent Mission Station Approach or gathered colony approach.

Small response was not expected by the early missionaries. The exploratory Mission Stations Approach was not launched as an accommodation to a hard-hearted and irresponsive population. It was regarded as a first stage after which great ingathering would occur. Even after the Basel Mission had lost eight of its first ten missionaries in nine years, the heroic Andreas Riis wrote back from the Gold Coast in Africa, “Let us press on. All Africa must be won for Christ. Though a thousand missionaries die, send more.” The exploratory gathered col-ny approach was adopted with the expectation that the Christian faith would sweep non-Christian lands, bringing them untold blessings.

But these expectations were often frustrated by meager response. In the light of the event, Professor Latourette can now serenely write: “The advanced cultures and faiths of Asia and North Africa did not yield so readily as did those of the primitive folk, either to Western civilization or to Christianity. This was to be expected. It has usually been characteristic of advanced cultures and their religions that they have been much slower to disintegrate before an invading civilization.”

A factor in the small response, whose importance cannot be overestimated, is that conversions were mainly out of the nation. Converts felt that they were joining an entirely foreign way of living—proclaimed by foreigners, led by foreigners, and ruled by foreigners. Converts came alone. A vicious circle was established: the few becoming Christian one by one set such a pattern that it was difficult for a Christward movement to be started. The person not only became a Christian, but he was generally believed to have “joined another race.”

The Exploratory Approach Becomes Permanent: Terms Defined

Where meager response continued, there gathered colony missions gradually accommodated themselves to carrying on mission work among populations which would not obey the call of God. The mission found plenty of good work to do. It never admitted, even to itself, that it had really given up hope of a great ingathering of souls, but that is what had actually happened.

The Churches Born of the Mission Station Approach

The first aim of missions is the establishment of churches. As we start to examine the results of the Mission Station Approach, we turn to an inspection of the kind of churches which mission stations have fathered. These we shall call Mission Station churches or gathered colony churches.

They have some favorable characteristics. They are composed of greatly transformed and well-educated individuals. The membership is literate. They come to church with hymn books. They can read their Bibles. On the whole, the Mission Station Churches are made up of people who are soundly Christian. The membership is proud of being Christian and feels that it has gained tremendously by belonging to the Christian fellowship. There are, of course, many nominal Christians and some whose conduct brings shame on the church, but even these are likely to send their children to Sunday School and church!

They are organized into strong congregations. They have good permanent church buildings, qualified pastors and ministers, and regular church services. In some churches the giving is exemplary and

there are many tithers. All told, the impression is that of small, tight, well-knit communities, buttressed by intermarriage and considering themselves to be a part of world Christianity.

One the debit side, these mission station churches are lacking in the qualities needed for growth and multiplication. They are, in truth, gathered churches, made up of individual converts, or “brands snatched from the burning,” or famine orphans, or a mixture of all three. The individual converts and rescued persons have usually been disowned by their non-Christian relatives and they feel superior to their own unconverted relatives. This is particularly true when they come from the oppressed classes. The second generation of Christians is even farther removed from their non-Christian relatives than the first. In the third generation, the gathered church members as a rule know none of their non-Christian relatives at all. A new people has been established which intermarries only within itself and thinks of itself as a separate community.

The Christians of the gathered colony approach have a vivid realization of the power of education, but they do not always have a vivid experience of the power of God. Many would grant that it was Christian education which had lifted them—an education given to them in the name of Jesus Christ.

It sometimes happens that the members of a mission station church, sensing the obvious fact that there is only limited employment in a mission station, draw the easy conclusion that if more people become Christians, the resources of the mission will be spread thinner and there will be less for each of the existing Christians. Cases have occurred where they have actually discouraged possible converts from becoming Christian.

Gathered colony churches are often too richly served by foreign missions. In one typical mission station church of 700 souls, we find a missionary in charge of two primary schools and one middle school for day pupils, another in charge of a middle boarding school for girls, a missionary doctor and his nurse wife who run a hospital, and an evangelistic missionary who gives half his time to the Christian community. Missionaries with less than half these resources, who are shepherding large numbers of Christians who have come to Christ in some People Movement may gasp with unbelief that such heavy occupation could occur. Yet both the national and the missionary leaders of such mission station churches consider that they really are managing with a minimum degree of foreign aid!

But—The Era is Drawing to a Close

However, as Latourette points out, the era is passing. The days in which the mission stations can exert a major influence on the affairs of Eastern nations are drawing to a close. Mission schools in Asia and North Africa no longer have the influence which they once had. They cannot expect to wield the influence which they did in the days when Western cultures were first arriving in Asia and Africa. And what is true of schools is also true of mission station hospitals.

Non-Christian nations are impatient with foreign tutelage. They believe it is demeaning to their national pride to admit to the need for guidance from any Western nation. The East, particularly India, honestly believes that, except for mechanization and industrialization, the West has little to give to the “spiritual East.”

It would be giving a distorted impression if the last paragraph were to imply that Christian missions have no more usefulness as cultural “hands across the sea.” In the days ahead when nations are forced into closer and closer cooperation, all friendly efforts to interpret nations to each other will be of value. The continued residence of Westerners in the East will doubtless do good. But the days of

great secular influence of foreign mission stations apart from the great national churches are probably about over.

They should be over for a further reason: there is now a use for mission resources which will do more for nation building, more for international peace and more for the Church than the further penetration of non-Christian faiths and cultures form the vantage point of a mission station.

Salute and Farewell

So has run the characteristic pattern of the Great Century, but a new age is upon us. A new pattern is a hand, which, while new, is as old as the Church itself. It is a God-designed pattern by which not ones but thousands will acknowledge Christ as Lord and grow into full discipleship as people after people, clan after clan, tribe after tribe, and community after community are claimed for and nurtured in the Christian faith.

The God-Give People Movements

While the typical pattern of missionary activity has been that of the Mission Station Approach, occasionally People Movements to Christ have resulted. These have not as a rule been sought by missionaries—though in Oceania, Indonesia, and Africa there have been some exceptions. The movements are the outcome of the mysterious movement of the Spirit of God. Their pattern of growth is very different from that described in the last chapter. They have provided over 90 percent of the growth of the newer churches throughout the world. The great bulk of the membership and of the congregations of the younger churches consists of converts and the descendants of converts won in People Movements.

In spite of this, we maintain that People Movements were the exception and that the typical approach of the last century was the Mission Station Approach. The number of mission stations from which Christian movements have started is relatively small. Mission enterprises are, for the most part, those which serve non-Christians and gathered colony churches. As Hendrik Kraemer writes, “Missionary thinking and planning in this revolutionary period are still overwhelmingly influenced by the Mission Station Approach.”

Some People Movements Described

Adoniram Judson went to Burma as a missionary to the cultured Buddhist Burmese. But he took under his wing a rough character, by the name of Ko Tha Byu, a Karen by race. The Karens were among the backward tribes of Burma. They were animistic peasants and were supposed by the Burmese to be stupid inferior people. “You can teach a buffalo, but not a Karen,” was the common verdict. Judson spent six months trying to teach this former criminal, now his servant, the meaning of the redemptive death of our Lord Jesus Christ and made such little progress that he was inclined to take the common verdict as true. However, he persisted, and a few months later Ko Tha Byu became a convinced, if not a highly illuminated, Christian.

As Judson toured Burma, speaking to the Burmese of that land, Ko Tha Byu, the camp follower, spoke to the humble Karen in each vicinity, the Karens started becoming Christian. Here a band of ten families, there one or two, and yonder a jungle settlement of five families accepted the Lordship of Christ. We do not have the data to prove that those who came were interrelated, but it is highly probable that connected families were coming in. A chain reaction was occurring. We can reasonably assume that among his close relatives alone, to say nothing of cousins and second cousins, Ko Tha

Byu had a host of excellent living contacts. The early converts doubtless came from among these and their relatives.

Judson, translating the Bible into Burmese, was concerned with more important matters than a Christian movement among a backward tribe. For years, he considered the Karen converts a side issue. However, the next generation of missionaries included some who were veritable Pauls, expanding the movement as far along the paths and across the rice paddies as possible. Today there is a mighty Christian Movement among the Karens and their related tribes in Burma, numbering hundreds and thousands of souls. The Karen Christians are good Christians. Discipled through a People Movement and now in the process of perfecting, they are not under the delusion that a nominal Christianity is worth anything to God. The thousands of churches scattered across the country contain a normal proportion of earnest Spirit-filled Christians.

We stress this because it is a mistake to assume that People Movement Christians, merely because they have come to the Christian faith in chains of families, must inevitably be nominal Christians. Such an assumption is usually based on prejudice, not fact. All churches face the problem of how to avoid creating nominal Christians. People Movements in themselves do not encourage the production of nominal Christians.

Up in the north of Pakistan there was a lowly people called Churas. They were the agricultural laborers in a mixed Muslim and Hindu civilization. They formed about 7% of the total population and were Untouchables. They were oppressed. They skinned dead cattle, cured the skins, collected the bones, and sold them. They had been largely overlooked by the missionaries preaching Christ to the respectable members of the Hindu and Muslim communities and organizing their few hard-won converts into mission station churches. Then a man named Ditt from among the Churas turned to Christ, continued to live among his people, despite their attempts at ostracism, and gradually brought his relatives to the Christian faith.

The missionaries were at first dubious about admitting these lowest of the low to the Christian fellowship, lest the upper castes and the Muslims take offense and come to think of the Christian enterprise as an “untouchable” affair. But those who became Christians were pastored and taught and organized into churches. Because the converts came as groups without social dislocation, the efforts of the pastors and the missionaries could be given largely to teaching and preaching. Attention did not have to be diverted to providing jobs and wives, houses and land for individual converts. The Mission to whom God had entrusted this Movement was made up of devout men and women, and they gave themselves to the task. The outcome at the end of about 80 years is that there are no more Churas in that section of India. *They have all become Christians.*

In Indonesia there have also been a comparatively large number of God-given People Movements. In the north of Sumatra there is a flourishing Batak People Movement, numbering hundreds of thousands. In 1937, on the island of Nias off the northwest coast of Sumatra, there were 102,000 Christians; in 1916 there were none. In the northern parts of the Celebes, the Minahasa tribes were fairly solidly Christian by 1940 and in the center the growth of People Movements was rapid. There were tribal movements toward Christ in the Moluccas, the Sangi, and the Talaud Islands. Around the year 1930, between eight and ten thousand a year were being baptized in Dutch New Guinea. By 1936 the number of Protestant Christians was reported to be 1,610,533. The Roman Church also has increased by numerous People Movements. In 1937 there were 570,974 members of the Roman

Catholic Church. New large People Movements in Sumatra have taken place after 1950 and in Irian and Kalimantan after 1960.

In Africa there have been a large number of People Movements. The day is not far off when most of Africa south of the Sahara will have been discipled.

The Churches Born of People Movements

The most obvious result of Christian mission which have been fathering and furthering Christward movements is a tremendous host of Christian churches. It has been calculated that there are well over a hundred thousand congregations of Christians brought to a knowledge of God through recent Christian People Movements. These exist in most of the non-Christian countries.

Let us consider the unexpectedly large number of People Movements. The islands of the Pacific have been largely disciple by People Movements. India has its extensive list of movements from the Malas and Madigas, the Nagas and Garas, the Mahrs and Bhils, and many others. Indonesia and Burma total well over a score of People Movements of some power. Africa has numerous tribes in which the churches are growing in tribe-wise fashion. Two new People Movements are being report in 1980: one in Mindanao and one in Mexico. Our list might be made much larger. Each of these hundreds of People Movements is multiplying Christian congregations as it grows.

These scores of thousands of congregations have many features in common. The pastors of the churches are usually men with about seven years of schooling plus some seminary training. The church buildings are often temporary adobe or cattle buildings, though there are many well-built churches among the older congregations. In older, larger People Movements today, national ministers head the church, while missionaries work as assistants directed by the church council. Many members of the churches are illiterate. But in the People Movement churches, the bulk of the Christian population has available to it only such educational advantages as the average non - Christian shares.

In some African countries, the school picture is totally different. Government does its education through missions. In such lands the children of the People Movements have excellent educational opportunities, and the membership of the churches is growing up largely literate.

Yet People Movement Churches are remarkably stable. There are reversions, especially in the early days, but on the whole, once a people has become Christian, it stays Christian even in the face of vigorous persecution. In addition to the faith of each individual and the courage which comes from world-wide fellowship, the very bonds of relationship and social cohesion keep weak individuals form denying the faith.

Unvalued Pearls

One of the curious facts about People Movements is that they have seldom been sought or desired. Pickett records in his book, *Christian Mass Movements in India*, that most People Movements have actually been resisted by the leaders of the church and mission where they started. These leaders often had grave doubts whether it was right to take in groups of individuals, many of whom seemed to have little ascertainable personal faith. Nevertheless, despite a certain degree of repression, movements did occur. One wonders what would have happened had mission from the beginning of the “Great Century” been actively searching and praying for the coming of Christward marches by the various peoples making up the population of the world.

Those People Movements which did occur were seldom really understood. The way of corporate decision was obscured by the Western preference for individual decision. The processes of perfecting the churches were confused with the process by which a people turns from idols to serve the living God. Even where there has been great growth, as in parts of Africa, faulty understanding of People Movements has resulted in much less than maximum growth and has caused needless damage to tribal life.

Christward movements of peoples are the supreme goal of missionary effort. Many who read this will not agree with this and indeed, it has never been generally accepted. Yet we not only affirm it but go further and claim that the vast stirrings of the Spirit which occur in People Movements are God-given. We dare not think of People Movements to Christ as merely social phenomena. True, we can account for some of the contributing factors which have brought them about. There is so much that is mysterious and beyond anything we can ask or think though, so much that is a product of religious faith, and so much evident working of divine Power, that we must confess that People Movements are gifts of God. It is as if in the fullness of time God gives to His servants the priceless beginning of a People Movement. If that succeeds, the Church is firmly planted.

It is time to recognize that when revival really begins in China, Japan, Africa, the Muslim world, and India, it will probably appear in the form of People Movements to Christ. This is the way in which Evangelical Christianity spread in Roman Catholic Europe at the time of the Reformation. It is the best way for it to spread in any land.

Five Great Advantages

People Movements have five consider-able advantages:

1. First, they have provided the Christian movement with permanent churches rooted in the soil of hundreds of thousands of villages. For their continued economic life they are quite independent of Western missions. They are accustomed (unfortunately too accustomed) to a low degree of education. Yet their devotion has frequently been tested in the first of persecution and found to be pure gold. They are here to stay. They are permanent comrades on the pilgrim way.

2. *They have the advantage of being naturally indigenous*. In the Mission Station approach the convert is brought in as an individual to a pattern dominated by the foreigner. The foreigner has set the pace and the style, often to his own dismay, but such denationalization is a very minor affair in true People Movements. In them the new Christians seldom see the missionary. They are immersed in their own cultures. Their style of clothing, of eating and of speaking continues almost unchanged. Their churches are necessarily built like their houses—and are as indigenous as anyone could wish. They cannot sing or learn foreign tunes readily, so local tunes are often used. Thus an indigenous quality, highly sought and rarely found by leaders of the Mission Station Approach churches, is obtained without effort by the People Movement churches. Church headquarters, however, need to make special efforts to keep their training of People Movement youth and leadership thoroughly indigenous.

3. *People Movements have a third major advantage. With them "the spontaneous expansion of the Church" is natural.* The phrase "spontaneous expansion" sums up the valuable contribution to missionary thinking made by Ronald Allen and World Dominion. It requires that new converts be formed into churches which from the beginning are fully equipped with

all spiritual authority to multiply themselves. Foreign missionaries might be helpful as advisers or assistants but should never be necessary to the completeness of the Church or to its power of unlimited expansion. Spontaneous expansion involves a full trust in the Holy Spirit and a recognition that the ecclesiastical traditions of the older churches are not necessarily useful to the younger churches arising out of the missions from the West. New groups of converts are expected to multiply themselves in the same way as did the new groups of converts who were the early churches. Advocates of spontaneous expansion point out that foreign-directed movements will in the end lead to sterility and antagonism to their sponsors. Therefore, the method called the Mission Station Approach will never bring us within measurable distance of the evangelization of the world.

Desirable as spontaneous expansion is, it is a difficult ideal for the Mission Station Approach churches to achieve. They might be freed from all bonds to the Western churches, they might be convinced that they had all the spiritual authority needed to multiply themselves, they might be filled with the Holy Spirit and abound in desire to win others to Christ, and yet—just because they form a separate people and have no organic linkages with any other neighboring people—they would find it extremely difficult to form new churches.

In People Movement churches, on the contrary, spontaneous expansion is natural. Both the desire to win their "own fold" and the opportunity to bear witness in unaffected intimate conversation are present to a high degree. There is abundant contact through which conviction can transmit itself. True, in People Movements this natural growth can be and alas, sometimes has been slowed down by the atmosphere and techniques of the all-pervading gathered colony approach. But once these are recognized and renounced by the leaders of the People Movement churches, it becomes comparatively easy for spontaneous expansion to occur. Missions can then, like Paul, deliberately attempt to use the relatively unplanned expansion of a Christward People Movement to achieve still great-er and more significant enlargement. Thus we come to the most marked advantage of these movements.

4. *Their movements have enormous possibilities of growth.* That these possibilities are today largely ignored and unrecognized even by the leader of the churches does not diminish either the truth or the importance of this fact. The group movements are fringed with exterior growing points among their own peoples. As Paul discovered, the Palestinian movement had growing points in many places outside that country. Just so, every Christward movement has many possibilities of growth on its fringes. For example, the Madigas have become Christians in large numbers. They are the laborers of South India. They have migrated to many places in India and even abroad. One cannot help wondering whether a fervent proclamation by a modern Madiga St. Paul carrying the news that "We Madigas are becoming Christian by tens of thousands each year; we have found the Savior and as a people have come into possession of the unsearchable riches of Christ," might not start Madiga Movements in many parts of the world.

   People Movements also have internal growing points—that is, the unconverted pockets left by any such sweeping movement. Here the leaders of the Christian forces must be alert to see to it that strategic doorways are entered while they are open. Doorways remain open for about one generation. Then they close to the ready flow of the Christian religion. Until the discipling of the entire people, there will be both internal and external growing points. Both will yield large returns if cultivated.

Of rarer occurrence are the bridges to other communities, such as that over which St. Paul launched his Gentile movements. In order to be called a bridge, the connection must be large enough to provide not merely for the baptism of individuals, but for the baptism of enough groups in a short enough time and a small enough area to create a People Movement in the other community. More of these bridges would be found if they were assiduously sought. More would be used for the expansion of the Christian faith if leaders could be led to understand them and become skilled in their use.

The possibilities for growth in People Movements are not by any means confined to developing new movements. Leaders of People Movement churches find that after the church has attained power and size the normal process of growth, including the baptism of individual seekers on the fringes of the congregations, often produced more quiet regular in-gatherings year after year than was the case during the period of the greatest exuberance of the movement. One might conclude that once a People Movement church has gained a hundred thousand converts and has become indigenous to the land and forms a noticeable proportion of the population, it is likely to keep on growing. A moderate amount of missionary assistance at places where the churches feel their need produces results far beyond that which those accustomed to the mission station tradition would consider possible.

5. The fifth advantage is that these movements provide a sound pattern of becoming Christian. Being a Christian is seen not to mean change in a standard of living made possible by foreign funds but change in inner character made possible by the power of God. In well-nurtured People Movement churches, it is seen to mean the regular worship of God, the regular hearing of the Bible, the giving to the church, the discipline of the congregation, the spiritual care exercised by the pastor, habits of prayer and personal devotion, and the eradication of unChristian types of behavior. This life, centering in the village church, often built by the Christians themselves, is seen to be the main feature of the Christian religion. There are no impressive institutions to divert attention from the central fact. Christians become “people with churches who worship God” rather than “people with hospitals who know medicine,” or “people with schools who get good jobs.” The health of the Christian movement requires that the normal pattern be well known, not merely to the non-Christian peoples, but to the leaders of church and mission and to the rank and file of members. The People Movement supplies the pattern which can be indefinitely reproduced. It is the pattern which with minor variations has obtained peoples for Christ throughout history.

Reflection Questions

1. Briefly defied the term “the bridges of God’ and explain the significance of these bridges for mission strategy.
2. Are group decisions valid? Why or why not? Explain the strategic importance of encouraging “multi-individual” decisions.
3. At the time McGavran wrote *The Bridges of God*, the term “unreached people group” had not yet been used. What is the significance of the idea of “people movements” for the ministry among “unreached peoples”?

Identity with Integrity

By: Rick Love (used with permission)

I sat stunned before the television as I watched the devastating terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Like any others, I felt numb and angry. Like many others, I've continued to ponder and pray since then. Who can doubt that it's time to rethink our models of "apostolic" ministry for the 21st century? Notice that I use the term "apostolic" rather than the broader and more baggage-laden terminology of "mission." I define the term "apostle" as a cross-cultural disciple-maker serving in a pioneer context—a "sent one" who helps form communities of Jesus' followers where Christ is not already named.

Serving in a Post 9/11 World: Terrorized, Globalized, Pluralized

Three massive global trends have profoundly changed our world: terrorism, globalization, and pluralism. They radically impact how we live, think, and communicate in the 21st century. They also challenge our traditional ways of doing apostolic ministry internationally.

The horrific terrorist attacks of 9/11 have deeply marked this generation. Before then, few people outside church circles were interested to know what Christians were doing in the Muslim world. But now anyone living or working among Muslims is of interest—either because of their roles as cultural bridge-builders or because they may be perceived as agitators who threaten national interests. International media are curious about their part in the supposed "clash of civilizations" between Muslims and the West.

Terrorism is not the only thing that makes apostolic ministry more challenging. We live in an interconnected, globalized world. Perhaps the most powerful and relevant example of this is the internet search engine "Google." Type in a few words about anything and you can get a string of articles and information in seconds. In this "google-ized" world, whenever we describe who we are, or what we do, or why we do it, our words move quickly beyond our intended audience and enter the huge global marketplace of ideas.

The third trend, pluralism, refers to the convergence of different ethnic, religious, or political backgrounds within one society. Terms like "Eurabia" or "Londonistan" highlight the influx of Muslim cultures into Western societies. In the not-too-distant past, the world was neatly divided into sending countries and "mission fields." This is no longer true. Significant populations from every major block of unreached peoples are living now in the nations that have been historically the missionary sending countries. Of course, the nearness of the unreached world presents a wonderful opportunity to expose unreached people to the gospel. But that same proximity means that dual identities of cross-cultural workers—recognized as missionaries by sending churches at home, but by their tentmaking identities in other lands—are often exposed by the new global realities.

Here are some examples of the challenge cross-cultural envoys face in a post 9/11 world:

- A seminar about Islam at an Australian church encourages church members to love Muslims and reach out to them in friendship. Some verses from the Qur'an were read, describing how Muslims are instructed to treat women and infidels. Recent Australian converts to Islam are in attendance. They press a civil suit against church leaders under new "hate speech" laws. The pastors are convicted of "vilifying Islam."

- A leader in a faith-based organization serving among Muslims allows a freelance journalist to

attend a seminary course he is teaching. A negative, inflammatory article results. The article is translated and reprinted throughout the Muslim world. He is invited to respond to the article in venues such as *The Washington Post, The New York Times, CNN,* and *60 Minutes* but is unprepared for such high-profile media attention. As a result, a community development NGO in an Islamic country is exposed as being connected to this same faith-based organization.

- A family serving in a Muslim country returns home for a season. They attend an event for international students sponsored by their home church. At the event, students from the same Muslim country were introduced with great enthusiasm by a member of the "missions committee": "We would like to introduce you to our missionaries to your country!"

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True Identity with a Triple Audience

The interconnectedness of our globalized world means that we are increasingly challenged to do three things simultaneously: to present the gospel (in our primary setting to the unreached community), to defend the gospel (to the secular world listening in), and to recruit for the gospel (within the church). In a post 9/11 world, it is increasingly proving impossible to communicate with any one of these particular audiences separately. What we say in one setting will eventually be heard or read around the world. In the past, we may have been able to restrict our message for a particular audience, but no longer. What is spoken to one audience is overheard by others. Since we can no longer present a different message or persona for each different audience, we must have the same message and personal identity as if we had a single combined audience. Three questions will help us deal with the complexity of multiple audiences in our globalized world: How will we frame our message? How will we express our intentions? And how will we present our identities?

Labels and stereotypes devalue the image of God in people. This kind of poverty is powerful and debilitating, both for those who do this and for those to whom it is done.

This woman cannot believe that she is made in the image of God. She has internalized a history of ruthless exploitation and genocide.

Poverty as Misused Power

When those who have power over others use it to benefit themselves, poverty results. Poverty is created when:

- The Brahmin lives out a social system that exploits the harijan (untouchables).

- A man uses the culture of *machismo* to legitimize drinking, womanizing, and beating his wife.

- A corporation uses its political connections to get a poor section of town condemned so a sports stadium can be built.

People in positions of social privilege are often tempted to use their power for personal advantage, ignoring the consequences of their decisions for those who have less power. Managers can misuse the power they have over their subordinates. Pastors can misuse the power they have over lay people. Even if we desire to be fair and righteous, we continually face temptations to believe that we are due certain privileges because of the positions we hold. This view makes many of us uncomfortable. It means we, too, are part of the causes of poverty.

Working against poverty within a framework of relationships is dangerous in that it demands the counter-cultural gospel of scandal that Paul talks about. It will anger the authorities—religious, political, economic, and even those in your own church. It will challenge and demand change in culture—both the local culture and your own.

The world cannot and will not transform political, economic, and social power into something that is pro-life, pro-poor, and pro-kingdom. Sustainable change will not come through community organizing, political processes, or more education.

Challenging the poverty-creating nature of power demands the transformational power of the gospel. It is about personal sin and social sin. Only the good news—all of it—contains the hope that the poor will someday be able to build homes and live in them.

Poverty as Fear

One final way of thinking about poverty: you are poor when you are afraid. This is true especially when you are afraid of those who have influence over your future and well-being.

Some fear the spirit world, the unseen world of demons, spirits, and ancestors. Others fear those in this world who have power over them: the Brahmin, the priest, the corporation, or the professor. This kind of fear, whatever its source, is disabling.

The Gospel of Mark teaches that fear is the opposite of faith. Fear, then, is a spiritual problem. It can be dispelled only by faith in the Son of God, who is more powerful than any source of fear.

Summing Up

Once we move beyond understanding poverty as the absence of things and knowledge, we see that, at its heart, poverty is a spiritual issue. Relationships that don't work, power that is misused, and disabling fear cannot be set aside.

Churches, mission, and Christian relief and development agencies must bring the gospel to the poor, not because it is something extra that Christians do but because it is the only source of truth and power that can address a serious understanding of poverty.

Reflection Questions

1. Is poverty defined so broadly that everyone should be considered impoverished?
2. How might Myers' ide-as help field practitioners?

The Challenge of the Cities

By: Roger S. Greenway (used with permission)

Cities are the new frontier of Christian missions. Because of their size, influence, diversity, and needs cities present enormous challenges. To neglect cities would be a strategic mistake because, as cities go, the world goes.

Cities are the centers of political power, economic activity, communication, scientific research, academic instruction, and moral and religious influence. Whatever happens in cities affects entire nations. When Christ's kingdom advances in cities, the number of people worshiping and serving the true God multiplies.

During the 20th century, the world became urbanized. When the century began, only 13 percent of the world's population lived in cities. By the end of the century, half the world lived in cities.

In 1950, only two cities, New York and London, had more than eight million inhabitants. In 2000, there were 25. By the year 2015, 33 cities are expected to have more than eight million. Nineteen of these will be in Asia.

Migration from rural areas to urban centers explains about half of the growth of cities. The other half is due to internal growth, which is determined by the number of births over deaths. The movement of more than a billion people to the cities over the last decades is the largest population movement in history.

Causes of Rural-Urban Migration

An underlying cause of migration to the cities is the worldwide increase in population. Generally, people today live longer, infant mortality has decreased, and medicines keep people alive who years ago would have died. With the increase in population comes the need for more jobs. This forces millions to leave their traditional rural homes and move to cities in search of employment.

There are also other causes. Cities offer educational opportunities that are not available in small towns and villages. There are hospitals and health centers in cities for people with special medical needs. Young people, especially, are attracted to the cities because cities offer excitement, entertainment, and new opportunities. Often they come to cities dreaming of riches and a better life, only to have their dreams destroyed by the hard realities of urban living.

Urban Poverty and Suffering

Some of the worst suffering is found among people who have recently arrived in cities. People from rural peasant classes are seldom prepared for the difficulties they encounter. They lack the skills required for the jobs that are available. They cannot afford to buy property or pay high rent. They are forced to live in squatter settlements, in shacks built of discarded wood, tin, and tar paper, usually located on the fringes of the city.

In their early stages, squatter communities lack water, sewage, electricity, and regular streets. Because the land does not belong to them, the residents are vulnerable to eviction and the sudden loss of their homes. Those who are fortunate enough to find work must spend exhausting hours each day walking and traveling on public buses. Family life suffers as young and old work seven days a week at whatever jobs they can find.

Life is hard for the poor in cities. Crime is prevalent, and security is low. Nevertheless, large numbers of new people continue to arrive from the villages. They are drawn as though by invisible magnets to the cities. And despite the poverty and suffering, their level of optimism regarding the future is generally high. They firmly believe that, if not the parents, certainly the children will enjoy better lives in the city.

Openness to the Gospel

As a general rule, people who are recently dislocated, and are experiencing major changes in their lives, are more open to the gospel than they were before. In my experience, this is true also among people who have recently arrived in cities.

New people in the cities are open to new ideas, including ideas about God and religion. As a result, I have come to believe that God is behind the migration of masses of people to the cities. He is creating new opportunities for spreading the gospel among unreached people coming from remote towns and villages. It is our task to take hold of the opportunity and carry out Christ's missionary command.

During my years in Mexico City, I worked with students in evangelizing and planting churches in squatter communities and other low-income areas. At first we tried other parts of the urban population. But we found that the greatest openness to the gospel was among people who had arrived in the city less than 10 years earlier.

Using the simplest and least costly methods, going door-to-door, witnessing personally to families in their homes, praying for the sick, and starting Bible studies, we began dozens of "cells" and house churches. Many of them developed into well-established congregations. This led me to believe that the massive migration to the cities that is occurring around the world may be, in God's providence, a key to world evangelization. Through urbanization, God is drawing people of every race, tribe, and language to places where they can be reached with the gospel.

Practical Issues in Urban Missions

There are five important considerations for inner city ministry:

1. Poverty

In many cities, between 30 and 50 percent of the population is poor, often desperately poor. Urban mission work, in most cases, demands that missionaries follow a comprehensive strategy that proclaims the gospel of God's saving love and demonstrates the same gospel in practical ways. Coping daily with social inequities and economic differences is a very practical issue for urban missionaries.

2. Racial, Ethnic and Cultural Diver-sity

In most countries, city populations are composed of people from many different backgrounds. They represent different tribes, castes, races, and social classes, and they speak different languages. Unavoidably, this affects mission strategy and church development. It also calls for missionaries who enjoy being near many different people.

3. Religious Pluralism

In villages, most people follow one particular religion. But city people follow a variety of religious beliefs and practices. Urban missionaries may give major attention to one group, but they must be prepared to witness to others as well. They must also be prepared to respond to people who reject all religion, and others who regard all religions as equally true.

4. Anti-Urban Attitudes

Traditionally, most mission work was done in rural areas. In the past, that made sense because most people lived in rural communities. But the biggest challenge is now in cities, and there we find a shortage of workers. Many missionaries are so disturbed by the noise and traffic in cities, the pollution, social problems, crime, and crowded housing, that they prefer working in rural areas. Unreached villages certainly need to hear the gospel. But in view of the masses of unsaved and unchurched people in cities, more attention must be given to urban centers.

5. High Cost

A major practical issue for mission agencies is the higher financial costs of urban work. To begin with, housing for missionaries is more expensive in cities. In villages, a piece of land for a church building often costs little or nothing, and local believers can erect their own place of worship. But in cities, property is expensive. There are building codes to follow, labor unions, and higher wages to pay. These and other factors tempt missionaries to avoid cities in favor of rural areas.

God's Word for Cities

God's Word must always be our starting point in missions. In order to understand God's will for cities, we need more than scattered verses of the Bible. We need to see God's overall plan from creation and the fall, to redemption and consummation, as it applies to cities. In that light, I suggest that the following biblical teachings be considered:

1. All human beings are creatures of God, made in His image and fallen into sin, and the gospel of God's saving grace in Christ applies to everybody. By this I mean that the gospel meets the spiritual needs of people of all races, nationalities, tribes, and social classes. Cities impress us by the fact that they are multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious. But the Bible teaches that there is one gospel, from the one God, through the one Savior, and it is for all the people that cities contain. That truth is basic to our under-standing of urban mission.

2. While felt needs differ from person to person and place to place, ultimate needs are universal and must be addressed. People in the city have differing perceptions as to what they need. Some will identify their needs as better housing, medical care, education, and a job. These needs are real and legitimate, and a holistic approach to urban mission will address many of them.

However, the temptation is to become so absorbed in helping people meet their felt needs that ultimate needs are neglected. Ultimate needs are those that the Bible declares to be people's most urgent and critical needs. They are the universal needs of repentance and conversion, reconciliation with God, and eternal life through faith in Christ.

3. It is God's will that cities be evangelized. In view of the anti-urban bias that we have mentioned, this point must be underscored.

In the Bible, urban mission began with the story of Jonah, the Old Testament prophet who God called to preach to the wicked in the city of Nineveh. Jonah represented all those who, through the years,

tried to avoid the call to the city. But as Jonah discovered, God was serious about bringing His message to the city. God cared about the Ninevites, their children, and even the animals (Jonah 4:11).

Christ's commission to "go and make disciples of all peoples, "forbids neglecting cities with their multitudes from all tribes and races (Matt 28:19). It is significant that the missionary strategy of the apostle Paul was completely urban. Even though hostilities met him in most of the cities in which he worked, Paul knew God wanted cities evangelized.

4. Vital, gospel-preaching churches are the hope of cities, and developing such churches is a key to urban missions. The New Testament treats churches as "new covenant" communities in Christ whose mission is to communicate the gospel and, by their presence and activity, be lighthouses and showcases of Christ's Kingdom. City churches are Christ's agents of transformation in society. Paul's strategy typically began with evangelism and went on to church-planting. By his teaching, writing, and example, Paul equipped churches to be light, salt, and leaven in their communities. Churches that fail in this are of little good to the city.

5. Cities are battlefields where spiritual warfare between Christ's Kingdom and Satan's is very evident. Saint Augustine wrote that in every city there are two cities, the city of God and the city of Satan, and they are in continual conflict with one another. It is undeniable that cities contain strongholds of satanic power that resist the spread of the gospel and promote unrighteousness in society. Cities are not evil because they are cities. Rather, cities maximize human potential for both good and evil. There is much that is beautiful and good in cities. By their schools, hospitals, and productivity, cities enhance the quality of human life. But at the same time, the power of evil is evident. Sin expresses itself not only in the wrongdoing of individuals, but also in institutions' policies and actions that exploit and oppress, as well as in the wrong use of the systems by which cities are managed.

To keep ourselves from both excessive optimism as to what we can accomplish and from depression when setbacks some, urban workers must possess biblical awareness of the spiritual warfare going on.

6. To bring shalom – God's Kingdom peace – to cities with their varieties of people, cultures, religions and problems requires multi-faceted, holistic ministries. These holistic ministries should be designed to: (a) make disciples of Jesus Christ, (b) multiply churches in every people group, (c) demonstrate compassion and promote justice, (d) care for the environment as God's creation, and (e) pray continually that Satan will be defeated and Christ exalted in every corner of the city.

In cities containing people of many languages and cultures, vigorous church-planting must be carried out in all the different communities so that the gospel can be heard and understood by everyone.

Care for God's creation is a Christian obligation, and Christ's disciples in urban centers ought to be at the forefront of efforts to preserve and protect the earth, air, and water. Not only are people hurt, but God Himself is dishonored by polluted air, toxic water, and contaminated earth.

Prayer for cities is missionary activity. "Seek the shalom of the city, ", Jeremiah told God's people in Babylon, "and pray for it!" (Jer. 29:7). Neither Satan nor city problems can withstand the effects of prayer.

7. The eschatological vision of the New Jerusalem inspires Christ's urban workers and shapes the mission agenda. The movement of history throughout the Bible is from the garden of Eden where the fall occurred, to the New Jerusalem, the city that God is preparing for us.

Believe it or not, all God's children will eventually be urbanites! Life in a city lies ahead of us. It will be a city where truth and righteousness are the way of life and Christ's name alone is honored (Rev 21:10-27). That vision should motivate us now and keep us going despite the obstacles. For like Abraham, our faces are turned toward "the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Heb 11:10).

Steps Toward Engagement in Urban Missions

I plead with all who are concerned about doing God's will and reaching lost people for Christ to consider the challenge of the growing cities of the world. The migration to the cities is so large that it must have a divinely-ordained, redemptive purpose behind it. How shall we respond?

Our response should not depend on whether we prefer to live in cities or not. As it was for Jonah, and no doubt for Paul, the question is whether we will go where workers are needed and where God want us to go.

For those willing to explore what God may have in mind for them, I suggest steps:

1. Grow

Most important is your own spiritual development. Ministry in cities requires that you "put on the full armor of God" (Eph 6:11), not just once or occasionally, but daily. Therefore, stretch your spiritual horizons. Go beyond your individual development into church-related concerns and areas of ministry in which you must pay a price in order to strengthen others.

2. Get Involved

Become involved in some kind of organized urban mission work. It will give you valuable experience and will test your gifts for ministry. Offer yourself as an "apprentice" to an effective urban pastor, evangelist, or missionary. Observe carefully how the Lord uses his workers. Learn all you can about presenting the gospel to different kinds of people and meeting a variety of needs.

3. Learn

Read books and journals that deal with mission work in cities and learn all you can about different models of urban ministry. If possible, take a course in urban ministry at a Bible college or seminary. Some schools offer advanced academic programs in urban mission.

4. Explore

Investigate a particular city. Begin by studying a map of the city and identifying its different parts – the commercial areas, industrial zones, and residential neighborhoods. Look closely at the areas that are growing in population and the kinds of people and cultures found there.

Then choose one neighborhood and study its people – their religions, cultures, languages, and social conditions. Inquire about their spiritual, social, and material needs. Find out if there are vital churches in every language group. Then think about ways to advance Christ's Kingdom in particular neighborhoods.

5. Pray

Develop and maintain a prayer ministry for cities. Prayer is missionary action. You can begin your urban mission immediately by making a list of certain cities in various parts of the world. Learn all you can about the people and their needs. Then pray regularly that God will build His Kingdom in those cities.

Follow these steps and you will grow in your understanding of what urban mission entails. God will increase the burden of your heart for cities and will show you what role He wants you to play. Consider it a great privilege if He calls you to be his co-worker in building His kingdom in the most strategic places in the world, the cities.

Reflection Questions

1. Explain why cities are so strategic for missions today.
2. Explain why millions of people are migrating to cities.
3. How should missionaries prepare themselves for mission work in cities? What factors should guide mission agencies in the division of person-nel between work in villages and cities?

State of World Need

By World Relief (used with permission)

> *When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separated the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*
>
> *Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."*
>
> *Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"*
>
> *The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." - Matthew 25:31-40*

Jesus and the poor are inseparable. Beggars, the blind, the lame, the destitute, and the hungry flock to him. The New Testament records ten times when Jesus was "moved with compassion". Each time was a personal encounter with suffering people. He embodies the message of Isaiah:

> *…to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke…to share food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter…to clothe the naked (Isaiah 58:6,7).*

"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat"

For nearly two out of every three people today, hunger is not merely an occasion-al pang felt before lunchtime. It's a lifestyle.

- Three-quarters of a billon people are chronically undernourished.
- Malnutrition is the underlying cause of more than half of the deaths of children under five. Of these deaths, 10% are directly caused by severe malnutrition.
- Over 30,000 children die every day of hunger and preventable diseases. That's 24 a minute. Real children with names and siblings and dreams -- kids who will never see adulthood because they lose their fight with hunger.

Poverty is at the heart of the world's hunger. To understand the diversity of the contributors to poverty, one must analyze a web of problems – unbalanced distribution of wealth, climatic limitations, greed, lack of work ethic, overpopulation, political maneuvering, technological inadequacy, and unemployment. No single factor can be effectively treated in isolation. All must be dealt with.

The exasperating truth is that the world produces enough food to feed everybody, but it just isn't being distributed fairly. The imbalance in food distribution is the number one reason a hunger problem haunts our world today. Developed countries nearly empty the food basket before passing the scraps to developing nations.

- Industrialized countries comprise only 20% of the world's population but consume 80% of the food resources.

- In the United States, we spend $30 to $50 billion every year on diets and related expenses to reduce calorie intake. Obesity and cardiovascular disease are rampant. Many North Americans literally eat themselves to death.

Rich industrialized countries are mostly to blame, but wealthy elites in poor countries also bear part of the responsibility. Too often, overall economic growth primarily benefits only the richest citizens of poorer countries. Some progress is made, but it rarely reaches those who need it most desperately.

There are signs of hope. Since 1970, both the percentage and the actual number of hungry people have fallen significantly in the developing countries.

- In 1970, 918 million people, or 35% of the developing world, were chronically undernourished. By the 1990s, those figures had fallen to 841 million people, which was 20% of the people in developing countries.

- Microfinance/microcredit has emerged as one promising way to combat severe poverty. Small loans (beginning at approximately $50) enable poor people to establish small businesses like food stalls or handicrafts. The income generated by these businesses allows people to pay off their initial loan and to meet their financial needs. Many applicants then apply for a larger loan and expand their business, providing greater profit for themselves and their families, as well as offering employment to others in the local community. Money that is repaid can be re-loaned over and over again, so that an initial investment is multiplied many times over. Research is proving that microfinance is reducing the vulnerability of the poor – children are receiving better nutrition, more kids are in school, and family have better healthcare.

"I was thirsty and you gave me drink"

Water is the most precious of all resources, a vital necessity of life. A human being cannot live more than a few days without it. It composes 90% of your blood, 80% of your brain, 75% of your flesh, and 25% of your bones.

Besides being essential for drinking, water serves a critical role in food production, food preparation, and hygiene. Removing water from any of these is like snapping a bicycle chain in half and expecting the bike to run smoothly. Imagine trying to grow a garden, fix dinner, or wash without water, or with water infested with para-ites and waste products. You might as well wash with mud.

Yet over one billon people in our world lack access to clean water.

In most developed countries, if you want an abundant, clean water supply, you just turn on your faucet. In developing countries, people often travel miles on foot to get a jug of water. It may well take half a day to make the trip. In other countries, even a half-day trek won't lead to water. There simply isn't any.

Two sides of the water supply problem plague developing countries: quantity and quality.

Water shortages parch countries with arid climates like Africa and India. In the Sahel region of Africa, the desert is creeping southward at a rate of 9 miles each year, scorching everything in its path.

Quality is the other half of the water supply dilemma. Even where water is available, it is frequently useless due to the damaging elements in it. Diseases that are spread through impure water may cripple and kill. Contaminated water is the main agent in transmitting typhoid, cholera, and bacillary dysentery – prevalent diseases in developing countries. Ignorance of hygienic practices is part of the problem. In many areas of the world, the same water is used for washing, bathing, and drinking.

Water pollution is more common in rural areas than urban. The most common contributor to pollution is organic human and livestock waste. Soil erosion and runoff of fertilizers and pesticides in farming areas also pollute the water supply.

Ironically, the more industrial and commercial development there is in a country, the more likely it is that chemical waste will pour into rivers and streams, leading to pollution. Industrialization and development may increase the gross national product of a country, but they may also mean more polluted water for the thirsty poor. Growing populations, industrialization, and food production will all increase the demand for clean water.

“I was a stranger and you invited me in”

Refugees are persons who have felt compelled or have been forced to leave their homes. Unable or unwilling to return, many remain in a homeless limbo. According to the United States Committee for Refugees, they are the “ultimate victims of war and oppression. Too often…the forgotten byproducts of ideological disputes, political repression, or a foreign policy gone awry.”

In most cases, they have fled because of war or civil strife. Persecution because of race, religion, national origin, or group affiliation may have precipitated the move. Oppression or lack of protection by a new or weak government may propel people to leave their country.

Every continent harbors stateless or homeless victims of war, intolerance, and social unrest. Because small percentages of refugees manage to return home or become viably resettled each year, and because vast numbers of new refugees continually emerge, the world refugee situation is constantly changing. Statistics on refugees and other displaced persons are often inaccurate and controversial. One country’s refugee is another’s illegal alien. Today’s internally displaced person may be tomorrow’s refugee. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates the number of persons of concern for them in 2006 at 32.9 million people of which 9.9 million are refugees and 744,000 asylum-seekers. Refugees are often in desperate need. The extent and specifics of that depend on the reason for dislocation, the understanding that individuals have of the forces acting upon them, the degree of violence and deprivation encountered, and the speed of resettlement. Yet the majority of refugees suffer from poor health, little food, inadequate shelter, and no money. A complex mixture of emotional problems results from culture shock and other frustrations. There are signs of hope. Habitat for Humanity will soon be the largest private house builder in the world. They have already built 60,000 houses for the poor around the globe. World Relief alone has resettled over 215,000 refugees, helping them find not only shelter but productive employment and a new life in a safe environment.

“I was naked and you clothed me”

Imagine that one night as you sat down to dinner, the blasts of gunshots and screams invaded your dining room. Looking outside, you discover homes blazing with fire and your neighbors bleeding in the street. A band of angry men streams toward your house. The only possible escape is an immediate one. You leave everything you own – home, food, clothing – and run for safety. Episodes like this interrupt the normal pulse of life in countries around the world when disasters like war disrupt a nation. Most notable today is Darfur, Sudan, where whole villages are burnt down, forcing families to flee.

In addition to these man-made disasters, other violent events, like natural disasters leave thousands of people homeless and in need of assistance in their own countries.

More than 90% of all loss of life and damage to man and the environment is the result of four main natural hazards: drought, floods, tropical cyclones, and earthquakes. Over half of all natural disasters originate with meteorological events including storms, floods, droughts, and temperature extremes.

In disaster-prone developing countries these events often serve as enormous barriers to economic growth, sometimes canceling out any hard-won increase in gross national product, or actually causing a loss.

In terms of the human toll, natural disasters kill thousands of people each year, cause disease and injury for tens of thousands more, and leave hundreds of thousands homeless.

Immediately following a major disaster, food and water supplies may be cut off or contaminated. Electricity and gas supplies are often involved in explosions and fires and are therefore cut off. Medical supplies and hospitals may be destroyed. The aftermath may also involve epidemics spreading through contaminated water, destroyed sanitation facilities, and large numbers of dead. Economic loss of property, crops, and personal possessions usually amounts to millions of dollars, if not immeasurably more. For developing nations the economic impact can be devastating.

Total recovery from a disaster usually requires outside help extending beyond the initial relief response. The minimum goal may be to restore normal pre-disaster conditions. Yet in developing countries, “normal conditions” frequently include malnutrition, disease, and economic deprivation. True need often goes beyond the consequences of the disaster alone. Thus, the goals of rehabilitation must aim at higher than pre-disaster living conditions.

“I was sick and you cared for me”

Malaria, tuberculosis, and parasitic infections invade and destroy millions every year. Millions die every year from preventable diseases. Diseases now rare in developed countries continue to kill people in countries where immunizations are not available. Even diseases like tetanus and measles often result in death in these countries.

Life expectancy is one of the most reliable ways to measure the health status in a country. The average life expectancy in developing lands is 15 to 25 years less than in developed countries.

Three basic types of diseases dominate developing countries: fecally-related, air-borne, and vector-borne.

The most widespread diseases are fecally-related, i.e., diseases transmitted by human feces through unsanitary waste disposal. These include parasitic and diarrheal disease like typhoid and cholera.

Air-borne diseases comprise the next largest group. These spread through persons breathing airborne respiratory secretions of infected persons. Examples are tuberculosis, pneumonia, diphtheria, bronchitis, whooping cough, meningitis, influenza, measles, smallpox, and chicken pox. Although most are preventable, they transform into killers in countries where medicine and doctors are inaccessible.

The third group of diseases is less common, though still a sober and deadly reality in developing countries. These vector-borne diseases, which are transmitted by insects, include malaria, sleeping sickness, and river blindness. Sexually transmitted diseases form another group of preventable diseases. The vectors which carry these diseases are people. HIV/AIDS is the most well-known of these diseases. More than 6,800 people a day become infected with HIV and over 5,700 dies from AIDS. There were 33.2 million cases at the end of 2007, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa (22.5 million, which represents 68%). The AIDS epidemic is the world's leading cause of premature death among both men and women aged 15-59. (Source is UNAIDS).

Fecally-related, air- and vector-borne dis-eases share a common cause: poverty. Crowded, unsanitary living conditions underlie the origin and spread of these diseases. These conditions include: water teeming with parasites, families of five or ten creamed into tiny tin shelters, inadequate diets, ignorance of nutrition and hygiene, and inaccessible immunizations or preventive health care. Most uneducated people in developing countries do not know the connection between unsanitary waste disposal and concurrent illnesses.

Even if these roadblocks to health could be removed, simple health care is a fleeting mirage to more than 80% of rural areas and poor urban sections. Efforts to alleviate disease are usually concentrated on major urban areas. Large hospitals are frequently built in places out of the reach of the rural poor. One out of every four people in our world today lacks access to basic health services. But there are signs of hope in disease prevention:

- In 1981, in some areas of Africa, 40% of all adults lost their sight to river blindness by the age of 40. At that time there was no real hope in sight. There is now a pill developed by the Merck Company to treat river blindness. The Jimmy Carter Center distributes it. Twenty-two million people received the treatment in 1997.

- Diarrhea used to be the number one killer of children. Over the past decade, efforts to train mothers in simple oral rehydration techniques have saved hundreds of thousands of children from this fate.

- In 1980, only 20% of the children in developing nations received immunization for typical childhood diseases. UNICEF reported in 2008 that, "the most recent statistics show that global immunization rates, as measured by coverage of the diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccines, now exceed 75%."

"I was in prison and you came to visit me"

Saleema, a teenager, sits in a Pakistan prison. Months ago she shared her Bible with Raheela, a friend of hers from a Muslim background. Rahella came to believe in Christ and, fearing that she would be killed by angry family members, went into hiding. Saleema was then accused of helping Raheela escape. Saleema was imprisoned, repeatedly raped, and beaten.

Raheela was eventually found by religious authorities. She refused to renounce Christ and was therefore publicly executed. The Islamic authorities have now charged Saleema with murder. Why? They reasoned that, had Saleema not given a Bible to Raheela, Raheela would not have followed Christ and been executed for apostasy from Islam. Saleema will also be executed if found guilty.

Cases like Saleema and Raheela are on the rise. Because prisoners of conscience are often charged with political or criminal crimes, it is almost impossible to assess how extensive the imprisonment of Christians may be.

International Christian Concern reports: “More Christians are persecuted and martyred for their faith in this (20th) century than all previous centuries combined. Nearly two-thirds of all Christians alive in the world today suffer persecution in varying degrees, including the loss of freedom, discrimination, and imprisonment, slavery, and torture.”

House church leaders are routinely imprisoned and tortured in China. For example, house church pastor Xu Gou Xing was arrested and placed in a cell block with violent criminal prisoners with the expectation that he would be beaten and abused by them. However, the Lord protected him, granting him favor with one of the criminal “leaders” who had a Christian relative. Xu soon began to lead several prisoners to the Lord. Authorities have now placed him in solitary confinement.

What Can We Do?

In a world of desperate need, we ask ourselves, “What can we do about such vast and all-encompassing problems?” The child who recommends sending his dinner leftovers to Africa elicits chuckles from wiser generations. Too often we adults answer this with, “Nothing. I can do nothing about all the suffering in the world.”

It is easy for us to become lulled into inaction by the belief that these overwhelming problems lie beyond our realm of control.

The needs of the poor – and the rich – go beyond the physical and the psychological, they are spiritual as well. The most effective development plans meet the needs of the whole person. Such plans do not come easily. Furthermore, there are so many individuals suffering from so many different problems.

The problems in the world today will not be solved by the actions of one or two people. But, collectively, individuals can respond to them in a significant manner. While you or I may not be able to solve these problems alone, we need to respond as God has commanded us to, in Jesus name. As Ron Sider says, “Nobody can do everything, but everybody can do something and together we can change the world.”

We dare not stand aside and leave people homeless, their eyes staring empty into the hopeless future when we can put a roof over their heads with minimal funds by North American standards.

We dare not take a spectator’s seat watching refugees who huddle just out of gunshot range. They are not just “inevitable victims of war.” They are made in the image of God, and He has called us to minister to them.

In other words, what we really believe in, we will act on. Everything else is just so much religious talk. God never intended for the righteous to sit idle while the restless poor struggle for survival. And we dare not exit at a point where their survival is assured but their eternal destiny is not.

Christians today have a total annual income of over $10 trillion. According to the United Nations, it would cost only $30-$40 billion a year to provide all people in developing countries with basic education, health care, and clean water – the same amount spent on golf every year.

The problems are worldwide, but individual responses are eternally significant. A loaf of bread. A cup of clean water. A shelter. The gospel lived out and proclaimed. These actions are immeasurably important to someone who is hungry, thirsty or homeless.

The words of Jesus invite us to respond to the dismal state of the world: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Reflection Questions

1. What are the six basic areas of world need described in this article?

2. How does this article challenge those in wealthier nations to respond to these major world needs? As individuals? Collectively?

A Church in Every People – Plain Talk About a Difficult Subject

By Donald A. McGavran (used with permission)

The goal of Christian mission should be to preach the gospel and, by God's grace, to plant in every unchurched segment of mankind – shat shall we say – "a church" or "cluster of growing churches?" By the phrase "segment of mankind" I mean an urbanization, development, caste, tribe, valley plain, or minority population. I shall explain that the steadily maintained long-range goal should never be the first but should always be the second. The goal is not one small sealed-off conglomerate congregation in every people. Rather, the long-range goal (to be held constantly in view in the years or decades when it is not yet achieved) should be, "a cluster of growing congregations in every segment."

The Conglomerate Church Approach

As we consider the question italicized above, we should remember that it is usually easy to start one single congregation in a new unchurched people group. The missionary arrived. He and his family worship on Sunday. They are the first members of that congregation. He learns the language and preaches the gospel. He lives like a Christian. He tells people about Christ and helps them in their troubles. He sells tracts and gospels or gives them away. Through the years a few individual converts are won from this group and that. Sometimes they come for very sound and spiritual reasons, sometimes from mixed motives. But here and there a woman, a man, a boy, a girl do decide to follow Jesus. A few employees of the mission become Christian. These may be masons hired to erect the buildings, helpers in the home, rescued persons, or orphans. This history of mission in Africa is replete with churches started by buying slaves, freeing them, and employing those who could not return to their kindred. Such as chose to, could accept the Lord. A hundred and fifty years ago this was a common way of starting a church. With the outlawing of slavery, of course, it ceased to be used.

One single congregation arising in the way just described is almost always a conglomerate church – made up of members of several different segments of society. Some are old, some young, orphans, rescued persons, helpers, and ardent seekers. All seekers are carefully screened to make sure they really intend to receive Christ. In due time, a church building is erected, and lo, a church in that people. It is a conglomerate church. It is sealed off from all the people groups of that region. No segment of the population says, "That group of worshipers is us." They are quite right. It is not. It is ethnically quite a different social unit.

Slow to Grow

This very common way of beginning the process of evangelization is a slow way to disciple the peoples of earth – note the plural: "the peoples of earth." Let us observe closely what really happens as this congregation is gathered. Each convert, as he becomes a Christian, is seen by his kin as one who leaves "us" and joins "them". He leaves our gods to worship their gods. Consequently, his own relations force him out. Sometimes he is severely ostracized, thrown out of house and home; his life is threatened. Hundreds of converts have been poisoned or killed. Sometimes the ostracism is mild and consists merely in severe disapproval. His people consider him a traitor. A church which results from this process looks to the region like an assemblage of traitors. It is a conglomerate congregation. It is made up of individuals, who, one-by-one, have come out of several different societies, castes, or tribes.

Now if anyone, in becoming a Christian, is forced out of, or comes out of, a tightly structured segment of society, the Christian cause wins the individual but loses the family. The family, his people, the neighbors of that tribe are fiercely angry at him or her. They are the very men and women to whom he cannot talk. “you are not of us,” they say to him; “you have abandoned us; you like them more than you like us. You now worship their gods and not our gods.” As a result, conglomerate congregations, made up of converts won in this fashion, grow very slowly. Indeed, one might truly affirm that where congregations grow in this fashion, the conversion of the ethnic units (people groups) from which they come is made doubly difficult. “The Christians misled one of our people,” the rest of the group will say. “We’re going to make quite sure that they do not mislead any more of us.”

Easy for Missionaries

“One-by-one”, is relatively easy to accomplish. Perhaps 90 out of every 100 missionaries who intend church planting get only conglomerate congregations. I want to emphasize that. Perhaps 90 out of every 100 missionaries who intend church planting get only conglomerate congregations. Such missionaries preach the gospel, tell of Jesus, sell tracts and gospels, and evangelize in many other ways. They welcome inquirers, but whom do they get? They get a man here, a woman there, a boy here, a girl there, who for various reasons is willing to become Christian and patiently endure the mild to severe disapproval of their people.

Ineffective in Untouched Peoples

If we are to understand how churches grow and do not grow on new ground, in untouched and unreached peoples, we must note that the process I have just described seems unreal to most missionaries. “What”, they will exclaim, “could be a better way of entry into all the unreached peoples of that region than to win a few individuals from among them? Instead of resulting in the sealed-off church you describe, the process really gives us points of entry into every society from which a convert has come. That seems to us to be the real situation.”

Those who reason in this fashion have known church growth in a largely Christian land, where men and women who follow Christ are not ostracized, are not regarded as traitors, but rather as those who have done the right thing. In that kind of a society every convert usually can become a channel through which the Christian faith flows to his relatives and friends. On that point there can be no debate. It was the point I emphasized when I titled my book, *The Bridges of God*.

The People Movement Approach

Let us now consider the other way in which God is discipling the peoples of planet Earth. My account is not theory, but a sober recital of easily observable facts. As you look around the world, you see that while most missionaries succeed in planting only conglomerate churches by the “one-by-one out of the social group” method, here and there clusters of growing churches arise by the people movement method. They arise by tribe- or caste- wise movements to Christ. This is in many ways a better system. In order to use it effectively, missionaries should operate on seven principles.

1. Aim for a Cluster of Growing Congregations

They should be clear about the goal. The goal is not one single conglomerate church in a city or a region. They may get only that, but that must never be the goal. The goal must be a cluster of growing, indigenous congregations, every member of which remains in close contact with his kindred. This cluster grows best if it is in one people, one caste, one tribe, or one segment of society. For

example, if you were evangelizing the taxi drivers of Taipei, then your goal would not be to win some taxi drivers, some university professors, some farmers, and some fishermen, but rather to establish churches made up largely of taxi drivers, their wives and children, and their assistants and mechanics. As you win converts of that particular community, the congregation has a natural, built-in social cohesion. Everybody feels at home. Yes, the goal must be clear.

2. Concentrate on One People

The principle is that the national leader or the missionary and his helpers should concentrate on one people. If you are going to establish a cluster of growing congregations amongst, let us say, the Nair people of Kerala, which is the southwest tip of India, then you would need to place most of your missionaries and their helpers so that they can work among the Nairs. They should proclaim the gospel to Nairs, saying quite openly to them, “We are hoping that within your great caste there soon will be thousands of followers of Jesus Christ who also remain solidly in the Nair community.” They will, of course, not worship the old Nair gods, but then plenty of Nairs don’t worship their old gods. Plenty of Nairs are Communist and ridicule their old gods.

Nairs whom God calls, who choose to be-lieve in Christ, are ging to love their neigh-bors more than they did before and walk in the light. They will be saved and beautiful people. They will remain Nairs, while at the same time they become Christians. To repeat, concentrate on one people group. If you have three missionaries, don’t have one evangelizing this group, another that, and a third 200 miles away evangelizing still another. That is a sure way to guarantee that any churches started will be small, non-growing, one-by=one churches. The social dynamics of those sections of society will work solidly against the eruption of any great growing people movement to Christ.

3. Encourage Converts to Remain With Their People

The principle is to encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their own people in most matters. They should continue to eat what their people eat. They should not say, “My people are vegetarians, but now that I have become a Christian, I’m going to eat meat.” After they become Christians they should be more rigidly vegetarian than they were before. In the matter of clothing, they should continue to look precisely like their kinsfolk. In the matter of marriage, most people are endogamous, insisting that “our people marry only our people.” They look with great disfavor on “our people marrying other people.” And yet when Christian come in on-by-one, they cannot marry their own people, because none of them have become Christian. In a place where only a few given people become Christians, they have to take husbands or wives from other segments of the population when it comes time for them or their children to marry. So their own kin look at them and say, “When you become a Christian you mongrelize your children. You have left us and have joined them.”

All converts should be encouraged to bear cheerfully the exclusion, the oppression, and the persecution that they are likely to encounter from their people. When anyone becomes a follower of a new way of life, he is likely to meet some disfavor from his loved ones. Maybe it’s mild; maybe it’s severe. He should bear such disfavor patiently. He should say on all occasions: “I am a better son than I was before; I am a better father than I was before; I am a better husband that I was before; and I love you more than I used to do. You can hate me, but I will not hate you. You can exclude me, but I will include you. You can force me out of our ancestral house, but I will live on its veranda. Or I will get a house just across the street. I am still one of you; I am more one of you than I ever was before.”

Encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their people in most matters. Please note that word “most”. They cannot remain one with their people in idolatry or drunkenness or obvious sin. If they belong to a segment of the society that earns its living by stealing, they must “steal no more”. But, in most matters (how they talk, how they dress, how they eat, where they go, what kind of houses they live in), they can look very much like their people and ought to make every effort to do so.

4. Encourage Group Decisions for Christ

The principle is to try to get group decisions for Christ. If only one person decides to follow Jesus, do not baptize him immediately. Say to him, “You and I will work together to lead another five, or ten, or God willing, 50 of your people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior so that when you are baptized, you will be baptized with them.” Ostracism is very effective against one lone person. But ostracism is weak indeed when exercised against a group of a dozen. And when exercised against 200 it has practically no force at all.

5. Aim for a Constant Stream of New Converts

The principle is this: Aim for scores of groups of that people to become Christians in an ever-flowing stream across the years. One of the common mistakes made by missionaries, eastern as well as western, all around the world is that when a few become Christians, perhaps 100, 200, or even 1,000, the missionaries spend all their time teaching them. They want to make them good Christians and they say to themselves, “If these people become good Christians, then the gospel will spread.” So for years they concentrate on a few congregations. By the time they begin evangelizing outside that group, 10 to 20 years, the rest of the people no longer want to become Christians. That has happened again and again. This principle requires that, from the very beginning, the missionary keeps on reaching out to new groups. “But,” you say, “is not his a sure way to get poor Christians who don’t know the Bible? If we follow that principle we shall soon have a lot of ‘raw’ Christians. Soon we shall have a community of perhaps 5,000 people who are very sketchily Christian.”

Yes, that is certainly a danger. At his point, we must lean heavily upon the New Testament, remembering the brief weeks or months of instruction Paul gave to his new churches. We must trust the Holy Spirit and believe that God has called those people out of darkness into His wonderful light. Between the two evils of giving them too little Christian teaching of allowing them to become a sealed-off community that cannot reach its own people, the latter is much the greater danger. We must not allow new converts to become sealed off. We must continue to make sure that a constant stream of new converts comes into the ever-growing cluster of congregations.

6. Help Converts Exemplify the Highest Hopes of Their People

Now the point is this: The converts, whether five or 5,000, ought to say, or at least feel: “We Christians are the advance guard of our people, of our segment of society. We are showing our relatives and neighbors a better way of life. The way we are pioneering is good for us who have become Christians and will be very good for you thousands who have yet to believe. Please look on us not as traitors in any sense. We are better sons, brothers, and wives, better tribesmen and caste fellows, better members of our labor union than we ever were before. We are showing ways in which, while remaining thoroughly of our own segment of society, we all can have a better life. Please look on us as the pioneers of our own people entering a wonderful Promised Land.

7. Emphasize Brotherhood

The principle I stress is this: constantly emphasize brotherhood. In Christ there is no Jew, no Greek, no bond, no free, no barbarian, no Scythian. We are all one in Christ Jesus. But at the same time, let us remember that Paul did not attack all imperfect social institutions. For example, he did not do away with slavery. Paul said to the slave, “Be a better slave.” He said to the slave owner, “Be a kindlier master.”

Paul also said in that famous passage emphasizing unity, “There is no male or female.” Nevertheless, Christians in their boarding schools and orphanages continue to sleep boys and girls in separate dormitories!! In Christ, there is no sex distinction. Boys and girls are equally precious in God’s sight. Men from this tribe, and men from that, are equally precious in God’s sight. We are all equally sinners, equally saved by grace. These things are true, but at the same time there are certain social niceties which Christians at this time may observe.

As we continue to stress brotherhood, let us be sure that the most effective way to achieve brotherhood is to lead ever increasing numbers of men and women from every ethnos, every tribe, every segment of society into an obedient relationship to Christ. As we multiply Christians in every segment of society, the possibility of genuine brotherhood, justice, goodness, and righteousness will be enormously increased. Indeed, the best way to get justice – possibly the only way to get justice – is to have very large numbers in every segment of society become committed Christians.

As we work for Christward movements in every people, let us not make the mistake of believing that “one-by-one out of the society into the church” is a bad way. One precious soul willing to endure sever ostracism in order to become a follower of Jesus, one precious soul coming all by himself, is a way that God has blessed and is blessing to the salvation of mankind. But it is a slow way. And it is a way which frequently seals off the converts’ own people from any further hearing of the gospel.

Sometimes one-by-one is the only possible method. When it is, let us praise God for it, and live with its limitations. Let us urge all those wonderful Christians who come bearing persecution and oppression, to pray for their own dear ones and work constantly, that more of their own people may believe and be saved.

One-by-one is one way that God is blessing the increase of His Church. The people movement is another way. The great advances of the Church on new ground out of non-Christian religions have always come by people movements, never one-by-one. It is equally true that “one-by-one-out-of-the -people” is a very common beginning way. In the book, *Bridges of God*, which God used to launch the Church Growth Movement, I have used a simile. I say that missions start out proclaiming Christ on a desert-like plain. There, life is hard; the number of Christians remains small. A large missionary presence is required. But, here and there, the missionaries or the converts find ways to break out of that arid plain and proceed up into the verdant mountains. There, large numbers of people live; there, great churches can be founded; there, the Church grows strong; that is people movement land.

I commend that simile to you. Let us accept what God gives. It if one-by-one, let us accept that and lead those who believe in Jesus to trust in Him completely. But let us always pray that, after that beginning, we may proceed to higher ground, to more verdant pasture, to more fertile lands where great groups of men and women, all of the same segment of society, become Christians and thus open the way for Christward movements in each people on earth. Our goal should be Christward movements within each segment. There the dynamics of social cohesion will advance the gospel and lead multitudes out of darkness into His wonderful life. We are calling people after people from death to life. Let us make sure that we do it by the most effective methods.

Reflection Questions

1. McGavran says, “Indeed, the best way to get justice – possibly the only way to get justice – is to have very large numbers in every segment of society become committed Christians.” Do you agree? Why or why not?

2. Why does McGavran insist that “a cluster of growing churches” rather than “a church” is the proper goal in pioneer church planting?

Training 7 – God and the North American Heart

Please read through these articles before this On-Field Session. The team leader will lead a discussion and/or use the questions provided at the end of each article as the basis for teaching and discussion.

- What is Poverty Anyway?
- Life on Purpose

What is Poverty Anyway?

By: Bryant L. Myers (used with permission)

I often express concern over whether we Christians use ideas that are more modern than truly biblical and Christian. Recently, I have been wondering about our use of the word poverty. Most of us believe we understand the meaning of the word. And the meaning we give to an abstract noun like poverty reflects the way we look at, think about, and make sense of our world.

Where Do We Begin?

The common definition of poverty is that it is the condition of those groups of people we abstractly describe as “the poor.” But the poor are not abstract. They are human beings with names, made in the image of God, those for whom Jesus died. People who live in poverty are valuable to God—as important to Him and as loved by Him as those who do not live in poverty.

Why is this reminder important? The world tends to view the poor as a helpless group. The poor become nameless, and this invites us to treat them as objects of our compassion—people toward whom we have the right to act as we believe best.

For a Christian understanding of poverty, we must remember that the poor are people with names, people to whom God has given gifts, and people with whom and among whom God works—before we even know they exist.

Poverty as Deficit

Poverty results from a lack of things. It is obvious that poor people do not have enough to eat, a place to sleep, or clean water. Their land is poor, there is no water for irrigation, the roads are poor, and there are no schools for their children.

And so we plan to provide the missing things: food aid, low-cost housing, and wells.

We also recognize that some poor people lack knowledge and skills. Poor people may not understand nutrition, the need to boil water, the importance of child spacing, or how to read the instructions on a packet of improved seeds. They don’t know about sustainable agriculture, running small businesses, and the importance of saving money. So we provide programs that feature education, both formal and non-formal. We assume that when the poor have the knowledge they lack, they will no longer be poor.

Christians tend to add another dimension to poverty as deficit: the non-Christian poor lack knowledge about God and the good news of Jesus Christ. To understand poverty holistically, Christians add the gospel to the list of other things the poor do not have.

These views of poverty are true, and, as far as they go, they are helpful. People do need things: skills, knowledge, and a chance to hear the gospel. However, limiting our understanding of poverty to this framework creates some serious problems.

When we limit our understanding of poverty in this way, we see ourselves as providers. The poor are passive recipients, incomplete human beings whom we make whole. This unwitting attitude has two negative consequences.

First, this attitude demeans and devalues the poor. Our view of them, which quickly becomes their view of themselves, is that they are defective and inadequate.

Second, our attitude about ourselves can become messianic. We are tempted to believe that we are the deliverers of the poor and that we make their lives complete.

So if the deficit view of poverty is helpful, yet inadequate, what might we add to our view of poverty?

Poverty as Broken Relationships

A careful look at the Bible suggests that understanding the gospel in terms of relationships helps. Too often, we evangelicals limit our reading to a legal or transactional framework that centers on our sin, God's wrath, God's grace in Christ, and our being forgiven. While this transactional framework is both biblical and important, it is not the only framework.

The Bible contains a lot of relational emphases. The consequences of the first sin were all relational—Adam blamed Eve, Cain killed Abel, they left Eden and were separated from an intimate relationship with God. The Ten Commandments frame social relationships. In the Gospels, the only two statements that Jesus called commandments were relational—to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Seeing the world in terms of relationships gives us new insights into poverty. This vantage point allows us insight to trace who is doing what to whom.

Poverty involves being excluded. We make people poor when we label them as the other, the outsider, the outcast. We begin the process of exclusion when we say people are lazy, dirty, uneducated, crazy, or unsafe to be around. When we withdraw because someone has leprosy or AIDS, is homosexual, has a different skin color, or comes from a different culture, we impoverish them and ourselves.

Labels and stereotypes devalue the image of God in people. This kind of poverty is powerful and debilitating, both for those who do this and for those to whom it is done.

A Han woman once told me, "I can believe that God might let His Son die for a white man. Maybe He might do this for a black man. But God would never allow His Son to die for a bushman."

This woman cannot believe that she is made in the image of God. She has internalized a history of ruthless exploitation and genocide.

Poverty as Misused Power

When those who have power over others use it to benefit themselves, poverty results. Poverty is created when:

- The Brahmin lives out a social system that exploits the harijan (untouchables).
- A man uses the culture of machismo to legitimize drinking, womanizing and beating his wife.
- A corporation uses its political connections to get a poor section of town condemned so a sports stadium can be built.

People in positions of social privilege are often tempted to use their power for personal advantage, ignoring the consequences of their decisions for those who have less power. Managers can misuse

the power they have over their subordinates. Pastors can misuse the power they have over lay people. Even if we desire to be fair and righteous, we continually face temptations to believe that we are due certain privileges because of the positions we hold. This view makes many of us uncomfortable. It means we, too, are part of the causes of poverty.

Working against poverty within a framework of relationships is dangerous in that it demands the counter-cultural gospel of scandal that Paul talks about. It will anger the authorities—religious, political, economic, and even those in your own church. It will challenge and demand change in culture—both the local culture and your own.

The world cannot and will not transform political, economic, and social power into something that is pro-life, pro-poor, and pro-kingdom. Sustainable change will not come through community organizing, political processes, or more education.

Challenging the poverty-creating nature of power demands the transformational power of the gospel. It is about personal sin and social sin. Only the good news—all of it—contains the hope that the poor will someday be able to build homes and live in them.

Poverty as Fear

One final way of thinking about poverty: you are poor when you are afraid. This is true especially when you are afraid of those who have influence over your future and well-being.

Some fear the spirit world, the unseen world of demons, spirits, and ancestors. Others fear those in this world who have power over them: the Brahmin, the priest, the corporation, or the professor. This kind of fear, whatever its source, is disabling.

The Gospel of Mark teaches that fear is the opposite of faith. Fear, then, is a spiritual problem. It can be dispelled only by faith in the Son of God, who is more powerful than any source of fear.

Summing Up

One we move beyond understanding poverty as the absence of things and knowledge, we see that, at its heart, poverty is a spiritual issue. Relationships that don't work, power that is misused, and disabling fear cannot be set aside.

Churches, mission and Christian relief, and development agencies must bring the gospel to the poor, not because it is something extra that Christians do, but because it is the only source of truth and power that can address a serious understanding of poverty.

Reflection Questions

1. Is poverty defined so broadly that everyone should be considered impoverished?
2. How might Myers' ideas help field practitioners?

Life on Purpose

By: Claude Hickman, Steven C. Hawthorn, Todd Ahre (used with permission)

There's a difference between going out for a walk and setting out on a journey. When someone takes a walk, they may stroll along, meandering here or there. They may be getting out, but they are not necessarily getting anywhere. But when people set out on a journey, they pack up and pull things together. They choose a course and move decisively. People on a journey move with purpose.

Map Quest

When it comes to God's will, many of us want the GPS version of God, hopefully with a turn-by-turn British-American voice prompting us at every intersection. Sometimes God gives people very specific instructions, mapping out what they are to do in detail, but this is rare. The world, however, is a map factory. It continually bombards us with plans for success, agendas both personal and political, and road signs that read "happiness just ahead." Most maps lead toward personal gratification and status or just loop back to the status-quo.

A map is very appealing to a person looking for direction. But the map is an easy way out. It appeals to the lazy. God gives people direction more than directions. He will not rob you of the faith-building experience of obeying Him based on what He says, not on what you see. We cannot expect to get all the detailed instructions before we are willing to begin traveling the path. The Bible doesn't lay out a "map." It gives us a "compass." God calls you to join Him in journeying in a steady direction toward a grand global destiny. He is calling us to follow a compass and to evaluate any maps that come our way by His overarching purpose.

From the beginning, God has been orchestrating history toward a climactic destiny for all the earth, a redemption that fulfills his purpose for people. You could call this the "True North" of His purpose. God graciously invites our participation in this grand journey by giving us the compass of His word and pointing us in the direction of "True North." Following this call not only brings us into the awesome significance of aligning our hearts with God's own passion, we also join a journey pursued by believers of all time.

The most limiting thing about maps is that they only give you already-charted territory. They can only take you as far as someone else has been. Mapped-out life plans don't push you to pioneer and explore what hasn't ever been done. If you keep following the compass Jesus gives us, you will find yourself involved in pushing His global task toward completion. To finish His journey means that at some point you move beyond the edge of the maps.

Our maps will change from season to season in our lives, but the compass is unchanging. The compass is the same for all God's people. It always gives the direction to True North no matter what your language, your country, your social status, your family, or your ability. It stands as a firm standard. By marking out True North and giving us a compass, Christ enables us to think, pray, plan, coach, challenge, create, suffer, and labor with many others. It's not a solo pilgrimage. He's summoned us to step into and help fulfill what believers of previous generations have already begun and what millions of fellow-followers are pursuing at this moment.

Living life on purpose means letting God's agenda and the True North of His heart become the guiding principle for all our decisions. If they thought it was possible, most people would love to find themselves moving in a purpose that culminates the story of the entire world in magnificent ways.

Practice of the World Christian Journey

People who live their life aimed at Christ's global purpose are sometimes called World Christians. World Christians pursue God's purpose as the focal point of their entire life. They aren't superior to other believers. They've simply decided to allow every decision of their lives to be directed by the magnetic pull of God's purpose. The World Christian says, "I'll do whatever it takes to be faithful to Christ and to live strategically for His purpose."

We used to think it helped to describe World Christians as either goers or senders. We thought this opened things up for everyone by offering role categories for people who weren't going to work full time in cross-cultural ways but were finding other ways to further the cause, such as sending or mobilizing missionaries. Then we realized that the more that we talked about well-defined roles of "goers" and "senders," the more that it seemed to push people to choose one of the roles for the rest of their lives. And you guessed it: pretty soon we were publishing "maps" to help people set their lives on autopilot as senders. At the same time, some of the "goers" who were in the pipeline to become candidates for mission service were often blind to possibilities of doing what some super-senders do: mobilizing many others for God's purpose. Instead of exclusive tracks, we needed to call a new generation of World Christians to think beyond strict categories and to live holistically toward the evangelization of all peoples.

Most World Christians will find them-selves passing through different seasons, enjoying a variety of relationships, working in different vocations, and even moved by different motives. Be sure to learn to excel in one or a few of the four practices mentioned below. You many major in one but remember to minor in the others. Plan on practicing them all. That is the World Christian lifestyle.

- The Practice of Going: Immersing Ourselves Cross-Culturally

Christ commands all of His followers to be a part of reaching all nations. In our globalized world, it's unlikely that you'll spend your entire life without an opportunity to declare or display the gospel of Christ to people of other cultures, even if you never get a chance to go. You many never to go another country, but Christ does command all of us to go to people with the gospel.

Many have old, or odd, stereotypes of what missionaries are like and what missionaries really do. The models and modes of cross-cultural work are changing rapidly with international commerce and communication. Business as mission, tentmaking, and other creative approaches have allowed many believers to thrust themselves into strategic opportunities. It has also ramped up the number of short-term opportunities. Chances are you'll probably be part of short-term mission efforts from time to time. If you're seeing life through the World Christian compass, you'll easily see that most of the fruitful endeavors are going to be accomplished by the workers who have been there for years. Link with what's long-term. Connect with the local people. Seek to serve the long-range efforts. Aspire to go as far as you can, to reach those farthest from Christ.

Some of these new opportunities can make it seem that cross-cultural mission work can be done as an easy part-time avocation. If you aim to make "going' the primary practice of your life, don't be an amateur. Do it with excellence. Get training (not necessarily schooling) under the most effective missionaries that you can find.

- The Practice of Welcoming: Connecting with Those Who Come to Us

We use the word “welcoming” as a way to describe going to people without traveling as far. Working with people who are visiting or have newly migrated to our home communities can be every bit as significant as going to distant continents. Reaching out to internationals should be a natural practice for those of us who claim to care for God’s purposes toward all nations. An absence of concern for internationals around us can expose some disconnection and failure to embrace the vision into our entire life.

I [Todd] remember my wife telling me about meeting a university student who sincerely declared her passion for reaching China. She prayed for China. She said she was called to China. She wanted to learn Chinese and it was all that she could do not to quit school right then and go to China.

Finally, my wife asked her, “Well, are there any Chinese students here at your campus?”

The girl looked back at her, kind of confused, then responded, “Well, yeah, but they kind of cluster together, and they all live in one set of dorms.”

My wife continues, “Well, have you ever been to the Chinese dorms?”

“No,” she replies, “It’s all the way on the other side of campus. And they all just stay to themselves!”

Finally, the obvious is gently pointed out, “Amy, what makes you think you are going to cross an ocean and reach out to Chinese people, if you won’t even cross the campus to reach out to them?”

International visitors are close to God’s heart (Lev 19:34; Deut 10:18-20). Over 40 times in the Old Testament alone Israel was commanded to care for the foreigner in their land. Today the strategic importance of welcoming can hardly be overstated. Migrating peoples are scattering all over the world as never before. Over 750,000 international students are studying in America right now. There are people in the USA from almost 200 countries of the world. This could be the largest number of countries and people to be found in one country at any time in history. Welcoming is a worthy point of emphasis for an entire life of ministry. Reaching internationals requires all the patience, diligence, and passion required by long-term missionaries in distant lands. Make it a practice to welcome internationals; God Himself has moved them into your sphere of influence for a reason.

- The Practice of Sending: Supporting Those Who Go

Some people find that Christ has enabled them with gifts and skills to work in supportive ways. We’re not talking about writing a check now and then. Occasional gifts and prayers are fine, but we’re talking about people who wake up in the morning and their ambition is focused on furthering the specific work of others. Those active in the practice of sending strive to complete the task by supporting the work of others. The practice of sending we’re talking about is filled with rich relational connection with missionaries, but serious sending is always vision-driven.

Prayer and giving are obvious ways to support mission enterprise. But when people focus their lives on fulfilling the total global task and apply their experience and gifts in creative ways to seeing particular mission efforts advance, they make surprisingly significant contributions.

A friend just received a one-time gift of $150 for his mission trip. The interesting thing is that it came from a seven-year-old. At $4 a month, plus birthday and Christmas money, that is quite a sacrifice when you are in the second grade! Another business leader is finding creative ways to offer his expertise at a distance. Another helps as a webmaster. Others make strategically timed visits to help with education or just to give missionaries a break.

Being involved in sending is also a practice for every World Christian to embrace. As Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt 6:21). The World Christian allows the compass of God’s heart to direct their resources. The habit of sending involves a decision to connect our heart to God’s heart by investing our treasure in His mission. It is not a matter of the amount given but an overflow of our inner spiritual life and affection for Christ.

I [Claude] know a couple in Los Angeles, Wendy and Scott, who are holding the ropes for others. They both work and serve as purposeful, committed senders. They have decided to live off of his salary and give her entire salary away to missions work. They are making a deep impact on the world, living life on purpose, but they never leave California. Living for God’s purpose in the world is not an issue of just location, but of lordship and lifestyle.

- The Practice of Mobilizing: Empower Others in His Purpose

The practice of mobilizing means working to cast a vision for the world in such a way that other believers can see God’s great story and find ways to be part of it. World Christians who mobilize are active in education, net-working, organizing, and rallying people to the journey for the cause. Some focus on challenging people to serve as missionaries. Others major on building up passion for Christ’s global glory throughout their local church.

Just about anyone who has a vision for God’s purpose in the world has at one time been mobilized. Whether someone asked them to go on a short-term trip, brought them to a missions conference, or invited them to pray for far-off countries, somehow they were introduced to God’s global purpose by someone else with that vision.

It makes strategic sense that many have made mobilizing the primary practice of their lives. Since fulfilling the global task will require many more to be engaged in the cause, those who mobilize find creative ways to enlist as many as they can to find a vital part in the work of world evangelization. Those who mobilize are not motivated by the prospect of recruiting more human resources to be cogs in some great mission machine. Instead, they yearn for others to know the joy of living maximum lives in fulfilling God’s love for all the world. A.T. Pierson once said, “Christians need to be converted to missions, just as the lost do to Christ.” In many ways, missions is the gospel for Christians, revitalizing their lives with passion for Christ and His global purpose.

Everyone naturally mobilizes to something. “Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matt 12:34). That’s really what mobilizing is all about. They allow the things that are on God’s heart to burn so brightly in their hearts that it begins to come out in their speech and overflow onto others.

Essential Disciplines: Turning Grand Intentions into Real Life Decisions

Holding a compass and facing the True North of God’s glory doesn’t really move you anywhere at all. It’s not much better than standing still at a big map at the mall reading “You Are Here.” Aiming at purpose is hugely significant, but to get anywhere we have to make hundreds of choices every day.

Forgotten New Year’s resolutions should be enough to tell us that we don’t have autopilot settings to carry out our intentions, no matter how good our intentions may be. We all tend to drift. No one sets out aiming for smallness. We’ve all let life and the waves of social pressure carry us along. It’s easy to get caught up in the mainstream and find ourselves too weak to fight the current. Passive defaulting to the world’s crosscurrents in the everydayness of life produces small people living for small things.

To fight the drift, we need to keep making key choices over and over again. The word Christians have used to describe regularly setting yourself to make small but vital, lifestyle decision, is the word *disciplines*.

There are many disciplines that Christians have found helpful to keep them growing in effectiveness for centuries. They are habits in the good sense. We think four of these disciplines are crucial to living life on purpose. Find creative ways to grow by practicing these disciplines. If you don't you will either drift away from God's purpose or fail to be part of fulfilling anything significant in God's purpose.

- The Discipline of Community: Walking with Others

Make choices to connect deeply with others who are following Christ. No one gets very far going alone. Because this self-orientation saturates our culture, Americans may be particularly prone to making life all about themselves. The heroes exalted in Western culture accomplish their deeds as solo acts. But the myth just isn't true. Significant achievements are made by teams, families, churches, fellowships, armies, or organizations. Jesus called people to follow him as a band of comrades and friends. Don't trivialize your life by remaining unconnected.

Be part of a growing church. Find ways to build up others in community. To extend yourself in meaningful relationships will require discipline. Don't bail too quickly on your church because it doesn't seem to be "missions minded." Perhaps that is the very reason He has you there. Turn your search for friends around. Instead of looking for who can help make your life work better, look for ways to build up and strengthen others. You are someone else's finest comrade. Be there for them.

Get connected or develop relational links to mission agencies. Plan on being part of something larger than yourself. To really join the journey that God's been unfolding for thousands of years, don't hesitate to develop relationships with people older and younger than yourself. Find a band of like-minded people to keep you accountable. Anything worth accomplishing is much greater than what you can do by yourself.

- The Discipline of Prayer: Coworking with God

World Christians discipline themselves to pray. But they aren't just praying about their problems or refreshing their spiritual life. All of that is important. But World Christians focus their prayer toward God's global purpose. No matter how common it may be to think of prayer as a problem-solving procedure, World Chris-tians pray about things that will bring glory to God and blessing to all the nations. No matter how small or great the concerns, their prayers follow the compass reading that aims straight toward the True North of God's purpose. Yes, they pray about everyday difficulties and hassles. But whenever they can frame their prayers as an appeal for God's kingdom to come or for His name to be great, they keep praying with that end in mind. So prayer becomes an adventure instead of a chore.

Try to be persistent by meeting with others to thank God for what He's doing and to discover different ways to keep asking God to accomplish His purposes. World Christian prayer is not a matter of attending more payer meetings. It's a matter of getting your life set on a prayer mission. By praying your way into the story of what God is doing in the lives of other people or other nations, you find yourself watching for what God has done and will do.

Keep your prayers informed with Operation World, prayer newsletters from missionaries, or just by keeping track with the news. Facts are like fuel, but bits of information won't spontaneously burst into

flaming prayers unless you mix in the truths of Scripture. As you learn to pray using passages from the Bible, you'll learn the art and the heart of using you own words to express God' s heart.

- The Discipline of Simplicity: Living to Give

Unless you say no to the onslaught of multi-billion dollar marketing schemes, you'll likely find yourself compromised by the American dream. Fight the system by practicing simplicity and by strategically giving. It may be harder to live counter-culturally with a simple lifestyle than it is to live cross-culturally in a foreign country.

Live to give. There are loads of good things written about handling money wisely, but for many believers the missing factor is a purpose great enough for them to make ongoing choices to live with less. Live joyously and gratefully. The discipline of simplicity isn't really a matter of playing deprivation games to see how little you can live one. Living life on purpose integrates your life to be content in what God provides and yet ambitious to see what great things God may accomplish.

Learn how to give regularly. Don't fool yourself by occasionally making random donations. Some of the happiest people I know set their hearts on purpose by living on a portion of their income in order to give the rest toward mission.

Learn to give strategically. There may be missionaries you know. But look beyond your immediate circle of friends, investigating ways that you could contribute to great needs as well as great opportunities to advance to Great Commission.

- The Discipline of Learning: Grow What You Know

Keep increasing in the truth of God's word and the facts of God's world. Without a fresh flow of information, you'll find your zeal fades and passion easily becomes misdirected. I [Steve] have a friend who identifies one new country each year. She reads books and scans history from that country. She watches the news, always keeping an eye out for her country of the year. And most of all, she prays for the people of that country. Along the way, she never fails to run into people from each of the countries she's selected. Find you own ways to keep expanding your awareness.

Push your perspective. Keep on refining the paradigm you are using to shape your worldview. If you don't keep moving in this discipline, your passion can dim. It's as if clouds form and cover up the North Star of God's vision. Eventually, it's a distant blur of some fad that you were caught up into for a season, nothing that will weigh heavily on your life for God.

Living For Something Worth Dying For

It's obvious that these disciplines aren't a recipe for merely having more happy days than sad ones. Living with disciplined intentionality for Christ and His purpose brings the joy of knowing you are living a life of significance. It's not a matter of living to your fullest potential. At least do that. The real issue is living for something that really matters.

Visiting graveyards can make you think about what matters. I [Claude] once visited the grave of Leonard Ravenhill, a passionate leader who challenged many to live radical lives for Christ. His gravestone simply reads: "Are the things you are living for worth Christ dying for?" Reading that rattled me for a while. But then a joy started welling up within me because I realized that I could answer "yes." I may be a small piece in the big picture. I may be a bit player in the great drama. But I'm going for it. I'm using all the days and strength God gives me to help fulfill exactly what Christ died

for. Jesus gave His life to see God served by some from every people. It's joy to be living for that same purpose.

Reflection Questions

1. Identify the four practices of a World Christian. Why do the authors encourage World Christians to plan on doing all of them and excelling in one or a few of them?

2. Describe the four disciplines that help World Christians live life on purpose and "fight the drift" of "the world's crosscurrents in the everydayness of life."

Training 8 – Missions at your Doorstep

Please read through these articles before this On-Field Session. The team leader will lead a discussion and/or use the questions provided at the end of each article as the basis for teaching and discussion.

- Mission Comes Home
- Continuing the Work

Mission Comes Home

By: Andrew Jones (used with permission)

I came home from the “mission field” to discover I had never really left it.

My time overseas as a short-term missionary with Operation Mobilization was life-changing and pivotal. It was enough to convince me that I would be a missionary for the rest of my life. Debbie, my wife-to-be, felt the same way. After two years of service on board the ship M.V. Logos in Latin America, we moved to the USA and got married.

I am a New Zealander by birth but had moved with my family to Australia as a teenager. As a new believer in Christ, I was involved in street evangelism and home missions for a number of years, but hearing of the need over-seas caused me to “give up my small ambitions.” I sold my car and bought a one-way ticket to the mission field.

Two years later I was back in the West. Of all places, we found ourselves in Southern California. Ending up on the “home front” was somewhat disorienting. We wanted to be missionaries, out there somewhere, anywhere—but surely not the USA?

More about Obedience than Geography

We began to realize that our call to mission was more about obedience than geography. We set about living a missional life where we were and very soon we found pockets of society that were quite untouched by the good news of Christ. We hosted international students and helped churches start outreach programs in their communities. We shared Christ in bars and on the streets. By the end of the ‘80s, we had started an alternative church service that looked like a coffee shop.

In the early ‘90s, we were invited back to the mission field, this time to another ship. It excited us to think that we would get back to “real” missions, serving overseas again. But our plans changed. Debbie became pregnant with our third child. We were now a family of five, one person too many for our four-berth cabin on the M.V.Doulos. We had to choose another field.

At the time, we were attending a church in East Los Angeles named The Church on Brady. Our pastor, Thom Wolf, was also deeply involved in training missionaries and we were able to learn much that would help us in a new venture. In 1994, we were commissioned as missionaries by this church. We were sent out, not quite overseas —in fact not even out of the state. We were sent just a few hundred miles up the freeway to San Francisco, to start Christian communities in a postmodern subculture that lacked a witness for Christ.

Not Far, but Distant: Mission to Post-modern Subcultures

“Cultural Creatives” was one of the names attributed to this demographic. The creatives we knew included thousands of street kids, young drug addicts, and others in postmodern subcultures. They were influenced by cultures as diverse as goth, punk, rave, hippie, cyberpunk and the newly emerging online geek culture with their chat rooms and new media mindset. And we loved them.

They were not a demographic to us. They were people, and they were our friends. We even moved into their neighborhood in the Haight Ashbury and lived among them. They became our tribe.

Being a missionary in the USA seemed more difficult than being a missionary in Latin America. Most young Americans we talked to considered churches to be completely irrelevant. Some had negative

experiences with Christians that had damaged their perception of Christianity. They thought Christians were angry and weird. Generally, the viewed Christianity with suspicion.

“For many Americans,” says Miriam Adeney, “Christianity is suspect. They think it has contributed to patriarchal sexism, ecological rape of the world’s resources, racism, the fostering of low self-esteem because of an emphasis on people being sinners, and repression of emotion.”

Many churches, denominations, and mission agencies came alongside to help us. The most helpful were the older, urban churches who were determined to stay downtown and continue the church’s vision to be a spiritual center in the city. Through collaboration on mission projects and multi-generational worship events, these churches found new life and vision.

However, though we enjoyed healthy partnerships and symbiotic relationships with the old urban churches, it was obvious that new wineskins were needed for new wine. Although we saw many young people give their lives to Jesus and become dramatically transformed, the cultural leap to the “inherited church” was too great. As my friend Dan Kimball put it, “They liked Jesus but not the church.”

Something Different Emerges

We decided to start new church movements with these new believers rather than trying unsuccessfully to fit them into existing churches. By the late ‘90s, we were connecting with missional entrepreneurs around the world who were thinking and doing the same thing. As we listened to each other’s stories, we realized a movement was underway—a movement not owned by any one group or denomination and not limited to or dominated by the Western world. It was something global and multi-directional.

We saw similar patterns in the kinds of churches being started. Many had started in coffee shops, homes, bars, businesses and other kinds of neutral, communal living areas—what some people call “third spaces.” Or in other words, spaces that were not really our space or theirs but something in be-tween. The new communities were normally led by lay people rather than by paid professionals. They were generally bottom-up structures with shared leadership in a dynamic hierarchy rather than a static top-down hierarchy.

They had started as simple and local efforts, often without a budget, and had “emerged” organically, self-organizing like a colony of ants (Prov 6:6) as they matured in communal relations and in community-focused mission.

Words like “Gen-X”, “missional”, “emerging,” “emergent,” and “postmodern” were soon attached as helpful tags but just as quickly became unhelpful as miscommunication and suspicion abounded and muddied the waters.

Simple

We still don’t have a good name. But whatever term we give them, these new communities that result from mission in the emerging culture are almost always simple structures that may be closer in significant ways to the early Church than the Reformation age churches. They also resemble the simple, indigenous movements borne out of ministry in the margins and among the poor in China, India, Latin America, and Africa, from which there is much to learn. But “simple” does not mean that they are unaffected by complexity. In reality, church life in the urban Western world is a complex experience that involved the interplay of many unrelated communities, conferences, festivals, chats,

blogs, mission projects, prayer groups, local interest groups, arts events, and citywide worship occasions. It is sometimes difficult to determine which combination of these, if any, is the dominant factor in someone's spiritual community. Church life in the West is more modular than singular.

Europe

After traveling around the USA for a few years in a motorhome, our family moved to Europe in 2000. Ironically, the closer we moved to the original heartland of Western Christendom, the more resistance we found to the gospel. In many ways, Europe has been a much greater challenge than America or Australia. The cultural memory of a vibrant and meaningful Christianity is even further removed.

Lesslie Newbigin was correct when he called the UK a "post-Christian" culture. Like me, he had returned from overseas mission to find a new mission awaiting him in his home country. He was challenged by the post-modern, post-Christian society and was also critical of the missiological literature that "largely ignored the culture that is the most widespread, powerful, and persuasive among all contemporary culture," namely that of modern Western culture.

Learning

Although the view from our front window keeps changing, the timeless story of the gospel does not. The scriptures have remained a steadfast compass to keep us on course. There are three primary observations from my time with Thom Wolf that have stayed with me and have borne fruit in our ministry over these last 15 years.

- Obeying Jesus

Jesus' instructions to those he sent out in Luke 10 are still just as relevant for mission today as they ever were. Jesus set his team out to find the person of peace, someone prepared by the Holy Spirit, who would be receptive to God's word. Mission flows outward, not inward. It's not about attracting people to a program or event but rather going out to where they are. It's about what happens in their houses not our houses. Jesus told them to leave their bags behind, and in many ways we also need to enter these new fields with empty bags and receive hospitality from the people we are sent to. The posture is that of a pilgrim rather than a benefactor, and it is this posture that will enable the gospel to move forward in mission to our home countries. Some people call this "post-colonial mission."

- Imitating Paul

Paul's apostolic pattern of ministry is also still relevant as a pattern for mission today.

After encouraging prayer for those in authority, and in many ways echoing Jesus' instructions from Luke 10, Paul says to Timothy, "Of this gospel I was appointed a herald, and an apostle, and a teacher" (1 Tim 2:7). He even repeats it in his second letter, using the same words in the same order (2 Tim 1:11).

This is Paul at the end of his life, passing on a short summary of what he did and how he did it to his apprentice Timothy. After sowing the ground with PRAYER, Paul became a:

a. Herald. A storyteller who explained what God was doing in contextually appropriate ways. Heralds are often artists in our Western world because art carries stories in deeply profound ways. And in our emerging world of new media, blogging, and life-streaming, where stories and facts are aggregated by search engines, a new kind of

herald is emerging who understands social media and the flow of information. We need to tell stories.

b. Apostle. Paul was an entrepreneur who helped initiate new structures to preserve and export the life and witness of the communities being birthed. Our new world is bursting with opportunities for the gospel and new ways forward are continually being forged. What is needed today, argues mission strategist Alan Hirsch, is "apostolic genius."

c. Teacher. Paul was someone who utilized creative ways of passing on his expertise and experience so that the next generation could stand on his shoulders and pass on the Church's teaching. We also need to teach faithful people so that they can teach others.

This pattern has proven itself many times. It is a rhythm of ministry that links us back to the early Church. Prayer, Herald, Apostle, Teacher. I sometimes call it PHAT, which usually gets a snicker from the young people. Or sometimes I put it differently in saying that our role is to make friends, tell stories, throw parties, and give gifts.

- Holistic Mission

Thom Wolf's prediction that "mission in the 21st century will happen primarily on the platform of business" is proving itself relevant for mission today, and not just overseas.

Missions and business have often been intertwined. This was true of the early Church and the apostle Paul who was a tentmaker. Enterprise was also a strong component of the monastic movements that brought the good news around the world. Early Protestant mission movements like the Moravians, and innovators such as William Carey also stared micro-businesses along-side Christian ministry. Even Henry Venn of the Church Mission Society in the 1850s suggested the use of cooperatively run micro-businesses coupled with fair trade, so that the mission might be sustainable and not dependent on foreign resources. It should not be surprising that business is also becoming a major platform for mission in the Western world. There is much talk of the "Fourth Sector" or "For-Benefit Businesses" and sustainable social enterprises that were once only commonplace in overseas mission.

Recently we were part of launching a co-operatively run studio and store for a dozen micro-businesses. Quite suddenly, we have been thrown into the heart and life of this town. We are not a mission station in the traditional sense of the word, but we are a center for spirituality, business, media, and hospitality. Neither are we a monastery, but I wonder what those Celtic monks who live and worked and prayed on this very land over a thou-and years ago would do if they were here today. I would like to think it would be something quite similar.

Still Learning

We are still learning. We are still making mistakes. The world is changing faster than ever before. We are still exploring what an appropriate missiology of Western cultures looks like. But if David Bosch is correct, and I suspect he is, missiology will probably "include an ecological dimension, it must be counter-cultural (though not escapist), it will have to be ecumenical, contextual, it will be primarily a ministry of the laity, and our witness will only be credible if it flows from a local, worshipping community, and the extent to which our communities will facilitate a discourse in which the engagement of people with their culture is encouraged."

Continuing the Work

Wayne Stapleton, NAB VP of Cros Cultural Engagement and Emerging Leader Engagement; wstapleton@nabconf.org

As we prepare to enter into a foreign country on a short-term mission trip, we train with excitement to enter into a different cultural context. We go with humility because we are going to be guests in a different culture. We prepare to be "on mission" for God in a different environment. The re-entry article in the Gateway packet describes three ways we might cope as we re-enter our home culture after a short-term mission trip: Isolate (be alienated), Rebel (be angry), or Imitate (be re-socialized). But it also highlights a fourth option: be proactive. Certainly, during a period of de-stabilization due to the tremendous differences we have experienced in a foreign culture, when we return home we need time to adjust, time to get back into our typical rhythms. But when we do, in what ways can the things we experienced really help us grow? We grow when we proactively see others the way Jesus sees them.

We are no less on mission when we land back home. Even though we re-enter our host culture when we come home, the way we see others should not really change from how we saw others on the trip. We have many opportunities to interact cross-culturally at home: in our neighborhoods, on our jobs, at our local stores and restaurants. Cross-cultural mission trips are great opportunities to experience other cultures, and they are most impactful not only when they change us as guests in other cultures, but also in our disposition toward guests in our home culture.

Work that happens on foreign soil is not meant to stay there. It is meant to continue at home. The mission work that happened on foreign soil happened in us. How can we continue the work? God can use our experiences abroad on his mission to prepare us for missional assignments in our own communities. While we all believe this, we also must admit that unless we are open to his movement, we can miss opportunities.

I have a friend who went on a short-term evangelism mission trip in Colombia. She had a great experience. It was so impactful; she was made more aware of evangelism opportunities when she came back home. She began to ask God who he was leading her to share with. She wanted to continue the work.

On a trip to a public library for homework, she asked God to make her sensitive to who he wanted her to share with. When she entered the library, she saw a young man by himself and wondered if he might be someone God wanted her to speak to. He saw her coffee, and he asked about it. She felt, "This must be the guy!" She struck up a conversation with him, and they ended up having a two-hour conversation about Jesus. None of her theology homework was done, but she did get some Kingdom work accomplished.

Mission trips can change us. They *should* change us. How much do we let them change us?

God expected the Israelites to treat foreigners differently because of their own experiences as foreigners:

> For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. (Deuteronomy 10:17–19 NIV).

God commanded love for the foreigner, love that comes from the God who loves the foreigner. He prefaces his command with statements about his character. It is significant that he is described as

showing no partiality just before he commands his people to do the same. God expects his people to reflect his character to those they encounter. What is God's character to those in our neighborhoods who are culturally different?

On short-term mission trips, we go to other cultures as guests; we learn what it is like to be a guest in another culture. Might our openness to other cultures when we are hosts change due to our experiences as guests in other cultures?

If you attend a mission trip in Japan, should your experience impact how you see Asians back at home? If you attend a mission trip in Cameroon, should your experience impact how you see Africans back at home?

What if the kinds of changes God wants in you on the short-term mission trip are not just about your attitude toward the people you were visiting overseas? What if God wants the work begun in you overseas to continue in you at home?

Here are six actions that can help us continue the work at home:

1. Train Your Eyes – See different cultures as inherently valuable and meaningful because God loves the people who make up those cultures. We often only see what we are looking for. Invite God to help you see the cultural "other" with his eyes. Pray to empathize with their cultural experiences in light of your experiences as the cultural "other."

2. Prepare Your Heart – Be open to getting to know people who are culturally different. Be honest with yourself and God. Pray about any fear or prejudice you might harbor toward the cultural "other" in your community. Invite God to make you someone who has a growing tolerance, leading to love, for the culturally different in your community. Remember how you would have wanted to be received when you were in a different culture. Remember that all people bear the image of God.

4. Guard Your Mouth – Speak less so you can experience them and their stories as valued. When you communicate with someone culturally different, give them a chance to share and be open to listening well. Be patient if English is challenging for them. Grow in your willingness to give an audience to people who are different without feeling the need to correct or oppose what you hear. Pray about when to speak and what to say. See yourself as God's representative specifically in that sphere. Say what is valuable and helpful, when it is time.

5. Tend to Your Time – Provide space for real relationship. Prayerfully ask God to show you how you can develop margin in your life so you can be open to making relational space for others. Be open to new friends who are different and who see things differently than you do. Even be open to changing your perspective on some things in light of your new friendships.

6. Quiet Your Spirit – Learn to discern how the Holy Spirit is guiding your next steps. Actively work on growing in your ability to sense when the Holy Spirit is moving and what he is asking you to do in response. Seek quiet time where you can pray for wisdom. Even in social contexts, quietly pray for God's guidance.

7. Order Your Steps – Do what you sense the Spirit tells you to do. When you get clarity from the Spirit about a course of action, do not hesitate to be obedient. Let yourself learn by doing and give yourself grace if you make a mistake. "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God" (Romans 8:14 NIV).

Reflection Questions

1. Of the six actions for continuing this work at home, which two resonate with you most and why?
2. What people group in your home context have you overlooked (or need to focus more acutely on) as you head home from this mission experience?

Training 9 – Debrief from your Host

A Message from Your Host's Heart: Ask your Host Pastor/Leader/Missionary to share with your team during one of your On-Field sessions.

Training 10 – Debriefing your Team

Team Members please read through all of the following articles before this Final On-Field Session known as the debrief session.

NOTE: The Debrief Session is outlined in the Re-entry/Follow-Through Stage

- Saying Good-bye
- What is Reentry?
- Make the Most of Mission
- I'm Home
- Integrating Your Experience

Saying Good-bye

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1. Do not be afraid to show emotion.—More than likely the nationals have fewer inhibitions than you, so learn from them! Hugs and words of appreciation are expressions you won't regret.
2. Treasure the moment—So often we live our lives for the future and fail to appreciate the present moment. This is a good moment, one that cannot be duplicated. Value what is happening.
3. Get the addresses of those you intend to write—Don't make commitments to everyone. Be realistic. That will help you have integrity at home and abroad.
4. Give a small gift as a token of your friendship—The giving of gifts should not be elaborate because that may introduce awkwardness into the friendship. Choose something personal that will remind the person of you.
5. Talk about your feelings with the team after you have departed—This will create an environment where others may feel it's okay to share their grief and joy.
6. Don't expect others to handle their good-byes as you do—We all respond differently to emotionally charged events. Be accepting of other's inhibitions or tears.
7. Get plenty of photos and video footage—You (and perhaps only you) will value this once you are home. You may also want to send pictures to the host community once you're home. (Be sure pictures and video are appropriate in the host community.)
8. Agree to pray for one another—This is the most important expression of love you may be able to share with your newfound friends. Let them know they will be in your prayers (but only if you really intend to pray!)
9. Avoid making financial commitments during the good-bye—You may confuse a very valuable time introducing finances into your farewells. Furthermore, you might make a commitment you are unable to keep once at home. Wait and think through your financial decisions.

What is Reentry?

Used with permission of Lisa Espineli Chinn, Intervarsity, Madison, WI, and Culture Link

Reentry is similar to culture shock. Sometimes it is called reverse culture shock. In reentry, you may feel "out of balance". You're not the same as when you left so there are some adjustments. It is normal for people to go through some type of reentry after an overseas experience.

Options for Coping with Reentry Stress

There are different ways of coping with reentry adjustments which you may experience after returning from a short-term missions trip. Three options of coping are explained below. You may find yourself coping one way at one time, or you may find yourself going through them all before you feel adjusted.

Initial Return: Fun (Honeymoon)

Most people feel some excitement upon returning. It's exciting to see friends, family, McDonald's, etc. You have much to tell and say. But once you are back home, you may find yourself struggling. The following are some options you may experience in reentry adjustments.

Option 1: Isolate (Be alienated)

After awhile, you may begin to feel like a "fish out of water". You may find yourself withdrawing from others—reading books, writing letters, not socializing with friends or family. You may find yourself feeling a strong guilt over your home culture's affluence and materialism. You may be unaware of other alternatives to impact your home culture or church. *Suggestion*: You need someone who has been through reentry stress to help you in understanding the transition process and exploring options. Contact your team leader or church leaders.

Option 2: Rebel (Be angry)

You may find that you are angry at your culture, your friends, your family, your church. No one understands you. Everyone is different from before and even their lifestyle or values are bad. You may find yourself mocking them. They appear foolish in what they do and what they value. *Suggestion*: You need to seek support from someone who has been through reentry stress and can help you understand how to soften your spirit and heart. Again, your church or team leader are good options. A former missionary would understand and be very helpful.

Option 3: Imitate (Be re-socialized)

This is where you go back to life as it always has been and ignore the changes and struggles you are going through. You resume life as if nothing happened. You may be afraid of the repercussion of being different or of standing on your own convictions. *Suggestion*: You need to be with compassionate and missions-minded people who can assist you in sorting out the short-term experience. As previously suggested, seek out your team leader or church!

The Final Option: (Be proactive)

This is the optimal way of coping and ultimately the final option for your reentry. You relate back with the home culture in a way that does not compromise or negate your new values or lessons learned from the short-term experience. You continue to learn while creating a unique lifestyle, incorporating

the old and new. *Suggestion*: Seek like-minded people to foster your integration. Then go and share your secrets with those who are still struggling in the other three options.

Make the Most of Mission

By Lisa Espenelli Chinn (used with permission)

Every transition if life has its difficulties and benefits. Returning home from mission service is not an exception. Over the years, God has used the short-term mission experience to alter people's "God view" and worldview. Participants' choices, tastes, lifestyle, and careers have been modified as well. Coming home from such a life-changing experience requires more than the usual

"Welcome Back". Every short-term participant needs to process the experience and prepare for his or her own reentry. Every sending group or church needs to assist returnees with debriefing, reentry adjustment, and applications of the mission experience. Why?

- Without appropriate reentry preparation and processing, the short-term mission experience is short-circuited and vulnerable to unnecessary detraction.

A reentry program should address the mixed feelings of elations, confusion, and frustration, as well as the issues of change, grief, closure, reverse culture shock, and expectations. Like the entry segment, the reentry side should include physical, emotional, spiritual, social, mental, cultural, and even financial preparation.

Reentry shock symptoms are common among returnees who expect to experience life the way it used to be. While home may have remained unchanged over the weeks or months that one is gone, the returning short-term participant may have undergone a major realignment of perspectives, loyalties, and priorities. When this happens, a stressful reentry may result.

Like many of life's stresses, however, reentry transition can yield good results. It's an opportunity for faith to grow and for self-discovery, values clarification, and life-changing decisions. Reentry stress also brings one to need and appreciate God's supportive church.

Without adequate reentry preparation, it's easy for the short-term experience to fizzle out with minimal impact on the returnee and the sending church or agency. Reentry allows the returnee to evaluate and utilize what he or she learned in another culture.

The responsibilities of sending churches and organizations do not end when the missionaries return home. The trip may be over, but a new journey begins. Unassisted, the returned traveler may find charting a new course difficult.

A reentry program helps put a healthy closure to the foreign experience. The temptation in busy lives is to keep moving. The returning short-term participant arrives home and shortly reports to work or finds a job or attends school. Because life moves so fast, a period for rest, recuperation, and reflection should be built into the returnee's schedule.

Jesus prepared His short-term mission team in what they would do, say, expect, and how they should behave (Luke 10:1-24). Interestingly, Jesus gave them a key reentry principle. As they reported their triumphs, Jesus affirmed their report but said, "However do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (v. 20). He was not downplaying the victories; He was putting them into perspective. The euphoria of short-term mission victories is short-lived, but the

disciples' identity was in Christ (their names written in heaven) - and that's permanent. When one's security is attached to spiritual victories and not in Christ, it will be easy to grow depressed and defeated when victory is not in sight.

Reentry programs, therefore, help complete the cross-cultural trip by providing adequate closure and encouragement to incorporate the experience into the future.

2. We owe good reentry preparation to participants.

It doesn't seem ethical or loving to expose people to weeks and months of living and working in a different and sometimes harsh environment and not have help available to process the experience.

Missionary care goes beyond the entry preparation. Complete missionary care embraces returnees with arms of understanding and compassion. Many returning short-term mission participants experienced extraordinary kindness and hospitality. They enjoyed being part of a team; they bonded with the nationals and witnessed close-up God's mighty works. The same people return to settings they now perceive as cold, comfortable, and complacent. The reverse culture shock may be too intense for them to handle alone. Adequate foreknowledge and preparation can minimize reentry stress and reduce the pain.

Not every short-term participant, however, returns home with problems or issues to wrestle with. But even those not experiencing reentry stress need help integrating and applying their mission experience.

Some of the difficulties returning short-term people have do not surface as soon as they return. Problems with alienation, resentment, or even depression show up months into their return. Feelings of spiritual superiority and impatience, however, may manifest early on. Good reentry preparation helps returnees anticipate such emotions and responses and gives ways to deal with these reactions.

In our attempt to reach the world, let's not overlook the reentry needs of those whose world has expanded, whose hearts have been broken and burdened, whose minds have been instructed, and whose spirits have been set on fire.

Common Reentry Responses

People respond differently to changes in life. Anticipating some common responses will help returning missionaries recognize them and prepare for resettling back home. Common reentry coping responses include isolation, irritation, and integration.

ISOLATION is a natural response to a new or threatening situation. Returnees may return home to an environment that negates some of the feelings and involvements that were reinforced and experienced on the mission trip (prayer, honest sharing, community life, service to others). Inevitably, the returnee may…

- Pull away from stressful situations by being alone or with like-minded people (former short-term mission participants).
- Continue to identify with the home culture but for the most part have negative attitudes and reactions to it.
- Express strong judgment toward the values and lifestyle of the home culture (church, family, friends, national, and foreign policies)

- Feel guilt or anger over the home culture's materialism and affluence.
- Daydream about the short-term experience; hold on to memories.
- Need someone who has been through reentry stress to help understand the transition process.

There is a place for appropriate isolation without loss of opportunities to grow, relate, and give to the home culture. Leaders should be alert, however, to excessive brooding, self-preoccupation, and alienation from others.

IMITATION may be the easiest response to a new situation. When responding in the imitation mode, returnees may…

- "Go native" by coping the ways of the nationals to gain quick rapport. For the returnees, it means quickly reverting to old ways of doing things at home.
- Resume life as if nothing happened.
- Struggle to translate the impact of the short-term experience to the rest of life.
- Need acceptance by the home culture.
- Fear the repercussions of being different or standing on their convictions.
- Need to be with compassionate and mission-minded people who can assist in sorting out the short-term experience.

There is a considerable amount of imitation necessary to fit in, but it should be done without the loss of personal values or newly acquired convictions.

INTEGRATION as a response to a new culture or to the home culture allows for the balanced blending of the present circumstances with past experiences. It is the ability to sort out what needs to be retained from the mission experience and what needs to be released. It calls for having one foot in a new world set on fire by the mission experience and the other foot in a different, sometimes apathetic old world of family, friends, and colleagues. Integration is facilitated when returning short-term participants….

- Accept the reality of transitioning between two cultures.
- Relate with the home culture in a way that does not compromise or negate new per-sonal values.
- Recognize that internal changes have occurred through the short-term experience.
- Continue to learn, while creating a new lifestyle that incorporates things learned while away from home.
- Courageously and joyously live out newly acquired values and practices.

There is a place for healthy interaction with the home culture without losing personal identity or newly embraced values.

Returning short-term mission participants may find themselves relating to life back home by moving from one response to another. Some participants may isolate themselves longer, others may imitate and slide back to old ways quicker, or integrate over a period of time.

They'll need all three approaches. To maintain some amount of equilibrium and sanity, appropriate isolation is necessary. To learn a new culture or relearn one's home culture, a good dose of imitation is necessary. To be effective in the new culture or back home, integration is indispensable.

An Ending, A Beginning

Debriefing triggers the reentry process. Although it suggests an end, it also ushers in a new beginning:

- An end of a trip, but the beginning of another journey.
- An end to a foreign experience, but the beginning of feeling foreign back home.
- And end to being special, but the beginning of being ordinary with a special heart for God and for people.
- An end to simple living, but the beginning of a different lifestyle.
- An end to crowded housing, but the beginning of a bigger worldview.

The short-term mission trip may have ended, but a new life has just begun.

I'm Home! Creative Communication Techniques to Help You Communicate Your Short-Term Experience

(Used with permission of Culture Link

Good-byes are fresh. Tears from telling your new friends you hope to see them again are tucked behind your eyes. The excitement of memories, the pictures of experiences, and the new lessons you have learned are racing through your mind. There is much to tell and now you're home. What do you share? How do you communicate what you've been through?

We each desire to express our missions experience with others. We want people to grasp what we are communicating. The disappointment of discovering that not all people are interested in our venture is disheartening for many returning laborers. With this combination of desire and potential disappointment, it is important for short-termers to know how to communicate their experience.

This article addresses the role sharing your story has for you and others. It discusses why it is important to process what you are going to share and gives creative ways in which to communicate to individuals and groups.

Why It Is Important to Share Your Experience

To tell about a short-term experience is beneficial for both the one sharing and the listener. For the short-term missionary this exercise solidifies the lessons learned, the vision that has been built, and aids them in processing the pleasant as well as the difficult parts of their trip. For the listener it is often God's tool for challenging them to be involved in the Great Commission.

As a short-term missionary you assume the role of a vision-builder when you share your experience. Each lesson you learned potentially becomes a challenging lesson for your listener. Each time you speak of God's provisions, it can be used to bring the listener into a closer relationship with God. You become a teacher of the joys of missions and a challenger for world evangelization when you express the pleasures and hurts of your experience. It is important to take the time to process which aspects of your trip you want to share and how.

As you review the creative communication techniques below, keep in mind the different audiences to which they can be applied. These techniques are designed to facilitate your spiritual growth and to be used to challenge others.

Creative Techniques for Sharing Your Story

Method #1—"Journal Segmenting"

The process of sharing your story begins before your arrival home. The preparation time and the mission are often bursting with wonderful nuggets of God's faithfulness. A means of capturing those moments is through journaling. When you journal, remember that you may want to share these experiences with others. Journal more than events. Record your impressions, thoughts, and feelings. This process helps you see God working in your life and will allow you to communicate the mission with clarity and depth.

Journal segmenting is using parts of your written memories to communicate concise aspects of the mission. There are numerous ways to use journal segmenting to tell your story. One short-termer took paragraphs from his first impressions of the country, his ministry experience, and his feelings during

his departure and place them in a letter. He used this as his follow-up letter to all his prayer and financial supporters. Another stood before his congregation reading a series of entries laced strategically together. This kept him from stumbling and kept his testimony concise.

Another creative means for using your journal is discussions with a leader or pastor. When the “how was your trip” question comes, it becomes easy to say, “I’d like to read one entry that captures the trip for me.” This allows you to clearly communicate a specific part of your mission, shows you are respectful of the leader’s time, and you can leave a copy of the entry for them to read again. Using a journal segment in this way can often leave the listener wanting more.

Method #2—”Story Telling”

Not all personality types enjoy journaling, however, everyone, whether shy or outgoing enjoys telling a story. Story telling is the process of identifying one aspect of a mission and determining how to communicate it with clarity. It can be used with an individual or an audience.

Part of our reentry training is for each person to share one specific story about the trip with the team prior to coming home. This exercise causes them to identify a specific experience and practice relating it. This process prevents dumping information on the listener once the missionary is home.

Effective story telling is similar to effective journaling. It is important to share the facts of the event as well as your personal impressions, feelings, and thoughts. When choosing a specific story, think of special people, like a faithful national worker who inspired you to greater service. Think of a unique event. In Bulgaria I watched a team pray for God to restore the power which had failed in the middle of an evangelistic outreach. He did so immediately and the life of that meeting is impressed in my memory forever. Think of an impacting scene like the natural beauty of the country or the stark reality of the slums in a poverty-stricken area. As you think of these things, identify one or two and build a story around them.

No matter what your specific story is, think through it before you share it so that the effectiveness of it will be multiplied. Remember to keep it concise.

Using Creative Communication Techniques

The above techniques may seem basic yet, few returning missionaries implement them. If these simple tools are used, the interest in missions would increase among pastors and lay people because they would hear specific stories about God’s faithfulness and how the short-term missions experience is used to change lives.

Remember the key to using these techniques is to be specific and concise, always leaving your listener wanting more. Many church leaders don’t meet with returning missionaries because they take too much of their time. Surprise your pastor by coming in with one specific story and lesson learned. Be pre-pared with a journal entry or story and leave him wanting more.

God is in the disciple-making business. Your short-term experience is one of His tools for discipling you. You sharing your experience through your journal and stories is one of His tools for discipling others. Take the time to prepare that and how you are going to communicate.

Brainstorm – How Can you Creatively Communicate Your Story?

#1—Journal Segmenting—from your mission journal, write down an example that would best answer the question, “How was your trip?”

#2—Story—from your mission experiences, write down the important details of an event that would make a good story.

Activity: Sharing Your Experience

As you return home, you will be very excited to share about your experiences. Unfortunately, people will have varied responses to what you desire to share. It's best to practice a few different versions of your experience so you can share in an appropriate way. Use the Journal Segmenting(#1) and Story(#2) examples you came up with on the previous page.

Break up in groups of 2 and time each other as you practice sharing the 30 second and the 2 minute sound byte.

30 Second Sound Byte: Summarize your trip for those who will give you just a moment to answer their question "How was your trip?" using your "Journal Segment".

2 Minute Sound Byte: Use the story you came up with that illustrates what you learned on your mission and practice with your partner telling the story in 2 minutes.

10 Minute Sound Byte: As you think of heading home, summarize how you might share about your experience most effectively in the context of a special dinner or other event you may be invited to.

Integrating Your Experience

used with permission of The Global Outreach Ministries of Grace Church, Racine, WI. Source: Adapted from "Vacations with a Purpose" by Chris Eaton and Kim Hunt

Unwrapping the Gift of Your Short-Term Experience

Understanding our world and ourselves requires great effort! The writers of the gospels tell us that whenever Jesus Christ encountered people in need He was deeply moved by what He saw. During your global project, there were probably a number of things that 'moved you' deeply. Let's explore what some of those experiences were….

The People

1. What did you see in the people that you did not expect to see?
2. Which of their needs are most vivid in your memory?
3. What aspects of their lives impressed you the most?

The Country

1. What things did you see in the country that were different from your expectations?
2. Is there any picture that quickly comes to mind? (Briefly describe it and the reasons it has stayed with you)

What I Learned

List one thing that you learned about each of the following:

1. The people:
2. The country:
3. The church:
4. The people on your team:
5. God:
6. Yourself:

Your Response:

1. What changes will you make in your life as a result of what you have seen, learned, and felt on this project?
2. How do you plan to integrate this mission into your life in practical ways? (Regular prayer for a people group, financial giving to missions, longer missionary service, sending care packages to missionaries, etc.)
3. What is God calling you to do now with the gift He has given you in this project?

Integrating Growth Steps

As you have participated in this global project, God has been speaking to you! God is at work. It is our challenge to listen carefully and take step s toward Him as He shows us areas in which we can become freer and more like Christ. Use the chart below to begin this process of mapping out at least 2 growth steps that God is asking you to take. As you think about your life back home, what has God shown you that needs to change? Use the chart to help identify 2 areas.

Roadblocks	Being in Community	Construction Zone	Vision	Symptoms/ Patterns	Need/Core Issue	Changes/ Action Steps
What are the main issues for me? Temptations, addictions, personal struggles, obstacles to living a spirit-filled life.	*How could others help? Small group, accountability partner, support person.*	*Things to do on my own. Prayer support, scripture memory, counseling, books, classes, fasting, conferences, magazines.*	*Who do you want to be in five years? What will that person look like? Where are you headed?*	*What sets this off in me? Triggers? What does the behavior look like? Negative consequences?*	*What need are you trying to meet? Core issue underneath?*	*What steps of growth have you already taken? What additional changes or action steps do you plan to take?*

With which spiritual disciplines will I train to specifically combat this area in my life? (Circle at least one)

Silence	Celebration	Secret Acts of Service	Other
Solitude	Fasting	Scripture Meditation	
Giving	Prayer	Confession	

Roadblocks	Being in Community	Construction Zone	Vision	Symptoms/ Patterns	Need/Core Issue	Changes/ Action Steps
What are the main issues for me? Temptations, addictions, personal struggles, obstacles to living a spirit-filled life.	*How could others help? Small group, accountability partner, support person.*	*Things to do on my own. Prayer support, scripture memory, counseling, books, classes, fasting, conferences, magazines.*	*Who do you want to be in five years? What will that person look like? Where are you headed?*	*What sets this off in me? Triggers? What does the behavior look like? Negative consequences?*	*What need are you trying to meet? Core issue underneath?*	*What steps of growth have you already taken? What additional changes or action steps do you plan to take?*

With which spiritual disciplines will I train to specifically combat this area in my life? (Circle at least one)

Silence	Celebration	Secret Acts of Service	Other
Solitude	Fasting	Scripture Meditation	
Giving	Prayer	Confession	

IMPORTANT!!!

Now tear out/print these “Integrating Your Experience” and “Integrating Growth Steps” sheets from your manual, fold them in half and put them in your Bible or journal. Take a look at them a few months from now and see what God has done and is doing in your life.

Appendix J: Spiritual Growth

- Bible Study
- Journal
- Prayer

Bible Study

1. What are the facts?
    - Who is the author? Who was the original audience?
    - What's going on in the story?
    - Who are the people, places, events, or significant happenings in the story?
    - What are the significant words, ideas, moods, etc. in the story?
    - Is the passage primarily descriptive or proscriptive?
2. What do the facts mean?
    - What do you think is the motive, reason, or purpose of the person in writing this, or what is the person in the story doing this?
    - What do you think/feel is the big idea, or the meaning behind this action, argument, teaching, or event?
3. What are you going to do about it? What is God saying to you in this story?
    - How does this story help you understand God and His story better/ Does it challenge you and your values?
    - How would you compare yourself and your values to those in the story?
    - What can you do with this? How does it challenge you to change or live differently? Now? Next year?

Bible Study Page

Date:

Bible Verses:

1. What are the facts?

2. What do the facts mean?

3. What are you going to do about it? What is God saying to you in this story?

Journal Prompts

- Recall the significant things, thoughts, and feelings that shaped your day.
- Think about and write about what happened to you and through you.
- What challenged you?
- What impacted your thinking?
- What made you think about your values or character?
- Did you serve God faithfully today by humbly serving His people?
- In what ways were you stretched out of your comfort zone?
- What surprised you most today?
- What surprised you about the culture?
- What strengths did I see in my teammates today? Have I told them?
- What did I learn from one of our hosts today?
- What is God impressing on me today?
- How did I contribute today? How did I use my gifts?
- Have I seen oppression here? Is it physical, spiritual, etc.? Has it affected me?
- What was a struggle I faced with someone today? What should I do about it?
- How do I feel about being part of God's story for this time and place in these people's lives?
- What some things about my life at home that I want to think about and maybe change because of what I am learning here?

Journal Page

Date:

My thoughts/feelings/things God is teaching me:

Prayer Prompts

Worship—I Praise You For Being…

- Think about who God is and what He is like.
- How can you give Him honor and praise?

Confess—I am sorry for…

- Be still and quiet.
- Listen for what God may be saying to your heart.
- Specifically say and list the things that you are sorry for, the things that you know in your heart have caused you to not listen to God or that you have chosen to do and know you shouldn't have.

Gratitude—"Thanks! God" for…

- Whatever is on your heart or in your mind that you are thankful for—tell God.
- Thank God for any way that He has blessed you and those around you.

Ask—I pray for…

- Write out your prayer requests—the things you want to ask God for and about.
- What is heavy on your heart?
- What concerns do you have?
- Who are people in your life that need God to do something on their behalf?

Action—Today I need to do the following with:

God:

My Family:

My Character:

My Life:

How will you seek to change your attitudes, response, actions, and thoughts in the above 4 areas?

Prayer Journal

Worship—I Praise You For Being…

Confess—I am sorry for…

Gratitude—"Thanks! God" for…

Ask—I pray for…

Action—Today I need to do the following with:

God:

My Family:

My Character:

My Life:

Appendix L: Team Evaluations

The next pages are simple evaluation forms. It is best to have participants complete the evaluations in debriefing time, as otherwise it may prove difficult to make sure they're completed. If you'd like the Word version or Google Form versions of the forms so you may add/edit as you see fit, please request from NAB Gateway by emailing kthao@nabconf.org or serve@nabconf.org. You may then tailor your copies to your trip. Note: If using the Google forms, you will want to have the link handy to send out in a group message or create a QR code image so everyone on the team can quickly/easily access the online forms.

- Team Leader Evaluation
    - For team members to complete during debrief session
- Assistant Leader Evaluation
    - For team members to complete during debrief session
- Team Member Evaluation
    - For team leader(s) to complete for each team member upon return from the field

Team Leader Evaluation

Leader Name:

Destination:

Dates:

This leader's strengths were:

This leader's weaknesses were:

I appreciated this leader because:

I feel that an area this leader needs to improve is:

I would be willing to serve with this leader on another team: Yes or No

Signature: _____

Assistant Leader Evaluation

Leader Name:

Destination:

Dates:

This leader's strengths were:

This leader's weaknesses were:

I appreciated this leader because:

I feel that an area this leader needs to improve is:

I would be willing to serve with this leader on another team: Yes or No

Signature: _____

Team Member Evaluation

Team Member Name:

Destination:

Dates:

This member's strengths were:

This member's weaknesses were:

I saw these gifts and abilities in this member:

This team member should consider career mission or ministry work in the future:

Yes

Yes, but first she/she should:

(Leader: If you answered yes, please let the Gateway Teams office know of this team member)

Other comments:

Signature: _____

Appendix M: Country Specific

Here are all the currently available Appendix Ms. Host Receivers may have recommendations, too. Additionally, there are online resources to utilize. As you consider resources be mindful of the author and publication dates.

Also available are Language Booklets. Apps like Google translate offer a quick and easy way to translate when needed. However, a printed copy of the booklet can prove to be an easy and useful way of communicating on a typical short term mission trip.

Appendix N: Further Involvement in Missions

- How to be Involved
- Should I go for Life
- Where to from Here
- Continuing the Work
- International Students: A Historic Opportunity to Reach the Nations
- The Sounds of Love and Global Transformation
- NAB Resources

How to be Involved

(Used with permission of Culture Link)

Each church community has different ways for you to continue to be involved in cross-cultural ministry opportunities. You will have to specify the involvement opportunities for your church and the area where you live. Here are some possibilities for further involvement:

Follow-up with Supporters

This is not an option! Each team member continues to be involved in missions when they write a report letter to their senders. You may want to host a report dinner. Remember, you will expand the vision of your senders by reporting to them with at least a letter.

International Community

Perhaps your church has an international ministry or needs to start one. Many returning short - termers become the best international ministry workers. Contact campus workers and see if there is a place for you to be involved with international students.

Giving

If your church has a missions fund, begin giving to it on an ongoing basis. You may want to consider supporting a national worker or missionary. Contact the mission agency for details.

Becoming a Missionary

Talk to your sending agency or others involved in full-time mission work. Find out how people make the steps to becoming a full-time missionary.

Caring for Missionaries

Do a project to support the workers in the culture you left. There was a team who financed Bible extension courses for two Macedonians for two years.

Seek Counsel

Over time, it is important for you to arrange a lunch with your missions pastor, pastor and/or Gateway Team personnel. Their input will keep you on track for what God wants to do in your life.

Should I Go For Life?

Adapted with permission of YWAM Publishing, Seattle, WA, 1992)

To help you evaluate whether or not you are motivated and ready to become a career missionary, complete each of the following sentences. Then discuss your answers with a mentor or pastor.

NOTE for STM team leaders: Guide your team members through each question during your final trip debrief

1. I am _____ going for life.
    - **a.** Open to the idea of
    - **b.** Feeling guilty about not
    - **c.** Avoiding the issue of
    - **d.** Already committed to
    - **e.** Already making specific plans about
2. The best model for me in becoming a lifetime missionary is probably
    - **a.** My grandparents
    - **b.** The missionary that I met during my short-term
    - **c.** No one I know. I don't have any good models
    - **d.** Other:
3. My life plans are mostly shaped by
    - **a.** A desire for nice things and security
    - **b.** A desire to glorify God
    - **c.** My college major or career goals
    - **d.** The short-term that I just was on
    - **e.** The unfinished task of world evangelization
4. My inventory of life goals includes
    - **a.** People coming to Christ through me
    - **b.** Things like a good education, position and home
    - **c.** Becoming famous

d. Raising a great family

e. Leaving a mark on the world

f. Other: _____

5. I'm undecided about being in career missions because

a. I had a bad time overseas

b. God has not yet called me to do so

c. I don't know how

d. I know that I'm not qualified

e. I'd like to try some other things in life

6. The thing that might stop me from becoming a missionary is

a. Parents or other family members

b. I hate raising support

c. I don't want to go as a single person

d. I'm too far in debt to go soon

e. I have poor health

f. Other:_____

7. When I say God is leading me to be or not be a missionary, I mean that

a. He has spoken directly to me

b. I'm hearing His voice through others

8. If God let me do anything that I wanted for His sake, I would

a. Work in my home church

b. Start my own ministry

c. Be a missionary for the rest of my life

d. Work in a secular field, reaching others for Christ

9. On the mission field, I could see myself

a. Doing evangelism

b. Discipling young Christians

c. Teaching Bible school

d. Serving in the medical profession

e. Serving in a regular job and reaching others

f. Teaching through Bible correspondence courses

g. Doing community development

h. Other: _____

10. If I really intended to go overseas, right now I should

a. Start paying off my school debt

b. Get some biblical training

c. Reach out to those already around me

d. Begin explaining my goals to my parents

e. Get more involved in my local church

Where to From Here?

Used with permission of Culture Link

Explore

Continue developing your World Missions Vision by reading missionary biographies, taking the Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course (Contact the Perspectives USA in Pasadena, CA), praying for the world, and seeking God.

Develop

Make your relationship with the Lord a priority. Seek out ways to be discipled. Small groups are very effective for developing a missions worldview. Find like-minded people and begin praying with them.

Church Involvement

Let the leadership of the church know what you are thinking. If you do go to the field, you will have build their support by communicating with them and by serving with them prior to going. Serving in the local church is the best training for cross-cultural ministry.

Exposure

Perhaps you should take additional short-term missions. The more cross-cultural experience you get the more equipped you will be for the field. Don't neglect the many multi-cultural ministries and events your own city may offer.

Agency Contact

Mission agencies are interested in you. They desire to guide you through the steps you need to take. Most agencies work well with each other. If your areas of interest are different from their areas of involvement, they will refer you to additional agencies.

Advance Training

Whether it is Bible college, seminary, graduate school, or medical preparation, some kind of training may be needed. Start contacting schools to learn about their entry requirements and the time frame required to complete your training.

Plot your Course

It is helpful to lay out a timeline from here to there. Charting your course is a big step for getting to your destination.

Continuing the Work

Wayne Stapleton, NAB VP of Cros Cultural Engagement and Emerging Leader Engagement; wstapleton@nabconf.org

As we prepare to enter into a foreign country on a short-term mission trip, we train with excitement to enter into a different cultural context. We go with humility because we are going to be guests in a different culture. We prepare to be "on mission" for God in a different environment. The re-entry article in the Gateway packet describes three ways we might cope as we re-enter our home culture after a short-term mission trip: Isolate (be alienated), Rebel (be angry), or Imitate (be re-socialized). But it also highlights a fourth option: be proactive. Certainly, during a period of de-stabilization due to the tremendous differences we have experienced in a foreign culture, when we return home we need time to adjust, time to get back into our typical rhythms. But when we do, in what ways can the things we experienced really help us grow? We grow when we proactively see others the way Jesus sees them.

We are no less on mission when we land back home. Even though we re-enter our host culture when we come home, the way we see others should not really change from how we saw others on the trip. We have many opportunities to interact cross-culturally at home: in our neighborhoods, on our jobs, at our local stores and restaurants. Cross-cultural mission trips are great opportunities to experience other cultures, and they are most impactful not only when they change us as guests in other cultures, but also in our disposition toward guests in our home culture.

Work that happens on foreign soil is not meant to stay there. It is meant to continue at home. The mission work that happened on foreign soil happened in us. How can we continue the work? God can use our experiences abroad on his mission to prepare us for missional assignments in our own communities. While we all believe this, we also must admit that unless we are open to his movement, we can miss opportunities.

I have a friend who went on a short-term evangelism mission trip in Colombia. She had a great experience. It was so impactful; she was made more aware of evangelism opportunities when she came back home. She began to ask God who he was leading her to share with. She wanted to continue the work.

On a trip to a public library for homework, she asked God to make her sensitive to who he wanted her to share with. When she entered the library, she saw a young man by himself and wondered if he might be someone God wanted her to speak to. He saw her coffee, and he asked about it. She felt, "This must be the guy!" She struck up a conversation with him, and they ended up having a two-hour conversation about Jesus. None of her theology homework was done, but she did get some Kingdom work accomplished.

Mission trips can change us. They *should* change us. How much do we let them change us?

God expected the Israelites to treat foreigners differently because of their own experiences as foreigners:

> For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. (Deuteronomy 10:17–19 NIV).

God commanded love for the foreigner, love that comes from the God who loves the foreigner. He prefaces his command with statements about his character. It is significant that he is described as showing no partiality just before he commands his people to do the same. God expects his people to reflect his character to those they encounter. What is God's character to those in our neighborhoods who are culturally different?

On short-term mission trips, we go to other cultures as guests; we learn what it is like to be a guest in another culture. Might our openness to other cultures when we are hosts change due to our experiences as guests in other cultures?

If you attend a mission trip in Japan, should your experience impact how you see Asians back at home? If you attend a mission trip in Cameroon, should your experience impact how you see Africans back at home?

What if the kinds of changes God wants in you on the short-term mission trip are not just about your attitude toward the people you were visiting overseas? What if God wants the work begun in you overseas to continue in you at home?

Here are six actions that can help us continue the work at home:

1. Train Your Eyes – See different cultures as inherently valuable and meaningful because God loves the people who make up those cultures. We often only see what we are looking for. Invite God to help you see the cultural "other" with his eyes. Pray to empathize with their cultural experiences in light of your experiences as the cultural "other."

2. Prepare Your Heart – Be open to getting to know people who are culturally different. Be honest with yourself and God. Pray about any fear or prejudice you might harbor toward the cultural "other" in your community. Invite God to make you someone who has a growing tolerance, leading to love, for the culturally different in your community. Remember how you would have wanted to be received when you were in a different culture. Remember that all people bear the image of God.

8. Guard Your Mouth – Speak less so you can experience them and their stories as valued. When you communicate with someone culturally different, give them a chance to share and be open to listening well. Be patient if English is challenging for them. Grow in your willingness to give an audience to people who are different without feeling the need to correct or oppose what you hear. Pray about when to speak and what to say. See yourself as God's representative specifically in that sphere. Say what is valuable and helpful, when it is time.

9. Tend to Your Time – Provide space for real relationship. Prayerfully ask God to show you how you can develop margin in your life so you can be open to making relational space for others. Be open to new friends who are different and who see things differently than you do. Even be open to changing your perspective on some things in light of your new friendships.

10. Quiet Your Spirit – Learn to discern how the Holy Spirit is guiding your next steps. Actively work on growing in your ability to sense when the Holy Spirit is moving and what he is asking you to do in response. Seek quiet time where you can pray for wisdom. Even in social contexts, quietly pray for God's guidance.

11. Order Your Steps – Do what you sense the Spirit tells you to do. When you get clarity from the Spirit about a course of action, do not hesitate to be obedient. Let yourself learn by doing and give yourself grace if you make a mistake. "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the

children of God” (Romans 8:14 NIV).

Reflection Questions

1. Of the six actions for continuing this work at home, which two resonate with you most and why?
2. What people group in your home context have you overlooked (or need to focus more acutely on) as you head home from this mission experience?

International Students: A Historic Opportunity to Reach the Nations

Rick Wood – Mission Frontiers June 30, 2016

Is there a purpose to history? Is history just a random series of events where various empires rise and fall as they fight each other over land, possessions or pride? Or is God orchestrating events to achieve some mysterious purpose? If you understand what God's ultimate purpose is, and so very few in the church actually do, then the seemingly random events of history begin to make more sense and we can even find our place in God's purpose for history and mankind.

From the time of the Fall, God has been working to reconcile a lost world to Himself according to the promise He made to Abraham when He said, "and through you all peoples on earth will be blessed." Gen. 12:3. We see the ultimate fulfillment of this promise to Abraham in Rev. 5:9 and 7:9 when Jesus is given the worship He deserves from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. In the new heavens and new earth that God will one day create, every people group of humanity will be there worshipping God in all of their uniqueness. The kingdoms of this earth will have become the kingdom of our Lord Jesus and the glory of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the seas.

Throughout history God has been working to accomplish this promised vision of the future. He has been working to bring the gospel from where it isn't to where it needs to go to bless all peoples. God's people have most often been unwilling to go to the nations to bring the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ to every person, tribe and tongue. As a result, God has had to use involuntary means throughout history to get the gospel to those who have no access to it. We can see this in the invasions of the Roman Empire; the colonization of the North and South America and numerous other examples.

Today, more people are traveling more widely and freely than ever before. Never in history has it been easier to communicate the gospel to those from unreached people groups. Hundreds of unreached peoples reside in our cities, both large and small, where the church and its people already live. God has brought these peoples here so we can easily reach them. This trend is only accelerating. The mission field is at our doorsteps. The question is whether we will open our doors, welcome them in, and share the good news of Jesus Christ with them.

International Students: An Opportunity to Change History

One of the most strategically important of these human migrations is that of international students. There are currently around 1,000,000 international students in the U.S. and they come from nearly every country in the world, many of which missionaries cannot enter. These students are the best and brightest the nations of the world have to offer and these countries are choosing to send them to us at their expense. These students will return to their host country to become the future leaders and influencers in their society. This is a God-ordained opportunity for us to reach the peoples of the world through these students.

This historic opportunity can either be a blessing or a curse. If we ignore these people, wish they weren't here or even treat them poorly then these future leaders could go back to become our future adversaries rather than friends.

One international student by the name of Sayyid Qutb came to the U.S. in 1948. Instead of experiencing friendship, hospitality and the love of Christ, he experienced racial prejudice and a culturally insensitive church. He returned to his home country of Egypt more anti-western and radicalized than before. Sayyid Qutb went on to develop the ideological foundation for Islamist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Osama bin Laden was an avid student of Qutb's works and they were the basis for bin Laden's creation of Al Qaeda.

Could well-trained Jesus followers reaching out to Sayyid with love, respect and the gospel of Jesus Christ have made a difference in the direction of Sayyid's life and ours? Maybe not. But we do know what happened to his life when they did not.

Far too many international students come to the United States and return home never having been invited into an American's home. This is truly tragic and a terrible loss for God's kingdom purposes when it happens. The consequences can be very long lasting indeed.

But if instead we welcome them into our homes, show them love, hospitality and share the gospel of Jesus Christ with them, then we have the tremendous possibility of building bridges of friendship and understanding between cultures while bringing the gospel to those peoples who currently do not have access. Hospitality and love can transform lives for eternity. There are a number of great stories of how ministry to international students is transforming lives and raising up workers to go back to their home country to begin the process of initiating disciple making movements.

We have all been called to live on mission with God.
Reaching out to international students with hospitality and the gospel is an easy way that we can have a dramatically significant impact for the kingdom of God around the world. Most of us should be able to invite international students into our home for dinner and show them the love of Christ. We don't need a seminary degree to do that. If you would like to get involved in this kind of ministry, please go to isionline.org and ask them for help in getting started.

Raising Up Movement Catalysts
Completing world evangelization is all about movements now. It is all about initiating and fostering movements of discipleship and church planting within the unreached peoples until there is no place left for the gospel to spread—everyone will have access to the gospel in a way that is culturally and linguistically understandable. But this will require the training and deploying of movement catalysts who are able to go to every people group and corner of the world and start these movements.

Those involved in ministry to international students have begun to realize that international students have the ability to be great movement catalysts since they already have an intimate understanding of the language and culture of the people group they come from. All that needs to happen is to get them saved, trained and deployed to go back home to start a movement in a language and culture they already know.

International Students Inc. is using its own specialized approach to Disciple-Making Movement (DMM) training. It is adapted from David Watson's Discover Bible Study Method. After a time of trial and error testing they developed an approach they call M:28. They have begun to train their entire staff in this discipleship process.

Derrah Jackson of I.S.I. reports on what they discovered in the process of implementing their M:28 strategy. "When we began working with people of peace, we found that they used their existing social networks, and, unsurprisingly, we saw multiplication. The multiplication was typically just one generation, but in one case to the third and, in another, to the fourth generation. A university graduate from that fourth generation group relocated to a large city because of a job offer, and today she is working to start DMM groups and to reach university students in her new home city."

They are still early in the process of implementing this strategy, but the early results provide hope that international students will be a key factor in fostering movements of discipleship around the world.

https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/international-students

The Sounds of Love and Global Transformation

Wichit & Miriam Maneewone with Anjuli Paschall – Forty Years of Reaching International Students - June 30, 2016

Conferences, seminaries, mission organizations and even degrees have been established around one idea: How do we reach the lost? Organizations, books, and church programs are geared to learn how we can best share the good news of the gospel, both here and abroad. For over 40 years, our commitment has been to just keep doing the next right thing, while working with international students whom God has brought to the San Diego area.

Our stories start here.
While we were both raised in Asia, God was already at work weaving in our hearts an expansive worldview. Our culture shaped us to see beyond race and religion. When studying in the United States as a college student, Wichit came to know Christ through campus missionaries. Miriam's faith and commitment to Christ had solidified while growing up as a missionary kid.

We didn't have money, seminary degrees or a mission statement, but what we did have was a love for God and for the lost. With limited resources and a wealth of love, we felt the call that God placed on our lives was to love international college students.

Love can be a huge word watered down to have little meaning. But for us, love is specific: It is a sound. Every Friday night for over 40 years in our little farmhouse on the top of a hill, our home has sounded like love: dishes clinging, pots simmering with curry, cymbals clanging, voices chattering (in English and every foreign language imaginable), pockets of laughter erupting and bare feet smacking against tile floors.

One sound you will never hear is a doorbell. On the rare occasion that the doorbell rings, people stop and exchange uneasy eye contact because it is such a rarity. *Why would people ring a doorbell when they come home?* They don't. They walk right in. And that's what we have done to reach the lost. We have given them a home.

At first, our Friday evening Bible study grew to 100, so that over the years thousands of international students have been reached. It also grew into Sunday lunches after church and one-on-one discipleship between college classes. It grew into a church plant geared to train and equip international students to share the gospel when they return home. It grew to overseas ministries and new missionaries. It grew into countries with high concentrations of unreached people groups like Japan, other Pacific Rim countries, India, Myanmar, Tibet, Thailand, Malaysia, China, pockets in the Middle East, Africa and Central and South America. For years, the majestic sounds of these students have echoed throughout our home, churches, cities and around the world until we have now touched well over 115 countries. The sound of *coming home* grew until it wrapped the world with the good news of the Gospel.

Consider these examples of international students transformed by Christ.
Students like Ivan, Jyap and Young Tak are among the many international students that found Christ while attending our home Bible study. Ivan was 16 years old from Singapore and studying to become a doctor when he was invited to our home on a Friday night. This young, brilliant teenager made a commitment to Christ. Instead of pursuing medicine, he went on to get his doctorate in missions and returned to Singapore to serve as the mission pastor in a church there. Currently, he is transitioning to ministry in a "closed" country.

Jyap, a devoted Thai Buddhist, came to the States to learn English and get her Masters in Business Administration. Instead, Christ radically changed her life. After spending years in our home where she experienced real love, she returned to Thailand to serve the local church and missionaries.

Young Tak, a charismatic 19-year-old Korean, came to our home one day and eventually accepted Christ as his Savior. He left several years later to plant a church in China and in Los Angeles.

The stories are endless, and the lives changed are countless.

It's really not rocket science. It's simple. It's about Jesus. Reaching the lost for Christ means doing what Jesus did, meeting physical needs, crossing cultural boundaries, reaching into the hearts of all who came across His path and inviting them into a life far more rich and real and radiant than the one they were living. We invite international college students into our home where we feed, teach and tell them about Jesus.

Over the years, hundreds, if not thousands, of students have accepted Christ as their Savior and then returned home and shared their faith with family and friends. The gospel has spread like water in dry lands desperate for life.

These are students who already have passports, instant access into their home countries, speak the language and know the culture are leaders in their communities. They have already established relationships and have automatic influence to reach the lost in their home countries. Some of the work that takes foreign missionaries years to accomplish is instant for an international student returning home.

Is it easy? Yes and no. Christianity is a call to die. It is a call to lay down your life in order to find it. Have struggles and trials nearly halted our ministry? Yes. Is having people in your home, day in and day out, hard? Yes. Is following the story that God has written inside of you rewarding and entirely life changing? Absolutely! When you are following the call that Christ has on your life, you accept the hard with the good because that brings the most glory to God. Our call has always been to keep taking small steps of faith that are mighty big for the kingdom of God.

So even as we are into our seventies, the glorious sound of love echoes from our land perched high enough for us to see, not just the surrounding mountains, but eternity.

https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-sounds-of-love-and-global-transformation

NAB Resources

Volunteer in Missions
An individual or family can do volunteer missionary service. This can be shorter in length like a short term mission trip of 1-2 weeks or last an entire year. Each volunteer experience is customized to match the needs on the field with the capacities of the volunteer. Gateway works with our Field Directors and Country Coordinators and you to create a missions experience that will be both challenging and fulfilling. Learn more at:

Defined Term Mission
A Defined Term Mission (DTM) is typically about two years. This is a significant commitment where you have an opportunity to enter the culture, the work, and join the NAB team. Many people find that this DTM option is a perfect introduction to a career of serving overseas. Learn more at: https://nabonmission.org/get-involved/missionary-job-openings/build-mission/

Career Missionary
NAB has International Missionary positions that we believe will strengthen our local church partners in a number of countries. In some cases, our NAB missionaries do the ground work, in other settings we focus on empowering national leaders and partners to do the work of ministry. Learn more at: https://nabonmission.org/get-involved/short-exploring-career-international-missions/

Blue Ocean – A missional cohort
Blue Ocean is a transformative one-year learning experience. You'll be part of a cohort that journeys together throughout the year, exploring what it means to join God on mission, be formed into the character of Christ, and dwell in your neighborhood – sharing and living out the Gospel. Learn more at: https://nabconference.org/north-american-missions/equipping/blue-ocean/

Ethos
Ethos is a two-year journey that is designed to help leaders of churches understand the Why and then the How to help their churches make a paradigm shift from a modern approach to ministry to a more missional/formational approach. This six-module journey, centered around two- to three-day retreats with other leaders in the region, guides leaders into a more missional/formational understanding of who God is and how he invites his people to join him on mission locally and internationally. Learn more at: https://nabconference.org/north-american-missions/equipping/ethos/

Project Discovery
Discovery Project is a weekend seminar aimed at helping the people of the church to see God through a missional lens and to begin to have an imagination for how they might join Him in their neighborhood. Discovery Project is designed to encourage the body of the church to live as followers of Jesus who bear witness to Him in every area of our lives. The Discovery Project is set up to be an 8-hour workshop at your church where we help people discover the nature of God and then reflect on what that means for us as image bearers. Learn more at: https://nabconference.org/north-american-missions/equipping/discovery-project/

Cross-Cultural Engagement
Cross-cultural engagement is about upholding the dignity of each person made in God's image, as well as God's desire that disciples be made of all ethnicities and that, in Christ, we are treated as one,

reconciled to one another. Cross-cultural engagement is about valuing the oneness of the church while valuing the uniqueness of the cultures that make up God's one church. Learn more at: https://nabconference.org/north-american-missions/cross-cultural-engagement/

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