# Contents

## Editorial

3  Canadians On Mission: Past Contributions and Current Thoughts

## Articles

4  From Sea to Sea: Reflections on the Canadian Mission Movement  
*Jon Fuller*

8  Improving Traction: 20 Questions to Advance Mobilization Based on the 2017 Canadian Evangelical Missions Engagement Study (CEMES) Research  
*Rob “Mags” Magwood*

12  Is the Western Paradigm for Global Mission Still Valid in Twenty-First Century?  
*Chris Pullenayegem*

15  Future Opportunities and the Diaspora Potential  
*Lisa Pak*

18  Diaspora Dynamics for Doing Reverse Mission in Canada  
*Narry F. Santos*

21  Ten Reasons Why the Global Campus is the Future of Mission  
*Alexander Best*

26  Why Are So Many Saying “Yes” to Christ?  
*Brian Stiller*

30  Communicating Effectively Across the Distance Divide  
*Warren Janzen*

## Missiographic

33  Canada On Mission  
*April 2019*

## The Spirituality of...

34  Walter Gowans and Rowland Bingham: The Spirituality of SIM's Canadian Founders  
*Gary Corwin*

## Voices from the Past

38  Finding the Freeway into the Heart  
*Don Richardson*

## Book Reviews

41  After the Trip: Unpacking Your Crosscultural Experience  
*By Cory Trenda*

42  Contextualizing the Faith: A Holistic Approach  
*By A. Scott Moreau*

43  Engaging Globalization: The Poor, Christian Mission, and our Hyperconnected World  
*By Bryant L. Myers*

44  Evangelism in a Skeptical World: How to Make the Unbelievable News about Jesus More Believable  
*By Sam Chan*

45  Heading Home with Jesus: Preparing Chinese Students to Follow Christ in China  
*By Debbie D. Philip*

46  High-Impact Teams: Where Healthy Meets High Performance  
*By Lance Witt*

47  Intercultural Discipleship: Learning from Global Approaches to Spiritual Formation  
*By W. Jay Moon*

48  Majority World Theologies : Theologizing from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Ends of the Earth  
*Edited by Allen Yeh and Tite Tiénou*

49  Mapping Church Missions: A Compass for Ministry Strategy  
*By Sharon R. Hoover*

50  Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective  
*By Wanjiru M. Gitau*

51  Short-Term Missions Workbook: From Mission Tourists to Global Citizens, Revised and Expanded Edition  
*By Tim Dearborn*

52  Women in God’s Mission: Accepting the Invitation to Serve and Lead  
*By Mary T. Lederleitner*
That’s the kind of compassion, forgiveness, and missionary zeal Canadians have exhibited for nearly two hundred years of foreign mission activity. Granted there was much missionary activity within Canada early on, especially among indigenous peoples. Then just before the middle of the nineteenth century, missionaries began to go globally. In 1845 Richard Burpee went to India with support from Maritime Baptists. In 1846 the tiny Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia sent John Geddie to the New Hebrides. Others quickly followed.

Through the years many notable Canadian missionaries have served with distinction. Here are a few standouts that should not be forgotten:

Jonathan Goforth (1859–1936)
Goforth was a Presbyterian missionary to China, Indonesia, and several other countries, with The Christian & Missionary Alliance. He served as the founding principal of the Alliance Bible Seminary in Hong Kong, and principal contributor and editor of the Chinese language Bible Magazine. He died at seventy-two years of age in a Japanese concentration camp in Indonesia.

Isobel Miller Kuhn (1901–1957)
Isobel a.k.a. “Belle,” was a Canadian missionary to the Lisu people of Yunnan Province, China, and northern Thailand. She served with the China Inland Mission (now OMF International) along with her husband, John, as a Bible translator, church planter, Bible teacher, evangelist, and authored nine books about her experiences. Three of her best known are: Green Leaf in Drought, In the Arena, and Stones of Fire. All three impacted me as a student.

Robert A. Jaffray (1873–1945)
Jaffray was a missionary to China, Indonesia, and several other countries, with The Christian & Missionary Alliance. He served as the founding principal of the Alliance Bible Seminary in Hong Kong, and principal contributor and editor of the Chinese language Bible Magazine. He died at seventy-two years of age in a Japanese concentration camp in Indonesia.

Rowland Bingham (1872–1942) and Walter Gowans (1868–1894)
Bingham was co-founder, along with Canadian Walter Gowans and American Thomas Kent, of Sudan Interior Mission (now SIM). Read Gary Corwin’s compelling article “Walter Gowans and Rowland Bingham: The Spirituality of SIM’s Canadian Founders” to learn about these missionary pioneers and the spirituality that drove them.

Don Richardson (1935–2018)
Don Richardson was a Canadian missionary (born on Prince Edward Island) with RBMU (now World Team). He was a teacher, author and international speaker who worked among the tribal people of what is now Papua, Indonesia. He is known for his impacting books: Peace Child, Lords of the Earth, and Eternity in Their Hearts.

This edition of EMQ focuses exclusively on Canadians doing mission. Every contributor (except Corwin, who features Bingham and Gowans) is Canadian. They present current thinking pertaining to missions both in Canada and beyond. With this edition, it is our hope that (1) Canadians will be encouraged by current missiological thinking in their particular circle, and (2) non-Canadians will gain a deeper appreciation for the contributions Canadians are making to global missions.

Marvin J. Newell
General Editor
From Sea to Sea: Reflections on the Canadian Mission Movement

Jon Fuller

William stood on the heaving deck looking out over the ceaseless rollers of the Atlantic Ocean. He’d left England with the hope that his sweetheart, Daisy, would soon follow him to Canada. Despite her father’s concerns about living amongst “the bears and Indians,” she too felt a call to serve the Lord wherever the needs were great. It was 1910 and the Methodist church in England were glad to send William as their missionary to the “colonies,” even though the China Inland Mission (CIM) had turned him down for “a lack of robust health.”

After years of church planting in Ontario, William and Daisy moved to the prairies, where they started a family. He broke his own horses to ride a preaching circuit in Saskatchewan. Later they ministered to the coastal lumber camps of British Columbia driving a motor launch through the islands. When the government required Chinese to move west away from the coast William offered to travel as escort. Here was his opportunity to minister to the Chinese, even if the CIM had not sent him to China. God had sent the Chinese to him.

Riding the trains inland brought William face-to-face with the spiritual conditions of the Canadian railroad workers, who faced many challenges and who had few opportunities to hear the gospel or be part of a church. Responding to this need, led him to start the Railway Mission of North America, which eventually became Christian Transportation, reaching out to a variety of transportation related communities.

Over the following years, William and Daisy saw their daughter Olive go to India to work with Amy Carmichael and the Dohnavur Fellowship. One son, Harold, joined SIM and served in Africa for many years. Another son, David, ended up in the Philippines with OMF, where I was born. William and Daisy were my grandparents, and models of mission for me.

Growing up with the stories of my grandparent’s mission journey helped form my understanding of mission as obedience to God’s calling to the hard places, where the gospel was most needed. As a child growing up in the Philippines, listening to our family’s journey across Canada from sea to sea, and to the ends of the earth, I think I grew up assuming that mission was also an essential part of what it meant to be Canadian. Stories of Prairie Bible Institute, my mother’s alma mater, and of People’s Church, Oswald Smith, and the “Faith promise,” only served to reinforce that understanding.

Mission and the Dominion of Canada

It’s not difficult to make a case that the notion of mission is part of Canada’s history, as long as one is willing to reflect carefully on what is meant by “mission” and to acknowledge that along with many positive examples of mission, there are also some terrible failures. Before Canada became a nation, at the London Conference in 1855, Samuel Leonard Tilley proposed that the confederation of different provinces of Canada be referred to as a “dominion,” taking the word from Psalm 72:8, “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” Psalm 72 is a wonderful Messianic psalm, proclaiming the promise that all nation’s will be blessed through the coming Messiah (v. 17), and that the whole earth will be filled with God’s glory (v. 19). Canada’s national motto “A Mari Usque Ad Mare,” found on all official documents, is usually translated as “From Sea to Sea” and has its roots in the same psalm.

Of course, few Canadians think about “the Dominion” today, except perhaps as a chain of Ontario groceries stores that have recently updated their brand. If Canadians do think of Canada as a “Dominion,” they probably think of the Canadian government’s sovereignty “from sea to sea,” rather than the sovereignty of Jesus the Messiah, who will “rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.” However, as a Canadian follower of Jesus, I see God at work through his people to establish our nation with a vision for his glory across our continent from sea to sea, and to the ends of the earth. My childhood assumptions about mission and Canada are consistent with that vision, and also with the history of the Canadian church and its mission engagement.

Reflecting on Mission in Canada Today

In his book, The Future of the Global Church, missionary statesman and respected researcher Patrick Johnston places Canada in the top ten countries for missionaries per sending church (Protestant, Independent, Anglican) ahead of the United States, UK, and South Korea. The 2010 version of Operation World, acknowledges this history, but also raises questions about the future of the Canadian mission movement. “Missionary vision was once very strong but has steadily declined over the last 20 years…. Canada once occupied a pride of place in sending aid and peacekeeping forces and in having a strong missionary-sending tradition. The latter of the three has decreased markedly.”


A close look at the data suggests that the North American mission community has remained stable, but is facing a time of significant global change. Looking at the twenty largest agencies in terms of income, the authors noted, “In almost every category we see significant growth or loss at particular agencies. While the overall missions community seems to have enjoyed a period of relative stability, there are certainly agencies that have weathered big changes.” The loss of over 1,000 members through an early retirement option of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptists, the
largest reporting agency would be an example of that.Using data from the thirty-four Canadian agencies that provided information for both the 2006 and 2016 surveys, the authors conclude that total income remained stable at roughly $68 million (adjusted for inflation) but income for international ministries dropped from $26 million to $23 million (adjusted for inflation). This may reflect the importance of international migration, which the NAM Handbook authors noted as a significant new development resulting in a refocusing of international mission. “The phenomenon of the acceleration of international migration is bringing an increasing number of “diaspora” peoples to North America. These new arrivals come as migrant workers, immigrants (legal and illegal), international students, and refugees. North American mission agencies are increasingly intentional about reaching out to this segment of society.” The authors go on to note the significance of Canadian organizations in this sector, “not surprising given the immigrant nature of the Canadian population.” There is some evidence here that the global changes are being felt more in the Canadian context than in the United States.

So how are Canadian mission leaders responding to these challenges? In June 2018, two consultations were convened in Toronto to respond to the changing face of mission in the Canadian context. The first, Our Common Calling, explored how mission language is used in Canada today. The second, Future Fit, brought together over sixty reflective practitioners in mission in an attempt to discern how the structure and strategy of Canadian mission engagement could be more relevant and effective in the changing global context.

During the Future Fit consultation, the delegates were asked to reflect on the Canadian Mission Movement in light of these changing dynamics. With reference to a challenging critique of global mission by Michael Stroope, Transcending Mission: The Eclipse of a Modern Tradition, they were asked whether they agreed with Stroope that there is a need for us to “transcend mission” in Canada today by selecting one of the following options:

- Stay the course. God is still at work through the Canadian mission movement today. We don’t need to change.
- Correct the course. The world is changing, and we need to make adjustments, but our movement is fundamentally healthy.
- Rethink the voyage. We need to step back and ask fundamental questions about where we are going and why. We need to transcend mission.
- Redesign the ship. Our mission models are no longer fit for the purpose. We need new models.
- Stay on course.

Out of fifty-nine respondents, 51% indicated a need to rethink the voyage, while 35% felt that the Canadian mission movement at least needs to consider new models (see Figure 1.2). While this was only an informal poll, it does suggest that most Canadian mission leaders recognize the need for significant change and are open to exploring that further. One of the factors behind this desire for change, is a recognition that we need to look carefully at our own history with a posture of humility and repentance.

The Challenge of Repentance, Reconciliation and Renewal
At the Future Fit consultation, Dr. Ray Aldred told his story of growing up in a residential school, one of thousands of First Nations children who were the victims of a deeply flawed practice of mission. He challenged us to consider how we can engage in biblical mission without requiring cultural

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**Figure 1.1** Churches and the Sending of Missionaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Missionaries Sent by Country</th>
<th>Average Number of PIA Churches Needed to Send One Missionary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China, Hong Kong</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>76.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>103.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Figure 1.2** Assessing the Canadian Mission Movement

51% | Rethink the Voyage
35% | Redesign the Ship
12% | Correct the Course
2%  | Stay on Course
assimilation.

The tragedy of the residential schools is a stark reminder of what happens when we fail to practice mission as the Father sent Jesus. My great-grandfather’s fear of sending his daughter to the land of “Indians and bears,” not only reflects a lack of cultural understanding, but is also an example of how subtly but deeply, colonial ideas of subduing nature and bringing civilization to the uncivilized had come to define mission in the early twentieth century.

There is much to be admired in the dedication, sacrifice, and perseverance of the early missionaries to Canada, but there is much also for which we need to repent. The current national conversation about reconciliation with our First Nations peoples is also necessary and on-going in the church. While we must avoid being paralyzed by the failings of our past, we also need to be ruthlessly self-aware of our use of power, and in particular, its expression through wealth and privilege.

It is easy for those who have money and privilege, to be blind to its shaping influence amongst those who have less. Mission strategies that are developed and funded by the Canadian mission movement are difficult to resist in places of material need, even though they may be contextually unsuitable. Monies that flow into a context may disrupt and deform existing patterns of relationship, privileging those who have access to the finances. Further, it is possible that our fundraising communication may at times turn people into helpless recipients who need Westerners to save them. While generosity is to be applauded, it needs to be accompanied by humility, which values the knowledge, wisdom, and agency of the community that is being helped. Mutuality in partnership needs to be the guiding principle, especially when there is power (and monetary) asymmetry.

Our Common Calling: Encouraging a Healthy Conversation about Mission

In 2016, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the Canadian Missions Research Forum (a group of Canadian mission agencies) collaborated on a survey of mission engagement in Canada. The Canadian Evangelical Mission Engagement Study (CEMES) was the largest study of Evangelicals ever done in Canada, involving about 2000 Evangelical lay people and 1400 Evangelical pastors. The number of responses from pastors was unexpected and seemed to indicate a significant interest in exploring mission in Canada. The pastors were asked eighty-seven questions, but only one was a free-text question: “How do you define missions?” The question was intentionally simple, in order to allow the pastors to respond as freely as possible. More than 900 of the pastors responded to this question, with everything from a few words to paragraphs, expressing an encouraging, although diverse, passion for mission.

There is still much work to be done with this data, but an initial analysis of the 420 responses where geography was referenced, showed that 250 (60%) of those specifically mentioned both local and global mission. Over half of the pastors (488) used the paradigm of “Word/Deed” in some way as part of their definition. Of those, the majority (321 or 66%) indicated the importance of including both in their understanding of mission, with another 145 or 30% expressing a primary emphasis on “Word” in their definition.

A significant number of survey responses reflected tension between what some referred to as the “traditional” model of “mission” or “missions,” as contrasted with a “missional” model. This tension was specifically addressed at the Our Common Calling consultation. During a panel discussion, one of the panelists made the comment that “Everyone is a missionary.” One of the leaders in the audience, responded that they did not agree with this because, “If everyone is a missionary, then no one is a missionary.” The ensuing discussion highlighted the concern that the traditional mission movement in Canada has “professionalized” mission to the point that many Canadian Christians do not see themselves having any part in the mission of God, something the Missional Church movement has helpfully challenged in recent years. At the same time, concern was expressed that least reached peoples (both in Canada and globally) will not hear the gospel without intentional, sacrificial, and strategic engagement. As one leader said to me, “It’s wonderful to see the Canadian church reaching out to the 20,000 Thai in Canada but don’t forget the 80 million in Thailand.”

The point of the Our Common Calling consultation was not to resolve these differences in the use of mission related language. Ultimately, the mission of God is beyond our ability to define, as David Bosch pointed out. “We may, therefore, never arrogate it to ourselves to delineate mission too sharply and too self-confidently. Ultimately, mission remains undefinable, it should never be incarcerated in the narrow confines of our own predilections. The most we can hope for is to formulate some approximations of what mission is all about.”

The discussion at Our Common Calling was intended to affirm the importance of this mission conversation, help leaders better understand the nuances in the Canadian context of words like “mission,” “missions,” “missional,” and “missionary,” and encourage everyone to listen carefully to each other in a spirit of grace and humility.

Renewing Mission In, To, and From Canada

The Future Fit and Our Common Calling conversations of the past year have raised a number of challenging questions about our theological and missiological frameworks. I am grateful for colleagues like Sam Chaise of the Christie Refugee Welcome Centre, and Aileen van Ginkel and Matthew Gibbins of EFC, along with many others in the Future Fit movement who continue to wrestle with these issues. We believe that our responses to the following questions will shape the Canadian practice of biblical mission in the years to come.

How can we renew our Biblical understanding of the God who sends? When Jesus told the disciples that he was sending them “as the Father has sent me.” (John 20:21), he provided a model for Biblical mission. However, too often we have failed to send and be sent in the way of the Father. We have forgotten that we are sent first and that any sending we do is only a stewardship response of God’s first sending. In pride we have claimed God’s role as sender. We have taken on ourselves both the glory and the responsibility of sending, when those belong first and finally to God alone. We have failed to embrace Christ’s model of sending “as the Father sent me”, in weakness, poverty and dependence. Our sending has been tainted by Christendom and colonialism: the gospel has too often been hidden by our human powers and resources, revealing only our insufficiencies and failing to reveal his all sufficiency.

How can we renew our vision of mission flowing from the glory of God? We have allowed our engagement with the challenges of our world, to define our mission when it should be defined by God’s glory. The incarnation teaches us that presence is essential, but also that God’s glory made flesh transcends geography. God’s people present in the world are called to reflect his
How can we renew mission emerging out of covenant community?

Christ's sending was a Trinitarian expression of community in mission, of interdependence, mutuality and partnership in the gospel. Biblical mission is always mission in community. Biblical mission is theology, ecclesiology and missiology reflected in the right relationship of the Trinitarian God at work through his people in the world. In the Canadian context, we need to foster dynamic conversations between the agency, academy, assembly, and agora (to use one but not the only model). These conversations need to embrace a diversity of mission language, expressed in grace with a clear view for God's glory and our identity as ones being sent.

How can we renew our understanding of who we are in God's created world?

We are sent into God's world, where he is already at work. We expect to meet him in the fieriest of furnaces. We do not bring God to the world, but join him in his world.

Being sent as Jesus was sent requires the discipline of “double listening.” Being sent means the discipline of listening to God who is the sender and also to the world into which we are sent. Biblical mission presumes intentional exegesis of the Word and the world.

God's glory amongst the nations (including Canada) brings all cultures (including Canadian cultures) to the foot of the cross. The cross both confronts and consecrates culture. Being sent as the Father sent Christ gives us the incarnation and the cross as our models. The mystery of the incarnation positions us in the world with generosity and humility. The mystery of the cross compels us to urgency and sacrifice.

A Uniquely Canadian Contribution

I have been privileged to live the majority of my life in Asia, so am still learning what it means to be Canadian. Since returning to Canada in 2013, I've been blessed with helpful companions on that journey, both in Canada and from outside. In 2017, I was invited to join a group of European mission leaders at a consultation in Amsterdam entitled Future Proof. The discussions there focused on how European mission agencies were responding to their changing context. I was encouraged that the issues with which they were wrestling were familiar: increased secularization, growing ethnic diversity, rapidly shifting technology, a new generation of leaders, and a church struggling to understand all of this. As I flew home, I remember thinking that, on many of these issues, in ten years Canada would be where Europe is now, and that the United States would follow.

Since then, I've had further conversations with North American leaders including Ellen Livingood of Catalyst Services and Eldon Porter of Missio Nexus, who have provided helpful outside perspectives on the mission movement in Canada. While affirming the challenges in Canada of increased secularization and declining church attendance, they have also celebrated the arrival of the nations in Canada's cities and the opportunity that provides for polycentric mission. Many of the most dynamic centres of mission engagement in the Canadian church today are in churches with East Asian ethnic roots: Filipino, Chinese and Korean churches. Diaspora mission in, to, and from Canada is a fast growing and exciting reality.

Ellen and Eldon both also pointed out the increased opportunity for collaboration that a smaller mission movement represents. Many of the key Canadian mission leaders live within hours of each other and are personally acquainted, creating the possibility for creative collaboration. The Future Fit consultation in June, 2018 capitalized on this, raising the intriguing possibility of an on-going national conversation amongst Canadian mission leaders, which is being nurtured by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and Lausanne Canada.

From Sea to Sea, and to the Ends of the Earth

As I reflect on mission in Canada today, I find myself returning to the story of my grandparents. William and Daisy were obedient to God's call, even when it took them across the sea and across a continent. They always had an eye for the neglected places, where the gospel was most needed, including lumber camps and railway cars. They were willing to go to China, but didn’t overlook the Chinese people God brought to their neighbourhood. They weren't distracted by false dichotomies of local or global mission, but embraced both with passion. They practiced mission by going themselves, and sending their own children. Grandma Daisy spent the final years of her life bedridden, but my memories of her bedroom are of the world map on the wall across from her bed, and the stack of prayer letters on her bedside table.

Ultimately, the health of Canada's mission movement comes down to the obedience of God's people who have been blessed to share this land. It is up to us to proclaim and live out, Christ's dominion across Canada, from sea to sea, and to the ends of the earth.

Jon Fuller and his wife Marilyn had the privilege of living in a Filipino Muslim community, where their daughters grew up knowing they were safe as long as they could see the mosque at the center of the village. Currently based in Toronto, Jon travels frequently, part of OMF’s commitment to be a global community of East Asian specialists. Both he and Marilyn have a passion to invest in the next generation, helping them become everything God has called them to be.

Notes
12. Fuller and Chaise, “Our Common Calling.”
I was amazed at the difference this investment made. The short-term impact on our family budget and headache of storing the summer tires was well worth it. Better grip for starting and stopping, better control in new-fallen snow, better traction on unexpected ice-driving confidence and the safety of our family was dramatically lifted by improved traction.

In challenging conditions, many of us in Canada are faithfully striving to mobilize new workers for global mission initiatives. Some of us have been at it for a long time, but admittedly our efforts aren’t always leading to the outcomes we desire. My encouragement to you (both Canadian readers and others) is to invest some short-term energy into processing this research that’s already been conducted, compiled and analyzed by a trustworthy source. The probable outcome for us? Improved traction.

**An Introduction to the Study**

The Canadian Evangelical Missions Engagement Study (CEMES) research (approximately 200 pages, published 2017) was conducted among Canadian evangelicals by Rick Hiemstra and his team at The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC). The process included both personal interviews and surveys to compile and collate over 3,400 responses from pastors and lay-people across the country. Demographic information is included to understand how generations may think differently on various elements.

The result is a very helpful snapshot of how the evangelical church in Canada is thinking about and engaging in missions. For those of us seeking to mobilize God’s people to see disciples made among all the nations (Matthew 24:14; Mark 16:14), the opportunity before us is like putting snow tires on my car—improved traction to get where we’re going.

The CEMES research has been presented in four reports, all of which are available online. These documents provide engaging commentary including numerous direct quotes from the interviews and preliminary conclusions.

What remains for us is a pressing question: “Now what?” How will we use this data? My proposal is to make an investment—to spend some time and effort together to better understand and apply this learning in order to more effectively help local churches identify, prepare and support thriving message bearers.

Rather than re-iterate the report, I’ve selected a few representative points from each report and then proposed probing questions with a recommended resource. Together this is intended to catalyze deeper reflection leading to intentional goals, evaluation of outcomes, and adjustments. I hope my approach might lead readers to (1) further engage the CEMES reports themselves, and (2) reach out to like-minded churches, agencies and schools to engage collaborative dialogues and initiatives. May the resulting conversations emerge in our pastors’ studies, on Missions Committees’ agendas, and on our agencies’ priority lists!

**Report One: Canadian Evangelicals and Short-Term Mission**

Who is participating in short-term missions, to do what, and for what duration? Responses indicate that many pastors (67%) have participated in short-term trips in the last decade, usually for two weeks or less. Lay people (22%) also reported participating in such a trip; usually less than two weeks. Most of these trips are to ministry locations outside Canada (86%) but there was a sentiment that this should be “rebalanced” back to Canada. The most common tasks during these trips included building construction and repair, vacation Bible schools, evangelism and discipleship, encouraging missionaries, and working with orphans.

Why do they go? At the core of this conversation is motivation. The clear majority of pastors (75%) agreed that short-term mission is an important form of discipleship for their local congregation. Most respondents agreed that spiritual growth of team members was the primary purpose of these trips. Two-thirds of pastors agreed that short-term mission should be made available to non-Christians who have skills and abilities to contribute.

**Probing questions toward improved traction**

1. How are we ensuring clear desired outcomes for each short-term mission initiative? How are we evaluating and learning from the medium- and long-term results of these initiatives?

2. How are we ensuring that our pastors are able to participate in short-term mission? What decisions are needed to provide time and space for our key leaders to participate personally?

3. How is short-term mission expected to contribute to the ongoing, long-term spiritual growth of those who participate? How are we integrating short-term mission into the ongoing discipleship program of the church? What resources are needed before, during, and after the short-term mission?

4. There is a tremendous participation on the part of youth, for which we thank...
the Lord! How are we providing opportunities for student (youth) short-term missions to participate locally (or nearby) in missions prior to distant initiatives? Are we encouraging students to consider subsequent longer-terms, rather than multiple short-term missions?

5. If non-Christians are invited to participate in short-term mission, how are we intentionally presenting gospel truth through their experience?


Report Two: Canadian Evangelicals and Long-term, Career Missions: Calling, Sending, and Training

This report observes that there is no broad consensus on certain key terminology, including what is meant by/included in mission or missions. It is also observed that there are various descriptions of short-term and long-term service. Many pastors (65%) agreed that long-term service means six years or longer, while only 33% of lay people held that same description, and 36% of lay people described long-term service as 1–5 years.

Sixty-seven percent of lay people and 90% of pastors agree that “the local church should challenge its young people to consider long-term service.”

In interviews, however, informants were “generally reluctant to encourage family members into long-term service, but would also reluctantly accept their family member’s long-term call if they were convinced it was the Lord doing the calling.” How does one discern a call to missions? Ninety percent of lay evangelicals agreed that long-term workers do more harm than good, and another 14% indicated they weren’t sure. Forty percent of pastors and 29% of lay people agreed that “it is better to send money to indigenous workers than to send long-term workers from Canada.” There was, however, no broad support among lay respondents for the idea that the presence of peoples from around the world (in Canada) removes the need to send long-term workers abroad.

On the sending of long-term workers, 37% of churches have sent out a long-term worker (not necessarily for the first time) in the last decade. Eighty-five percent of pastors agree that the local church has the primary responsibility for the Great Commission, of which 76% also agree that agencies or denominations are better equipped to care for and supervise mission personnel. Among the laity, 61% of older respondents (Silent Generation) believed agencies are better equipped than local churches, while just 43% of younger respondents (Generation Y) held that view. Thirty-five percent of lay respondents indicated we should not send long-term workers into dangerous situations, compared to 16% of pastors. Finally, 68% of pastors indicated their church would consider sending professionals or business owners to live abroad intentionally as a mission worker.

An important tension emerged in the research: should we even send missionaries? Nine percent of lay evangelicals agreed that long-term workers do more harm than good, and another 14% indicated they weren’t sure. Forty percent of pastors and 29% of lay people agreed that “it is better to send money to indigenous workers than to send long-term workers from Canada.” There was, however, no broad support among lay respondents for the idea that the presence of peoples from around the world (in Canada) removes the need to send long-term workers abroad.

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Probing questions toward improved traction

1. How are we helping with clarifying language regarding missions? How are we helping discern what constitutes short- and long-term service? How can we clarify what might be called medium-term service?

2. Which resources and support are we providing to local churches as they identify potential workers and discern the call of God? How are we encouraging healthy dialogue between individuals “independently interested” and their local churches?

3. How do we come alongside families (parents and grand-parents) as they loved ones consider the call of God, and as they depart to serve in distant places? How are we informing and encouraging local churches to care for these Senders?

4. How are we clearly challenging local churches (and especially young people) to consider God’s call to long-term service? How are we complementing the efforts of local churches to make the remaining task clear? How are we stimulating courageous and creative thinking for professionals or business people who might serve with mission purpose?

5. How are we communicating the viability of long-term service into unreached and difficult/dangerous places? How are we seeking to ensure that with are helping without hurting?


Report Three: Canadian Evangelicals and Mission Priorities

This section of the research looks at local church budgets and spending as well as influences and factors in making decisions about financial support and strategic direction. Pastors report that churches spend 15.5% of their budgets on missions, and 80% of churches support long-term workers (i.e., missionaries). Forty-one percent of lay people indicate that they personally support a long-term worker. Older evangelicals (51%) are more likely to personally support long-term workers than are Generation Y evangelicals (32%). Deliberative bodies (missions committees, church boards, or congregations at annual meetings) are most influential for missions funding decisions, and a clear majority of all supporters seek assurance that administrative fees collected by agencies lead to greater effectiveness.

According to pastors, their church’s top three mission priorities were (1) missions to the unreached, (2) poverty relief, and (3) working with national churches. Although unreached was the top priority, evangelism among Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists was ranked as low priority—a tension in the report which warrants exploration. Another curious indicator was the low priority of
Bible translation, considering that one of the defining marks of evangelicalism is the priority of the Word.

Probing questions toward improved traction

1. If pastors are knowingly (or unknowingly!) bearing the role of the primary missions mobilizer in their church, what tools and supports do we offer to make their job easier? Where can pastors quickly locate trustworthy resources to align their own hearts, and then the hearts of their congregants, with the mission heart of God?

2. How are we equipping decision-makers with strategic information (big picture factors) on which to base their decisions? How are we developing trusted avenues of communication with those influencers?

3. How are we informing church congregations about unreached people groups, including Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists? How are we encouraging reconsideration of the current imbalance in financial support to reached areas vs. unreached people groups? Most of mission activity and financial support (99.7%) are directed toward where the church already is, with only 0.3% of resources are allocated to where the church is not.

4. How are we informing churches about the need for God’s Word in appropriate formats? “God’s Word is so much more powerful than anything people can say; it is a mighty lion that needs to be unleashed. Let us pray for the Word of God (in written, oral, musical and dramatic forms) to be translated and rise among the unreached.” (Isaiah 55:10–11)


Report Four: Canadian Evangelicals and Missions Promotion in the Local Church

In our noisy world, it is very difficult to earn and maintain attention. Hiemstra correctly observes that “Attention is the currency of our age. The fragmentation of attention in contemporary life leaves little capacity for deep and sustained engagement with any one ministry or mission.”

The research clearly supports something many of us have observed: the lead (senior, etc.) pastor of a church is “the indispensable voice in leading a congregation to engage with missions.” The data also clearly underscores the strategic nature of platform time—initiatives referenced in the pulpit benefit from more attention and support from the congregation. Many evangelical churches no longer hold regular Sunday evening services or mid-week meetings (often replaced by some sort of small group gatherings) which means it is challenging to allocate (or earn) platform time for missions. This is true even for missionaries reporting to their sending churches (Acts 14:26–28) let alone newcomers.

Churches clearly expressed concerns about the quality of missions presentations. This is consistent with my own experience—one venue declined a presentation saying, “Mission presentations are so boring!” While daunting for the average presenter, workers and agencies must wrestle nevertheless with the expectations and capacities of contemporary church congregations.

Some critical challenges were uncovered by considering perspectives on prayer: both pastors and lay-people frequently indicated they did not pray for missions unless they were prompted or reminded. “Very few of the respondents talked about planned or regular prayed for missions that was not a response to external prompting.” While this is perhaps not surprising in our busy world, we must strive to cultivate faithful prayer for both mobilization and workers serving (2 Corinthians 1:11).

While indicating the need for accountability and regular updates, the research indicates a paradoxical tension between “(1) the demand for information and (2) the common complaint that there is too much information to absorb.” Those of us in the missions world need to continually experiment and evaluate, as there is evidently no single correct answer to this communications challenge.

Seventy-four percent of pastors “agreed that their churches actively foster conversations about the biblical basis for their missions engagement.” Further, about one quarter of churches indicated that they either held (or helped organize) a missions conference in the previous year. Fifty-five percent of pastors said that their missions program included an ongoing component focused outside of Canada.

Probing questions toward improved traction

1. If pastors are knowingly (or unknowingly!) filling the role of primary mobilizer for their congregations, what tools and supports can we develop to make their job easier?

2. Which alternative means of communication with God’s people (other than platform time) are being used? How are we testing/developing these avenues?

3. How are we ensuring quality control of our missions presentations? Are missions committees and agencies/workers reporting taking this seriously? How are we supporting that returning workers (focused primarily on overseas ministries and cultures) who may be ill-equipped to meet the expectations of the congregations they report to?

4. How are we working to shape the expectations of the congregations regarding missions presentations? If those expectations are unrealistic, how are we adjusting?

5. How are we cultivating regular, faithful prayer for missions? Have we renewed our methods to incorporate new communication tools? How can we provide on-ramps for those who would like to participate but perhaps lack experience/awareness? Are we effectively building a sense of community for those praying?

6. Are we helping to develop mission communications plans that are manageable by a particular group (e.g., entire congregation, leadership groups, small groups)? How we evaluating the effectiveness of communication?

Recommended Resource: Paul Seger, Senders: How your church can identify, train and deploy missionaries (CreateSpace, 2015).

Enjoying New Traction

In the long run, I’ve become an advocate of snow tires for Canadian winter driving. The traction is worth the hassle. I’ve also become an advocate for prayerful, collaborative discussion of this helpful research from CEMES. This article is just a sampling, but there is much to learn and pray over. Our investment of time to learn and adjust (both to the clear
IMPROVING TRACTION: 20 QUESTIONS TO ADVANCE MOBILIZATION

lessons as well as the not-so-obvious clues to be mined) will be well worth our effort to improve traction for mobilization of the church.

Afterword: Are you interested in further dialogue on this research?
It should be noted again this article engages only select elements from the research which I liken to a treasure trove of current, relevant, organized data! I would welcome further engagement on these and other topics (rmagwood@send.org) as the new Global Missions Toolbox will be diving into this material. Also note that for approved programs of study, the anonymous data set can be made available for further analysis/study. Already one DMin student is using this for a forthcoming dissertation. For more information contact Rick Hiemstra at the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (hiemstrar@theEFC.ca).

Rob “Mags” Magwood serves as the host of the Global Missions Podcast and Canadian Director of SEND International. A current project, The Global Missions Toolbox, is designed to support pastors and missions committees as we together seek to identify, prepare and sustain a new generation of faithful mission workers. Mags and Kathleen first served in church-planting and theological education in Ukraine and Russia, and now live in London, Ontario.

Notes
1. Beth Hiemstra helpfully distilled Executive Summaries found on pages 3–4 of each report. See https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/Communications/Research/Canadian-Evangelical-Missions-Engagement-Study.
Is the Western Paradigm for Global Mission Still Valid in Twenty-First Century?

Chris Pullenayegem

To answer the question, I think it’s wise to first ask more questions. The title is loaded with assumptions. Asking questions and wrestling with the answers is a good way of unpacking the issues it raises.

Questions such as:

- Who is asking the question?
- Of whom is it being asked?
- What is global mission?
- Who has defined and given meaning to the term global mission?
- What is the operating paradigm?
- What is valid and by whom is validity assessed?
- What metrics are used and are these valid?
- Were these metrics ever valid?
- Are the principles guiding global missions different than those for local missions?
- How do these principles align (or not) with biblical principles concerning mission?

Western mission has shaped Christianity and the world. This objective/subjective approach is a reflection and challenge for us to critically re-examine our strategies and motives around mission. It is my hope that it will inspire critical thinking and provoke thoughtful discussion. There are three caveats that preface this article. One is that these are entirely my opinions and not representative of any group of people. The second is that I have spent more time critiquing the problematic elements, assuming that readers are familiar with the beneficial aspects of the gospel. The third is that this is not an academic paper. It is not meant to be. It is a biblically-based personal reflection of the questions being posed.

Paradox 1: Gospel of Freedom—Culture of Control

Culture and the gospel often go together. Freedom (from sin) and by association the social implications of human evil proclaimed by the gospel was accompanied by the shackles of Western culture. So, a gospel that was supposed to bring freedom and hope became, to some, an instrument of control, of subjugation and of cultural domination.

Paradox 2: Transformational Gospel—Transactional Relationship

Missions proclaims a transformational gospel based on the concept of grace. But the way it was lived out was transactional in nature, based on the principle of contract.

God’s grace is free and unconditional. Period. Unfortunately, the carriers of this same
good news used religion as a way of extracting loyalty and exerting control. Promise of work for those who converted and a change of name to signal a change of loyalty were some ways Christian colonizers exchanged the benefits of their religion to extract the obedience of the indigenous people.

As colonizers established their religious institutions and stamped their authority on the land, it became clear that alignment with (i.e., converting to) the white man’s religion and way of life opened up vast potential for personal advancement. Employment opportunities and education prospects were carrots that were dangled tantalizingly before the locals. Simultaneously, dire consequences were threatened and enforced for those who wouldn’t bite. One way of commanding loyalty and securing allegiance was by change of identity (i.e., name change). Changing one’s name to reflect that re-orientation is why there is a disproportional percentage of Portuguese/Spanish names than indigenous Sri Lankan names in the local telephone directory. However, this transactional nature of western missions is not relegated to history. Consider, for example, the post-tsunami missionary efforts of a Western mission organization that was expelled for trying to exploit the plight of vulnerable tsunami victims, requiring that locals accept a Bible as a condition of receiving food relief.

Paradox 3: Incarnational Gospel—Detached Missions

The Logos came and lived among us. What was supposed to be an organic, natural and incarnational movement became quickly encapsulated into a programmatic enterprise. The Great Commission that was given to ALL disciples became the prerogative of a specialized few. The “as you live and move about” of the Great Commission came to be interpreted as “go into the rest of the world,” which birthed a missionary movement that needed people with specialized training, funding, institutional support and organizational infrastructure. Fortunately, although the Western mission movement is still robust, it has moved beyond being a Western enterprise to a networked global strategy. However, in its specialized format, it seems to have hijacked the original concept of the Great Commission, which in itself is problematic as a description of a specific mandate given by Jesus to all believers.

Built into the commandment in Matthew 28 is the concept of being incarnational. The Go in the Greek really means as you are going which in turn implies the idea that carrying out the work of discipling is carried out in one’s normal and everyday spheres of living.

I have the highest respect for those missionaries who have sacrificed their lives and worldly comforts to incarnate themselves into an entirely foreign culture. They learned the language, familiarized themselves with the culture and very often died in their host countries in the pursuit of discipling the nations. However, in many other instances, the religion that missionaries carried was mostly foreign to the locals—or even hostile to them. It never got to wear local clothes. To this day, unfortunately, many mission programs only serve to strengthen the colonial status quo.

The term short-term missions is actually a misnomer and should be renamed or reviewed. Any initiative that does not have in its DNA a strong emphasis on the incarnational nature of the gospel and its mandatory cultural adaptation is in my opinion, an incorrect or at the least a skewed interpretation of the Matthew 28 mandate. Ironically, missionaries who go out with the intent of changing the world often find that the world has changed them.

This line of reasoning makes even more sense in today’s world, which is witnessing increasing animosity and closedness to Western influence, especially Christian influence. Strengthening and equipping local believers (the local church) who can then carry out Jesus’ mandate seems the most logical and strategic alternative. I believe the term Great Commission has outlived its meaning. We need a term that gets us back to the original intent of the words of Jesus—one where He calls the whole church (His body) to disciple, teach, and baptize as they locate themselves in the environments and spheres of life where they have been placed.

Paradox 4: Holistic Gospel—Compartmentalized Delivery

Depending on particular denominational variations, missions can lie anywhere on the spectrum between evangelism and social justice: all parts of a whole with biases towards and specialization in one of more of them. Often the gospel is presented in a linear manner with emphasis on personal salvation and delivery from hell with issues of justice and care for God’s creation tagged on to give it a measure of authenticity. Sadly, churches in the missionized world were often built on these Western organizational lines of specialized ministries, and in the process lost the opportunity to contextualize the gospel in ways that would complement a naturally holistic way of living.

One doesn’t have to look too far back into history to see this false dichotomy being played out. How do people who claim to be transformed in their relationship to God turn their backs on the poor or ignore calls for just and righteous governance to be instituted? It’s been the perennial thorn in Church’s flesh (i.e., actually living out the gospel), and yes, it’s not going away anytime soon—all this while Jesus himself modeled the perfect way of gospel living.

In Matthew 9, after a long description of a day in the life of Jesus including healing, teaching, driving out a demon and raising someone from the dead, Jesus’ ministry is summed up in verses 35–36: Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds he had compassion on them … Jesus embodied the gospel. No compartmentalization, no nuancing or presenting distorted priorities. He just simply lived it in all its holistic and complete essence. Why can’t we? Is it because it is inconvenient or uncomfortable? Or, is it because we have never questioned the assumptions that drive our fragmented behavior and thinking? Of course, western mission is not fully to blame for this—but it has aided in its perpetuation.

And now, it has taken root in a more recent phenomenon: that of diaspora communities doing missions and sending mission teams back to their countries of origin. More diaspora-led missions have this same compartmentalized missions delivery system built right into their DNA. Once again money, and with it control and influence, present a well-disguised version of the same paradox, which in my mind is doubly harmful. Yes, people are being saved; but that is only part of the gospel, isn’t it?

Paradox 5: Me!

Here’s the kicker—I’m a product of western missions, however flawed, now completing the circle by migrating to and living in the west. Thousands of others like me are here because of the vision of Western missionaries and non-governmental agencies.

I’m a fourth generation Christian (from a Hindu background), whose faith was one that was brought, taught, and passed down by Western missionaries. I attended a church that was built by a South African missionary who died an untimely death from malaria.
But that same church also didn’t welcome indigenous populations until they had no one else to invite. The music was Western as were the church traditions. To this day, preachers wear suits or a full robe (cassock) notwithstanding normal temperatures of 30°C, while the local attire is more appropriate to the climate. I end my list of paradoxes with this because not everything is as bad as I painted it. The good and the bad travel together, which is the nature of a paradox.

**Will the paradigm shift?**

My guess is that it will not, at least not as long as the power and control is with the West or with Western-minded missions organizations. Money talks. It often dictates how mission is done in local contexts. It also commands the shortest route because of the need to report back to mission funders who are in many ways controlled by a budget. It is my belief that money has negatively influenced the ‘how’ of mission in the developing world. Maybe by 2025, when the number of Christians in China is expected to outnumber those in the United States, it may change—or maybe not!

Budgets and plans go together. Mission agencies require results (i.e., programs that produce results). In many cases the number of believers and churches planted are the required results.

The implications are that:
- The hard and long work of incarnational mission work is short circuited
- Relationship-building is sacrificed on the altar of expediency and efficiency
- Conflict escalates due to perceived “flow of funds” by other organizations and communities
- It precipitates an ongoing state of dependency

**Does it (the paradigm) need to change?**

Table 3.1 is not a list of binary, either/or factors. They are more like ends of a continuum. They signal a shift that I hope will characterize mission organizations and efforts of the future.

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**Chris Pullenayegem** is a Canadian of Sri Lankan origin who grew up in a multi-religious and multi-ethnic environment and brings a useful perspective into his work in the Canadian context. He has academic background in law, psychology, and change leadership. Being strongly rooted in reformed theology, Chris brings wisdom, knowledge, and skills in assisting congregations discover and fulfill their God-given role, especially in rapidly changing environments. Chris is a musician and loves the outdoors.
Future Opportunities and the Diaspora Potential

Lisa Pak

In this day and age of the global village, the inter-mingling of people groups and the meeting of cultures through immigration, business, travel, tourism, education, politics, social media, missions, marriages, sports, and even, unfortunately, conflicts, are occurring at unprecedented levels. As a result, local churches are faced with unique challenges that often expose and bring to light latent biases and prejudices but also remarkable opportunities unlike ever before. The rising diversity of demographics is a global phenomenon and presents a truly kairos gateway in reaching the nations even as they come to us. Thus, the growing presence of diaspora churches must be understood in light of God’s redemptive history and His kingdom plan.

The Diaspora in Canada

The term diaspora broadly refers to a “scattered population whose origin lies in a separate geographic locale.” For the Canadian context, perhaps even North American, this would mean immigrants who are visible minorities as opposed to the landed Anglo-Saxon communities, mainline churches and denominations. In the case of Toronto, where the National Offices of the Canadian Bible Society are located, the diaspora population is flourishing. One article states:

Foreign-born people account for nearly half of the population of Toronto. This gives Toronto the second-highest percentage of foreign-born residents of all the world cities after Miami. Unlike Miami, Toronto has no dominant culture or nationality, which also makes it one of the world’s most diverse cities. 49% of the city’s population belong to a visible minority group (compare to 4% in 1981), and visible minorities are expected to hit a majority of 63% of the Toronto CMA population by 2017.

What is more, the growing number of diaspora churches established by these people groups are dotting our neighborhoods and these communities bring with them a generation of diaspora young adults, youth and children that are truly an untapped resource and potential strength of the local church and the global kingdom of God. They are a particular generation of diaspora young adults and youth who serve as a bridge and nexus between cultures and generations and these qualities make them uniquely qualified and equipped by God’s sovereign will, for such a time as this.4

Biblical Examples

Consider the many individuals in the Bible who were part of the diaspora at various points in Hebrew history. Consider also how they were used by God because of their devotion and their particular historical circumstance. The particular example that I want to unpack here is that of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

On every conceivable level, these young boys were born into difficult times. In the centuries before, the leaders of Israel and Judah had committed, allowed and even encouraged such rampant idolatry and all the acts and customs that came part and parcel with pagan worship, and thereby brought upon Israel, then Judah, the judgment of God. Understandably, these were times when the few remaining godly, like Jeremiah and Habakkuk, were distressed at what they observed. Where was God? Where were the godly? Why was God allowing such evil and suffering? And what was the emerging generation to do? The chances of a devout generation rising up from the ashes of the ungodly idolaters seemed more than unlikely.

And just as God warned, King Nebuchadnezzar came with all his fire and fury. When Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and took the youths of Judah for his own courts, to train and raise up as servants of the Babylonian Empire, it was a foreign policy that aimed to dominate vassal kingdoms through cultural assimilation. The Babylonian Empire offered their noble youth captives what their native kingdoms could not: opportunity and a secure future. They ate of the king’s food, drank of the king’s wine, were educated by the masters, learned the Babylonian language, and they were also given Babylonian names. Daniel was given the name Belteshazzar, Hananiah was now Shadrach, Mishael was Meshach, and Azariah was given the name Abednego—all were names associated with Babylonian deities.

And despite this immersion into the pagan world, Daniel and his friends resolved in their hearts to obey God. They freely accepted all that was Babylonian—even excelling in the studies—insofar as it did not conflict with their devotion to God. They demonstrated that they could hold in balance the tensions of (1) loving God and being an effective and knowledgeable part of their contemporary world, and moreover, (2) being Jewish and Babylonian. And while they incited the ire of their colleagues and peers because of how much better they were at their jobs, they were undoubtedly used by God in pivotal moments of history to bring Him glory and to continue His history from the age of Babylon to the age of Medo-Persia.

Diaspora Today

Could the young diaspora youth of today have the same kind of spiritual potential as the youths who were taken captive to Babylon? Are they the Daniel Generation of the twenty-first century, learning from the secular world, excelling in their fields, fully devoted to God, influencing society for God’s kingdom?

Certainly, the young diaspora generation lives with similar undertones. They leave their homeland—some forced to just like the...
Hebrew youths—to come to a country that offers better opportunities for education, jobs, growth, living and a future for their children. They are educated in a different paradigm, learn a new language, immersed in another culture. Many have two names—a name from their homeland, a new name for their new country.\(^6\)

And perhaps it’s this geographical dislocation, this uprooting from the familiar and the acquired knowledge of change, rebuilding, relearning and starting over, that point them towards God. God’s people, from Adam and Eve, to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Naomi and Ruth, David, and those in the exile like Daniel and Esther, from Mary and Joseph and the birth of Christ to the scattering of the Apostles and the early church, God, Immanuel, has been with His people who have been ever on the move.

Movement reminds us that this world is not our home. Movement exposes us to different contexts and challenges our personal paradigms. Movement mixes things up. Movement brings people together who otherwise may not have occasion to meet.

**Advantage of Diaspora Churches**

The diaspora church in North America is God’s blessing and a huge asset that North American mainline churches and denominations must embrace and empower. As their youth and young adults emerge as leaders in their fields, most are bilingual (even multi-lingual) and have intuitive knowledge of customs, traditions and nuances that enable them to navigate very different cultures and systems with a facility that outsiders can rarely learn. In other words, this diaspora young generation has much potential to be extremely effective agents in a world that has become a global village—much like Daniel in the days of Babylon. But they need mentors and they need opportunity.

The strength of the mainline churches of North America lies in the intentional grafting in of the diaspora church, which includes not only prayers, financial support, and encouragement, but also listening to their voices as emerging leaders and giving them positions of authority, responsibility, and leadership. This is a not about affirmative action\(^7\) within the church but rather a challenge to make intentional and strategic changes to harness the full potential of our sisters and brothers, to whose nations we sent missionaries, and now, we have the privilege of having in our own countries and in our own churches. The diaspora people groups offer a wealth of knowledge, experience and testimony that reflect God’s creativity, His kingdom’s diversity and His ever-present power that is active today and always.

God has consistently called His chosen people out of their places of comfort so that they might follow Him. There are plenty of examples of God’s diaspora faithful throughout the Bible. At seventy-five years old, Abram left everything had to follow God to a place that He would show him. Jacob fled from his brother Esau and endured much injustice at the hands of his uncle Laban. Joseph was sold in human trafficking and found himself in Egypt. Moses was born in Egypt, experienced his own identity crisis and fled into the wilderness. Israel wandered as a nomadic people before Joshua conquered Canaan and settled in their cities. David, the great messianic king of the united monarchy, spent much of his time fleeing from King Saul in the caves of the desert wilderness. In the New Testament, Jesus’ own parents, Mary and Joseph, fled from Bethlehem to Egypt to Nazareth in order to avoid King Herod’s madness. All this shows that God has always moved His people all over the world, throughout history, according to His purpose.

The stress of migration and the tension of clashing cultures can only become a springboard for God’s kingdom work through obedience. Obedience of those on the move and obedience from those who receive fellow believers with Christian hospitality, mercy and grace. This is where the church must come together as the Body of Christ, exercising all the gifts, uplifting, edifying and always continuing to make disciples of all nations—nations that are not only abroad but, now, also domestic.

It would be arrogant to assume that the North American church leaders know more about a nation’s politics, customs, traditions, culture, paradigms, etc., than those who come directly from those very countries. It would be arrogant for the first-generation leaders of diaspora churches to assume that they are the ones who can move easily between both worlds. This is the unique position and calling, if you will, of the youth and young adults of the diaspora generations.

There is another advantage that is a result of the times. More than any other era in history, we live in a world that allows us to be more connected than ever, a day and age when travel is convenient and communication is instant. While many of us remember the days of analog, with each passing year, travel and communication are instant. While many of us remember the days of analog, with each passing year, the pace of change is faster than the pace of learning.\(^*\) I agree with this statement insofar as it applies to any generation that remembers analog but I disagree with the statement for our young generations. They are a demographic that rides the wave of change easily and with anticipation of what’s coming next. A changing and evolving world with finger-tip information and instant communication is their playground and they’re not as threatened by it as we might be. Look at any young millennial entrepreneur—they’re able to use all of it to their advantage. In many ways, they are the instigators and catalysts of this rapid pace of change.

So, when we couple the diaspora young adults’ sojourning experience with the day and age into which they are born, these may just be the God ordained elements that set the stage for this emerging generation to be effectively used by God for His glory. It is a remarkable thing that none of these circumstances are of their own making; they did not choose to be migrants in a millennial generation. They just happen to be the kids of migrants who happen to be born into this current world.

We know that, ultimately, God is in control. He has always had a plan and it’s never Plan B. When we take a careful look at global migration trends, listening intentionally to the testimonies of those diaspora people groups on the move, the opportunities that our diaspora sisters and brothers bring to North American churches becomes self-evident and one cannot be anything but excited and hopeful about what God has in store for the future days. In the same way that Gentile believers were grafted into the early church, the diaspora church and their young people are the spiritual transfusion that mainline churches and denominations need.

Whatever the world’s political climate, whatever the culture’s latest trend, we must not let the social conditions psyche us out. Despite living through the siege of Jerusalem, only to be taken captive to Babylon, thrown into a fiery furnace, survive the fall of Babylon, only to be thrown into a lion’s den and die in exile, Daniel and his friends knew something of the prophecy to go to Babylon and live and thrive. God is with them even there just as He is with us here, in our chaotic and turbulent times. As such, the current
social climate may just be the fertile spiritual soil for raising-up diaspora young leaders in the emerging generation in preparation for a world that God knows is coming.

The diaspora churches need to hold on to their unique stories and testimonies and, in the tradition of Psalm 78 and Deuteronomy 6, pass them down to their children and share them amongst the church as God’s story in real-time history. In the same way that the members of the early church were scattered throughout the Roman Empire with the gospel of Jesus Christ in their hearts, taking the salvation message to wherever the Holy Spirit led, the diaspora generation comes here to us, no doubt in the sovereignty of His will, hearing, believing and, in turn, going to make disciples of all nations and in particular their own people group.

In Toronto, as we observe these visible changes in our demographics, we are excited to see a glimpse of the mosaic of God’s kingdom on this side of heaven. It’s not perfect. Every church, diaspora and otherwise, has their unique challenges. Diaspora communities often have generational challenges yet it is especially encouraging to see the emerging diaspora youth and their devotion to God. We must never underestimate the ability of young people to understand and grasp things that are of God. We must never underestimate their interest in things that are of God.

In light of all this, there are two questions to consider:

1. Are traditional mainline churches and their leadership willing to take a step back to make room for the diaspora churches, not just at the table, but to take the lead in directing the conversation? Are you willing to sit at our table and not just on the mission fields?

2. Is the older generation of diaspora church leaders willing to pass the leadership, perhaps sooner than anticipated because of the pace of change in the world today, to empower, encourage, guide, even protect and ultimately lift up and challenge the young diaspora leaders (second and third generations) to take responsibility for church leadership (including in their homeland)?

As we consider the future of Christianity and the church in North America, we recognize and acknowledge that there are obstacles and challenges. Nonetheless, we’re also reminded that God works most outstandingly when the odds are outstandingly against His people. Thus, in a world that seems to be spinning out of control, we know all is not lost. May He raise up for Himself a Daniel generation for “such a time as this.”

**Notes**
6. My parents immigrated from Korea to Canada in the late ’70s and I was born in Canada in the early eighties. My legal first name is English, followed by my legal middle name which is Korean, and my last name from my father. My parents intentionally chose this order because I was born in Canada and wanted to acknowledge that I am Canadian in the fullest sense, hence, my first name is English. In acknowledgement of my roots, my middle name is Korean. Finally, in order to identify me as part of a family unit, my last name is my father’s. Many immigrants and diaspora people have two, even three, names.
7. In my mind, and I acknowledge that this may not always be the case, affirmative action sometime carries the notion of giving something to someone because of their minority status, not because they have earned it or because of their demonstrated or potential ability.
8. As quoted by Dr. Gary Nelson from Stephen Holmes, Board member of Tyndale University College and Seminary.

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Diaspora Dynamics for Doing Reverse Mission in Canada

Narry F. Santos

The global phenomenon of diaspora—the movements of people or their dispersion from their homeland—has triggered both diaspora mission and reverse mission in unprecedented ways. This article seeks to share three diaspora dynamics for doing reverse mission, in light of the diverse and changing context of multicultural Canada.

My Reverse Mission Story
Before discussing these diaspora dynamics, allow me to share with you my own story on reverse mission (i.e., the kind of mission involving missionaries and pastors from former mission fields who are now ministering in Europe and North America). I originally came from Manila, Philippines. My home church, Greenhills Christian Fellowship (GCF), was started by an American Baptist missionary forty years ago. After growing the church to more than a thousand in fifteen years, this missionary passed the baton to a Filipino pastor, who previously served for fifteen years in the United States and Canada as church planter, pastor, and Bible college professor.

This Filipino pastor’s philosophy of mission focused on intentional church planting. In 1997, he asked me to start the first GCF satellite (our term for a church plant) south of Manila. After serving for eighteen years, he left a legacy of twenty-three GCF satellites in the Philippines. Twelve years ago, GCF sent my family and me to do church planting in Canada.

From this journey of reverse mission and of seeking to fulfill our church-planting mandate, I present my reflections on what I consider as key dynamics on diaspora mission. First, we need to discover the value of diaspora mission. Second, we need to discern diaspora mission engagement through collaborative partnership. Third, we need to determine more sustainable diaspora multiplication and mission engagement for the next generation through further collaboration.

Discovering the Value of Diaspora Mission
As a mission field, the Philippines has been a recipient of global mission for several centuries. Specifically, GCF benefited from the missionary and pastoral work of a North American mission agency. It’s now time for us to pay that blessing forward through reverse mission—for us to help others after being helped by them. One of the best ways I have discovered to do reverse mission in North America—particularly in Canada—is to engage in diaspora mission.

The Lausanne Diasporas Leadership Team of the Lausanne Movement adopted a practical diaspora mission framework, which was presented at the third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Cape Town, South Africa, as a booklet entitled Scattered to Gather: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora. This diaspora mission framework is composed of three segments; namely: (1) mission to the diaspora (i.e., mission by the host churches to reach the diaspora); (2) mission through the diaspora (i.e., mission by the diaspora to reach their own diaspora group); and (3) mission beyond the diaspora (i.e., mission by the diaspora cross-culturally and inter-culturally, to reach the host country and other ethnic groups in their context).

To engage in diaspora mission, I needed to understand the diaspora landscape in Canada. According to the 2016 Census of Population from Statistics Canada, three population projections for Canada from 2011 to 2036:

- In 2016, between 55.7% and 57.9% of Canada’s immigrant population could have been born in Asia.
- In 2036, nearly one in five people could be of second generation (i.e., non-immigrants with at least one parent born abroad).
- Together, in 2036 immigrants and second-generation people could represent nearly one person in two (between 44.2% and 49.7%).

Mission is now at our doorstep through diaspora mission.

In addition, there are three figures in the 2016 Census of Population from Statistics Canada that are worth noting:

- The visible minority population was 22.3%.
- Out of that visible minority population, 48% were from Asia.
- The country with the biggest immigrant addition by 2016 was the Philippines (188,805). According to the 2011 National Household Survey, there were 662,600 people of Filipino descent living in Canada. The total number of Filipinos in Canada (as of 2016) was 851,405.

In other words, in 2016 the Filipinos formed the third largest Asian group in the country (next to Indian and Chinese Canadian communities). Filipinos also formed the largest Southeast Asian ethnic group in...
Canada. Why do I say this? Again, to highlight the point that mission is now at our doorstep through the diaspora.

For a first-generation Filipino church to significantly engage the diaspora in Canada, I realized this valuable lesson: we cannot plant churches in Canada according to the way we planted churches in the Philippines. I learned this lesson the hard way. Right after a friend picked up my family and me at the Toronto airport in April 2007, he told me directly, “You cannot plant a Filipino church in Toronto.” I asked why. He told me that it does not make sense to plant a Filipino church in one of the most multicultural cities in the world. Because of this realization, our church plant leaders went through a discernment process, asking God and ourselves this question: “What kind of church must we be in Toronto?”

This discernment process led us to our 3M church ethos: (1) learning how to be missional (i.e., adding value to our community through meaningful relationships and welcoming hospitality); (2) learning how to be multicultural (i.e., reaching beyond the Filipinos and seeking to engage the other groups that God brings in our community); and (3) learning how to be metropolitan (i.e., going where the Diasporas were flocking—gateway cities and urban centers). Such a discovery steered us to the second dynamic in diaspora mission: discerning diaspora mission engagement through collaboration and partnership.

**Discerning Diaspora Mission Engagement through Collaborative Partnership**

After ascertaining our church-planting ethos, we learned another hard lesson: we cannot do God’s mission mandate by ourselves. We needed others to come alongside GCF to fulfill God’s bigger kingdom mandate. So we had to learn how to seek the help of like-minded groups in Canada.

God guided us in this new and uncharted journey. He created in us a desire to be part of a bigger family of churches, so we joined the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (CBOQ) in the east, and the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada in the west. To help us to become missional and multicultural, we connected with the Tyndale Intercultural Ministries (TIM) Centre, which provided us with training and coaching. In fact, CBOQ provided three years of financial support for twenty-five GCF leaders to go through the TIM Centre certificate/diploma program on Missional and Multicultural Ministry and Church Leadership. Through this new form of mission engagement, we saw the value of intentional collaborative partnership of the 3As: Assembly (local church); Agency (denomination); Academy (seminary). What an encouraging sample of mission collaboration.

As we went through the training, I sensed that this missional and multicultural journey would be both hard and long. What encouraged us to continue was the consistent coaching that our church leadership received along the way. What was even more encouraging is that more than four hundred students from different ethnic backgrounds in Canada have taken these courses since we started this leadership program ten years ago.

We have seen that the first dynamic for doing reverse mission in Canada is discovering the valuable contribution of diaspora mission. The second is discerning diaspora mission engagement through collaboration and partnership. Let us now go to the third dynamic: determining how to sustain diaspora multiplication and mission engagement for the next generation through more collaboration.

**Determining Sustainable Multiplication and Mission Engagement for the Next Generation**

For sustainability in our church-planting mandate, we challenged our church leaders to use the Acts 1:8 principle in planting churches in our Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. For example, GCF Toronto (which is the “Jerusalem” church) is to give birth to GCF Peel (its “Judea and Samaria” church), and GCF Vancouver (its “ends of the earth” church). Then GCF Peel (its own “Jerusalem” church) is to give birth to GCF York (its own “Judea and Samaria” church) and GCF Winnipeg (its own “ends of the earth” church). In the first four years after my family and I arrived in Canada, we saw God raise six new GCF satellites (GCF Toronto; GCF Peel; GCF Vancouver; GCF Calgary; GCF York; and GCF Winnipeg).

Our desire is to be a multiplying church, which refers to churches that reproduce in deep (i.e., producing at least three generations of churches), wide (i.e., starting from our own “Jerusalem” to our “Judea and Samaria” and “ends of the earth” churches), and long ways (i.e., producing at least three generations of successive leaders). This heritage of church reproduction started from GCF Philippines, which now has twenty-three churches. So far, there are a total of thirty GCF churches in the Philippines and Canada.

After seven years of reverse mission in Canada, in 2014 my wife and I sensed God’s call for us to return to the Philippines to do church planting with Saddleback Church, south of Manila. We returned to our homeland, planting and pastoring the church for three years then sensed from God that our role to lay the Saddleback church-plant foundation had been completed. It was time to explore what God had in store for us next.

Upon visiting Toronto in October 2016, the GCF Canada leaders informed me of their Vision 2024: Trusting God for them to plant seven new churches in Canada for the next seven years. I was encouraged to hear of their passion to do more church planting.

But what blessed my heart even more was their desire to have a millennial summit in 2018, in order to discern how the Moses generation could pass the baton to their Joshua generation (of one-point-five and second-generation leaders). The intent of this summit, along with the succeeding ones, was to discern how the new and next generation leaders could work together in planting the next seven satellites in new and fresh ways. Those two visionary moves (i.e., the new vision of planting new churches and the value of preparing the next-generation leaders) sealed the deal for us to return to Toronto in 2017 and to help toward the fulfillment of this new God-sized vision.

God guided us again in this new and uncharted journey. We hoped to minister to the millennial leaders from the six satellites (plus the two new satellites in their infancy stage), along with the current church leaders through their leadership summit. God connected me with CBOQ and enabled us to avail of their research, resources, and insights of their Next Generation Ministries at the millennial summit. I was also able to renew my partnership with the TIM Centre and was introduced by the TIM Centre to the tribe of Issachar (a group of English Congregation Pastors of Chinese Churches in Toronto), who are also wrestling with second-generation ministry issues. This group of one-point-five-generation Chinese pastors shared with us the lessons that they have learned, and made their retreat venue available for us to use for free. These tribe of Issachar pastors facilitated the workshops
and the director of the CBOQ Next Generation Ministries gave the plenary talks. How encouraging it was to see another round of collaboration with CBOQ and the TIM Centre, along with a new like-minded partner in effective intergenerational faith transmission.

We held the GCF Canada Millennial and Leadership Summit in Ontario on September 14–15, 2018 with forty people attending. We also had the opportunity to take this summit to Vancouver on October 26–27 for the leaders and millennials of GCF Vancouver who were not able to make it to the national summit the previous month.

**Conclusion**

These are the key lessons that we have learned regarding the diaspora mission dynamics for doing reverse mission in Canada. We know that we have a lot more lessons to learn, especially in navigating the tensions and transitions of first-generation and second-generation immigrant church-planting leadership, and of engaging the upcoming and unchartered reverse mission realities. May we discover how we can intentionally collaborate better as partners in this diaspora mission journey in Canada.

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**Notes**

1. The term diaspora is originally used for the Jewish dispersion (i.e., the scattering of Jews outside Palestine). It is now applied to the scattering of people from their homeland.

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Global Growth
The growth of International Students is explosive: tripling since 1990¹ to five million in 2018.² What does that mean? As Ed Stetzer recently observed in Christianity Today, with a million international students in America, it means, “one out of 300 people living in the United States is an international student. That’s a pretty stunning number.”³ In Canada, half a million international students live amongst a population of 36.7 million: more than one in a one hundred.

Global Reach
In June 2019, Global Campus a conference about ISM⁴ will be held at the University of Toronto, Canada’s premier school, one of the largest in North America⁵ and Canada’s top destination for internationals. Here, one in five students are internationals on study visas, and many more, through immigration, do not need one. The campus is like its city: 51% of Toronto residents were born outside the country. Located in the heart of the world’s “most diverse” city, the University is the perfect host, an archetypal global campus.⁶

In 1982, Dr. Charles Malik said, “Change the university, and you can change the world.”⁷ In 2019, on a global campus like Toronto, this is literally true. And, as TV. Thomas, Chairman of the Global Diaspora Network, has observed, “…and they pay for their own ticket.”⁸ This is mission in reverse.

Global Unreached
Beau Miller, Executive Director of ACMI estimates that “two-thirds of the international students in the United States come from the 10/40 Window.”⁹ Dr. Yaw Perbi, President of

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Is International Student Ministry (ISM) just a useful way to connect with young people from around the world while they study in the West? I want to suggest ten reasons it should not just be at the fringes of your missiology but at the centre.

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Ten Reasons Why the Global Campus is the Future of Mission
Alexander Best

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Figure 6.1 INTERNATIONALLY MOBILE STUDENTS: GLOBAL (2011–2017)

Figure 6.2 U OF T INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BY COUNTRY/REGION OF ORIGIN

U of T has international students from 163 countries and regions. The top five countries/regions of origin are China, India, United States, South Korea, and Hong Kong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>11,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea (South)</td>
<td>582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ISM Canada, calculates a similar pattern: seven of Canada’s top ten student sending countries are in the 10/40 Window.10

As the latest data (see Figure 6.3) indicates: 77% of Canadian international students are from the 10/40 Window, totaling 571,210 or 1.5% of all those living in Canada. The Joshua Project estimates, 60% of these people are “least reached” by the gospel.11

Global Culture
Yet this is not the only reason ISM is the epicentre of missiology. For, it is not just that these young people travel across the world to study in our midst; it is what they encounter when they get here which is so strategic and so critical to the future of the world, to the future of the campus, to the future of the church. They do not just enter an alien country and culture; they encounter each other. The extraordinary complexity of the modern global campus is not just in its faces and voices, it is in the ideas and practices, of their hosts and of their fellow guests. How often do young Japanese rub shoulders with young Koreans or Chinese? How often does a Saudi sit in class with a Jew? The global campus is neither a melting pot nor a mosaic, it is a kaleidoscope in dizzying technicolour.

ISM in partnership with diaspora churches can penetrate the ethnic enclaves many retreat into. ISM in partnership with other campus ministries can draw them out, to interact with their global neighbours, with the peace and power of the gospel. The challenge and opportunity for Christian ministry, is not just bridging language and religious experience, or reaching the unreachable. Drawing such diverse young people into an encounter with God, who transcends each, and who invites all people “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” to stand together “before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Revelation 7:9–10, ESV).

The global campus holds the promise of a modern Pentecost, but within also lurks the danger of a modern Babel.12 International students, like their domestic peers, encounter on the global campus, a tale of two cities. Not so much Dickensian Paris and London on the brink of violent revolution, but Augustine’s: the City of God and the City of Man.13 As with medieval Rome, there is a war, between God and idols.

On the global campus, students are marinated in a globalized youth culture: of selfie identity, app abbreviated relationships, fifteen-minute YouTube heroes and tweet length thoughts. That is just the Western tech. Koreans, Chinese, and Indians bring their own iterations. On the global campus trends are transferred and new ones started. The future is being shaped here and disseminated around the world by pixel, and by hand. The Tower is built in our midst. Each continent is sending its future engineers14 to learn how to build their nation’s totems, each rushing to reach highest into heaven.15

The global campus fosters an intellectual atmosphere short on critical thinking, historical perspective and reflection, and no less overwhelming than the regimes of its global hinterland. What wrestling that occurs is rarely more than emoji deep debate about self-defined identity, sexuality, justice. But the fish’s invisible water is the unexamined presumptions of technocracy: never mind the purpose, show me the product; never mind the why, tell me how. The worldview that permeates the global campus is a kumbaya of undocumented human goodness and a trust in human ingenuity, with little grounding in our histories.

Yet people like the University of Toronto’s âme noire, Jordan Peterson, are taking on the assumptions and presumptions of the global campus. Peterson in fact deploys the biblical motif of the Tower of Babel to rebuke the delusions that deceive his students.16 As the National Catholic Register reports: “Peterson sees the story as a warning about the dangers of idolizing the intellect in utopian attempts to make heaven on earth.”17 In the two years since he refused to obey a university directive compelling the use of gender neutral language,18 his small YouTube lecture channel has garnered 1.8 million subscribers. His most popular video is called ‘Introduction to the Idea of God.’ In it he defends the Bible as “a book more durable than a stone, than any empire,” saying, “we don’t understand how it had such an unbelievable impact on civilization.” It has been watched 3.4 million times.19 There is a battle for young hearts and minds of the global campus. More Christians need to join the fray.20

Global Ministry
ISM has traditionally been conceived and conducted as first world work, a hybrid of domestic campus ministry and Western sending mission—without the airfare or the visa.21

The customer is the international student, the service provider is the ISM organization, paid for by local personal support raising, the dominant model of both missionaries and campus staff. This manifests in the style, structure and focus of ISM: the care and discipling of students by local Western staff and volunteers, often former missionaries or general campus workers. The increase in the direct participation of mission agencies is a new and welcome development. In cities like Toronto, with large global immigration, the diaspora church is becoming an ever greater...
and much needed participant, bringing as they do, language, culture, and living communities of faith in their mother tongues.

An initiative like Toronto’s Welcome Project,20 brings together churches and campus ministries and mission agencies and campus and airport chaplains, to greet some of the one hundred thousand new international students arriving at Canada’s busiest airport each year, and to connect them to local campuses groups and churches across the city, who run conversation classes, Bible studies, retreats, away days, and holiday dinners in family homes.21 In cities across North America similar work is happening, and more is needed.22

Global Impact

However, ISM ministries across North America are wrestling with a problem: the fruit of their labour, the state of the students who return home with a profession of faith. American ISM ministries have become acutely conscious of the challenges facing those who become Christians as international students, after they return home, most noticeably among the largest nationality, the Chinese. In Canada this is less apparent because so many graduating students remain and become citizens, incentivized by government policy.23

Last year, ISM organizations in North America formed a group to address the challenge of ensuring ‘returnees’ flourish, and this fall attended a conference convened by Chinese Diaspora, Hong Kong, and Mainland leaders. The overriding assessment of the Chinese hosts was that Western ISM sent back shallow Christians unprepared for the harsh challenges of a Christian in China and unable to relate to the distinct and different character of Chinese churches, returning with little practice reading Scripture in Chinese, or worshipping without western music and liturgy. Many returned with a sense of entitlement: to lead or be served. This was blamed for the high attrition of faith amongst Chinese students, with estimates of “recidivism” as high as 90%. It was a shocking indictment. The analysis may correlate with observations about domestic Christians graduating from Western campuses, and with critiques of the shallowness of Western Christianity as a whole. It presumed the Chinese churches had discipleship perfected.

The issue seemed at least in part about control: who should and could direct the ministry to international students, the church of home or abroad? This is a variation on the missiological struggle to navigate the shift in the locus of the church—from West to East, North to South—each pole uncertain of their role, responsibilities and rights.

Global Missionaries

ISM is a unique arena to explore and resolve these conflicts, because it is transnational and temporary. Students are temporary ambassadors, with a kind of dual citizenship: they belong and inhabit two worlds, if only for few years. They are what the Chinese call “1.5 Generation.”24 The only parallel is indeed the tiny contingent of global diplomats. Not only is the global campus world-shaping, it can be church-shaping. It requires, however, re-orientating our concept of ISM. In Hong Kong, this occurred with a simple question: “Given that nearly one and a half million Chinese are studying overseas, are not some of them Christians?” 25 This was an opening for an offer:

These students, your congregants, can be “embedded” missionaries, able to reach their Chinese peers during their foreign studies, more easily and with more understanding than Western ISM workers could ever have. What if Western ISM organizations, helped these Christian students land well in the West? What if you sent them early, so we could help them adjust to our language and culture, connect them with the ministries on the campuses they will attend, and nearby diaspora Chinese Churches? What if we helped train and integrate them into the leadership of campus groups to collaborate in reaching, caring and evangelizing their fellow international students?

This is bi-lateral mission: a partnership between Chinese churches and Western ministries. It is re-engineering of ISM to focus on recruiting, equipping and supporting global students to be the emissaries of the gospel. It is to focus ISM on the empowerment of the young, development of their leadership, and the support of peer-to-peer evangelism, discipleship and service. This is necessary to be more effective in discipleship and evangelism and returning well. It is also the antidote to one of the critical challenges of Western-led ministry. Lisa Espineli Chinn, formerly InterVarsity USA’s National Director of International Student Ministry, warns about the risks in our current model, “unknowingly putting international students at a place of indebtedness by our kindness and hospitality to the end that they cannot say no to us or to the Gospel we present.” Indeed, this dynamic may account in part for the problems of Chinese returnees:

Internationals who come from cultures that exhibit a strong sense of gratitude and respect to benefactors, may be constrained by their culture to not disagree or displease their North American friends and hosts. What is the impact of that in our friendship and evangelism? Or from the other side, what ethnocentric attitude does the North American display that hinder mutual respect and undermine trust? Do North Americans project that they have the answers, and the international student will always have the questions? How can there be more equity and equilibrium in the interactions between hosts and guests?26

Changing the approach, may also help the West directly. International students by their foreignness, are now like early missionaries to their own countries. They have a platform, not just to reach each other but to reach our students. The gospel on the lips of white Caucasians is a dismissible offence. With accent and pigment, it is a story freshly told, and re-heard. The variety of international students creates the possibility of a collective chorus, a witness that defies postmodern segregated truth; a diverse harmony that sounds a divine note (Revelation 5 and 7). We need the global church not just to help us reach their unreached, but to help us reach ours. As Johnson Hsu observes, “Within secular progressive politics, the voices of ‘People of Colour’ and other ‘oppressed’ peoples crying out for freedom to be people of faith, is heard more than similar cries by ‘privileged’ voices.”27

Global Campuses

However, the global campus is no longer a matter of them and us. Oxford University reports that, “student mobility is shifting from a largely unidirectional east-west flow to a multidirectional movement and encompassing non-traditional sending and host countries.”28 International education is becoming polycentric. Global campuses are becoming a worldwide phenomenon. China has one and a half million students overseas; but it has half a million foreigners studying in China (as many as in Canada).29 Many are from Africa, on scholarship, part of an intentional effort to increase the cultural, social, and economic influence of China, especially in regions where they are investing heavily.
the “One Belt and One Road” strategy. The top two nationalities of foreign students in China are South Korea and America. Imagine their churches and ISM organizations, equipping their students to be embedded missionaries in mainland China, reaching other internationals and Chinese. Some small initiatives are already underway. But they barely scratch the surface in China, let alone other global campuses beyond the West.

As International Student Ministry is itself being internationalized there is a need for multilateral collaboration. Networks like ACMI and the Lausanne Movement’s ISM Global and North American groups are critical, but more connections are needed, and across wider aspects of mission. There is a need for a multi-layered approach that includes engagement with the global campuses at its primary focus: work. It is the preparation for work, in every field of human endeavor, that attracts students to leave home. Apart from some welcome exceptions campus ministries, domestic and ISM, have been weak here. They focus on personal evangelism, personal piety, community and broad intellectual themes, of worldview, philosophic apologetics and hot-button issues around sex (LGBT and abortion). They have not focused on the very reason students are there, on what they will spend the rest of their lives doing: their future work.

**Global Workplace**

Apart from the ethical challenges facing future doctors around death (abortion and assisted suicide), there is little emphasis on what the Bible and Christian history teaches about the policies, priorities, and objectives of all these fields of human endeavour. Arguably, Universities have lost their intellectual rigour and critical thinking, and succumbed to “group think” and unexamined assumption precisely because Christianity has retreated from the fray. The rich history of Christian influence on everything—from architecture to law, science to industry, medicine to social care, justice to politics—but even Christians have been persuaded it was all bad. In his seminal work, *The Book That Made Your World*, Dr. Vishal Mangalwadi explores how the application of the Biblical narratives Peterson draws on, shaped Western civilization and through the missionary movement, shaped India, for the good. He started out to prove how bad it had been. But he came to appreciate its value and then believe himself. He illustrates how non-Westerners can understand, apply and convey the gospel, afresh.

The main reason campus ministries struggle is that most workers have little experience in the workplaces their students are graduating into. There is an urgent need for Christians in every walk of life to mentor, encourage, and support students who will follow them. Medieval trade guilds are an instructive model, the origins of the modern academy. Master craftsmen trained apprentices in carpentry, masonry, smithery, horticulture, and every trade society needed. They transmitted essential skills and knowledge and more. They transformed feudal societies, of the kind still operating in parts of the world, modeling new economic and civic structures: municipal government (which across Europe still meet in “Guildhalls”), trade unions and corporations.

They were deeply influenced by the Bible, transmitting its stories to the common people. The church became ever removed from local culture, worshiping in an unknown language (Latin) withdrawn behind a veil (the partitioned of naves and raised alters). It was the guilds who took the gospel to the streets, quite literally. The Medieval Mystery Cycles were the first moving-pictures, literally. Each guild would tell a Biblical story, apt for their trade (the carpenters did the ark, etc.) constructing a stage mounted on a cart. They acted out the tale as they wheeled around each side of the market square, for their stationary audience, watching and listening in their vernacular.

We need gospel guilds to play out the good news in the marketplace and the public square, growing as they go, global apprentices who will become masters of their trades, witnesses of the gospel and builders of the kingdom of God, in every corner of the world. The global campus is where they are most needed, and from whence they can have most impact. This year the Lausanne Movement will hold the *Global Workplace Forum* in Manila in the hope that global church will share and discover new ways to bring the gospel to work.

**Global Future**

The church has not been immune to building towers with its common tongue, not bearing witness to the Spirit’s revelation of Jesus Christ. We may try to build the response, brick by brick, but the City of God comes down from Him (Revelation 21:10), not built up by men. On the road from Babel to a New Jerusalem, Pentecost was the inflection point. The Spirit of God came down and reversed the curse of Babel and gave us a King to unite us. The disciples obeyed the call to gather, pray and prepare to be empowered and go. We need to go too.

God is re-gathering the nations, drawing their brightest hopes for the future, to a global campus near you. He wants to reveal to the next generation of leaders of every nation who He is. As Johnson Hsu puts it: “We have spent decades praying for the unreached. God has answered our prayers in part by bringing them to us. How will we and our churches respond?”

The future is coming, and it has bought its own ticket. Who will be there to meet it?

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TEN REASONS WHY THE GLOBAL CAMPUS IS THE FUTURE OF MISSION

Notes


4. The Association of Christians Ministering to Internationals is hosting the Global Campus Conference at the University of Toronto, June 13–15, 2019, http://globalcampuslive.utoronto.ca


7. Charles Habib Malik, A Christian Critique of the University (Inter-Varsity Press, 1982).

8. T.V. Thomas. See: http://globalcampuslive.speakfastthrough.org


12. The subtitle of the Global Campus conference is a question: “Babel or Pentecost?”


21. Including Australia, by historic origin and civil and educational derivation.

22. Ministries involved in Welcome Airport: International Student Ministries Canada, Inter Varsity, Power to Change (Cru Canada), Chinese Canadian Campus Evangelical Fellowship, OMF, and SIM. Learn more at http://welcome.ca


24. A consortium of International Ministries in North America, many involved in Global Campus, has online resources to help start new work, https://everyinternational.com


26. Johnson Hsu (Toronto Director, ISMC, University of Toronto Chaplain, Chinese Church Pastor), in discussion with the author.


29. Hsu, discussion.


40. Hsu, discussion.


42. ThisCity, ThisToronto, http://ThisCity.org
Why Are So Many Saying “Yes” to Christ?

Brian Stiller

In 1960 globally there were 90 million Evangelicals. Today estimates are that there are more than 600 million. I wanted to know why.

Two thousand years ago the Christian church began on the day of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem. Since then the demographic “center” of Christian populations has made its way across Europe.¹ With the surprising growth of the Christian community globally in the past fifty years, the demographic weight of Christianity in Africa and Asia has pulled this global center south and west. Demographers now place the center of population density of Christians in Africa.

The metaphorical center of world Christianity has literally moved from Jerusalem to Timbuktu in the nation of Mali. This is not merely some clever observation—it is a remarkable sign that points out what we otherwise might miss. Long a city name used as a metaphor for a far-away and unreachable place, today Timbuktu signifies this massive shift, as the location of the center represents a mighty upsurge in Christian faith around the shrinking globe.

What is the extent of that growth? The answer might come as something of a surprise, particularly to those in the West. Even those least inclined to dismiss religion from ideological modernist presumptions—the Lutheran sociologist Peter Berger, for example—during the 1960s fell into the trap of assuming that the trends in former State-Church Western European nations (such as France and Sweden) were part and parcel of modernization. In 1968, Berger projected that “[By] the twenty-first century, religious believers are likely to be found only in small sects, huddled together to resist a worldwide secular culture”² typified by the fragmentation of life and the division of labor. Thirty years later, however, these projections seemed far less plausible. As Peter Berger now notes:

The assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today … is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled “secularization theory” is essentially mistaken.³

The journey from Jerusalem to Timbuktu, with its relocation of the Christian center out of its centuries-long European habitat, alerts us that much is going on. As we will see, this growth and relocation is not driven merely by external forces, but also by re-expressions of faith in five major ways. These reasons, or drivers, expand the witness of the gospel resulting in remarkable growth of churches and the Christian population. Others do more in reshaping the vision and heart of the gospel, its self-understanding and ways of seeing its surrounding world.

Secular Assumptions

An analogy (of sorts) takes me back more than a few years, to my university days. The small graduate class in Montreal met in our professor’s home: it was the late 1960s. As he outlined why faith as a working framework for life was reaching its end, I heard background music coming from the kitchen—so I asked if we could listen. It was Judy Collins singing “Amazing Grace”, the longest-playing number-one song on the music charts, ever. The incongruity was striking. While the academy allowed that personal faith might have a sort of personal value, or even have a “cohering” or binding effect for people in need, the idea that it might become an overarching story, a meta narrative or a basis for an ethics of civic life, was dismissed out of hand. Religion in the postmodern age was merely a matter of aesthetics.

Science, it was assumed, would displace faith as a way to understand humanity, history would discredit religion’s explanations, democracy would give citizens power to overturn religion, and global industrialization would fix human dilemmas of poverty and sickness. In summary, secularism worked from the premise that “Religion’s regress spelled humanity’s progress.”⁴ This faith statement would drive out its predecessors from the dark ages of religious belief.

What is the basis for their conjecture? The hard secularization thesis claims that, as societies become increasingly scientific, both interest and need for religious faith will be replaced by self-confidence, leaving little need for a God (at least insular as to how one actually lives).⁵ After all, if we can put an astronaut on the moon, what need is there to rely on a creator-Being? If we can multi-transplant organs, what need have we of a healer-Being? If we can bring about psychological healing, what need is there of a therapist-Being? If social engineering can elevate the poor, what need is there of a supplier-Being? “No need,” at all, seemed to be the received wisdom of the West.

Despite such declarations, faith in the Majority World is on the rise. Even as public policy and the dominant elites in the West act as though faith is on the losing side, Western public interventions abroad are constantly confronted with surging faith. This is true not only in secluded worlds of congregations, mosques, or temples but in the wider spheres of human activity—politics, business, sports, media, arts, and science.

Even for that small group of university students in Montreal in 1969, our experience was different from what we heard in the academic bubble. Even as they posited their predictions—in the late 1960s and early 1970s—a grass-roots, counter-culture Christian faith was turning the secular assumption on its
nose among (of all people) counter-cultural hippies.

It was a movement of escapism. Ironically, as it turned out, the religious response of long-haired Christian humanitarians was much more closely aligned with what was really happening in the world.

A Surprising Surge

Even as that secularist current moved its way through our world, another stream was gathering strength. There is an unstoppable tide rising in most regions outside the West.

Africa

The 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh predicted that by the end of the century, Africa would be Islamic. It hasn’t happened. Within my lifetime, the Christianization of much of Africa would have amazed even David Livingston. In 1900 Africa was home to 8.7 million Christians. Today there are 542 million, with estimates that by 2050 this will rise to 1.2 billion. While Africa makes up 14.9% of the global population it holds 21.9% of the world’s Christians. In 1970, 38.7% of Africa was Christian (mostly in the Sub Sahara); by 2020 that will rise to 49.3%.

This continent is sharply divided. A dominant Islamic presence in the north—Egypt, Somalia, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, and Morocco—has been joined by the gradual but determined Islamic move below the Sahara. Sub-Saharan Africa now is mostly Christian. The historic presence of mission work has built a core of Christian churches, and the many educational and medical initiatives have created a bulwark of witness beyond which a vast indigenization of the faith has taken place.

Asia

When the Kuomintang government fell to Mao Tse-tung and his forces in 1949, there were under one million Christians in China. Though the Cultural Revolution, Christians were not only re-educated but also many were killed. Today the exploding population of Chinese Christians is quite impossible to number. Some estimate it to number over 70 million.

Best known (and symbolic of church growth in the majority world) is the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea.

Figure 7.1 Tracking the Centre of Global Christianity

As the expansion of Christianity spread throughout the Global South and East, the statistical centre of gravity largely followed suit. The most drastic change in the demographics of Christianity has been its growth in Africa (every region except Northern Africa, the majority of which is Islamic). This has caused the statistical centre of gravity line to move further and further south into the heart of Africa. It is highly likely that this trend will continue as Christianity continues to expand in the Global South and contract in the Global North.

Located near the government’s national assembly building, its large and unassuming campus is home to just under one million members, estimates that are that 5% of the city attends this church. While its sanctuary seats only twelve thousand, its many auditoriums seat another 20,000 and multiple services over the weekend provide for its attendees, including a Sunday school of thirty-eight thousand. This city is thus the home to the largest Pentecostal (and Presbyterian, and Methodist) churches in the world.

In 1960, there were 30 known Christians in Nepal; today, there are more than 1.4 million. Isolated from other cultures, the country did not allow most foreign missions. Then, some time after 1960, conversions began to multiply, seemingly without strategy or forethought. One link was in Britain’s traditional recruitment of Nepalese Gurkhas to fight in the British army. Enlisted, many serving abroad heard of the gospel and came to faith. Returning to their families and villages, they told about the Jesus they had met. Soon churches flourished. Another link lay in the relative lack of university training in the country. Most students went elsewhere, where they contacted Christians in the countries of study. After graduating they, too, returned home and, as with the returning soldiers, told their families and friends about Christ. Churches thus began to spring up in this remote country as a result of the remigration of Christianity through these global wanderers.

Latin America

Viewed as the most Christianized continent on earth, the spiritual transformation of Latin America has become a bellwether for Christian witness globally. Roman Catholics arrived with their European masters, forming a religious monopoly that made every effort to prevent Protestants from relocating there. In the twentieth century, however, as the move of Spirit-empowered ministries circled the globe, Latin American countries felt that same presence.

By mid-century, the Catholic Church in Latin America was in serious decline. So few males were entering the priesthood that most were brought in from abroad. Only 20% of its citizens were active participants. Protestant mission, especially Pentecostals, resulted not only in rapid Evangelical/Pentecostal increase, but also in Catholic revitalization. Drawing from the Gallup World Poll, Rodney Stark notes that in four of eighteen countries, Protestants make up a third of the population and in eight others, over 20%. The Pentecostal and Charismatic renewal movements triggered within Catholics a remarkable shift in emphasis in worship forms and community address. The gospel message, with its fire and zeal, is capturing the Latin heart.

North America

A recent United States survey triggered headlines that faith is declining: the Boomer generation is being replaced by Millennials, who are less and less interested in church. Such statistics obviously have a political orientation, where the word Evangelical, or even Christian, is often reduced to a demographic or voting description rather than a faith position. Some read this as “the sky is falling,” but Ed Stetzer disagrees: “Christianity and the church are not dying, but they are being more clearly defined.” In seven years (2007–2014) Pew learned those who self-identify as Christian dropped from 78% to 70%. The percentage of Roman Catholics moved from 23% to 20%, mainline Protestants from 18% to 14% and those declaring they have no religious affiliation from 16% to 21%. Evangelicals dipped one percent from 26% to 25% but added in adult numbers by about five million.

Gallup found actual weekly religious attendance was about the same as in the 1940s. New York City Pastor Tim Keller of Redeemer Church assesses—in a concerted move to provide places and train people for the gospel story—that today some 5% attend a church that has a “high view” of Scripture, up five-fold from 1% a couple of decades ago. He champions a strategy to raise that to 15% in a decade.

The rumor that God had “died” is being discredited, as the last four decades have shown religious belief also to be a destroyer of dictatorships, an architect of democracy, a facilitator of peace negotiations and reconciliation initiatives, a promoter of economic development and entrepreneurship, a partisan in the cause of women, a warrior against disease, and a defender of human rights.

TheDrivers of Global Faith

At the forefront of this amazing growth is a church that has come to know and appreciate the person and gifts of the Holy Spirit. In societies overborne by poverty, empty political promises and inner vacancy, there is within emerging generations a search for spiritual wholeness and societal peace. The rise of Christian witness is enabled by a new and revitalized encounter and infilling of the Spirit. Even though Christians are Trinitarian in theology, functionally we have operated on a dual pivot: the Father and the Son. This repositioning of our theology and spiritual practice to a more faithful Trinitarian vision is the basis of what we are today witnessing. This is the first driver.

Underlying everything that Christians are and do is their Bible—the second driver. In the early 1900s, the Reformation charged forth in both Germany and England as the Bible was translated into the language of people on the street, giving those who could read the opportunity to engage the text for themselves. William Tyndale, the first to translate the Bible into recognizably modern English from the original languages, said that he did this work so “a ploughboy” could read it. By so doing, Luther in Germany and Tyndale in England unleashed the power of the Word, enabled by the Spirit.

I was born with a Bible, in my language, in my hand. It has always been with me, without my ever knowing anything different. For people who have never read the Bible in their own language, a translation sensitive to their culture has an echo effect, resonating immediately with the images and concepts in their minds, rather than having to go through the mediation of a translator. The centuries of Bible translation, however, built a foundation on which the current rapid and stunning building of Christian faith rests.

The third driver of this tide-like move is the revolutionary influence of locally grown leaders and ideas. This is not unconnected to the first and second drivers—movements of the Spirit are profoundly indigenizing, as is the power of the written word in one’s own language. Great events such as the East Africa Revival, the Harriet movement in West Africa, the Galiwink’u Revival in Australia and the Pyongyang Revival of 1907 transformed Christianity into a local faith. In each of these, indigenous men and women moved from relying on Western-dominant personnel, forms, methods, and language to those of their own people. As nationals took over, the church changed, sending some mission boards into “fixes,” but cultivating on their own soil societies receptive to the seed of the authentic and biblical gospel. Indigenous leadership has been critical not only to the astounding growth of the church but also to being able to read the gospel in context—that
WHY ARE SO MANY SAYING “YES” TO CHRIST?

Notes
10. “It has developed churches in the city and suburbs. Many left the mother church to attend. The central church now is closer to 600,000.”
16. Toft et al., God’s Century, 8.
17. See Amos Yong, Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

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is, in a local language or dialect (vernacular) that expresses what they believe. Indigenization is one of the gospel’s most important strategies for expanding the global church.

Re-engaging the public square—the fourth driver—is, for many, one of the most surprising. Taught for decades, yes for a century, that the gospel was about inner change and eternal redemption, the Evangelical Church, both in its sending and receiving, left to others—often secularists, mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics—the running of government and public service. The shift of Christianity from a privatized spirituality to a wider and more engaged stance is profoundly upsetting for the traditional elites. On the other hand, it also projects into the public imagination of many cultures the shape and role of a new, vibrant and Christ-centered faith.

Wholeness—the fifth driver—is not a new application of the Bible. When I was a child, helping those in need in our community or raising money for those half a world away was embedded in what our church believed and did. Yet, not unlike the withdrawal from the public square, Evangelicals viewed our calling to be one of personal conversion and salvation for eternal life.

Inevitably agencies and societies sprung up, funded by our communities, who helped us see the human person holistically, not just as a soul separated from human needs. This more vigorous integration of the whole person—personal transformation, work, education, food, and family—is based on the understanding that the gospel speaks into all of life. This recognition elicits how injustices are often the fruit of systemic malignancies in the social body. Taking an ax to these roots is a biblical call. In the end, if God says he loves justice, we should too.

Conclusion
For two thousand years, the rise and fall of Christian faith has had much to do with renewal and revival. Stagnation is often followed by a break-in of the Spirit, refreshing the ever-new message of the risen Christ. While we know God has no grandchildren, each generation makes its own choice: one generation can say “no” to faith and the next “yes.” In recent decades, globally many are saying “yes.”

Communicating Effectively Across the Distance Divide

Warren Janzen

Have you ever faced communication frustration? Your team is scattered and so you connect via social media, chats, video calls, or internet work groups. You’re trying to manage all these media channels and still have some “real” interaction. Sometimes it feels so sterile, only focused on the task. Sometimes it feels like your teammates are distracted and not listening. Or sometimes you feel like you can’t read the room and make adjustments in the middle of a meeting. Maybe it’s the more mundane issue of s-l-o-w b-a-n-d-w-i-d-t-h. Or maybe it’s that one teammate is technologically challenged and always leaving their mic on or can’t turn their video on or #drivingmecrazy.

For the past fifteen years, I’ve been directing a dispersed leadership team. We connect regularly via video calls. We message each other and exchange countless emails. We collaborate via a team website and share documents. We’d all agree with the apostle Paul that communication is different when you are not there in person. Having heard how Jewish Christians were persuading the Galatians to be circumcised, Paul was broken-hearted and angry. Unable to visit them personally, he wrote a letter. In the midst of challenging the requirement that non-Jewish Christians must observe the Torah, he pauses to express frustration for the way in which he needed to write them: “… how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!” (Galatians 4:20, NIV). Commentator Scot McKnight understands Paul to imply that his written letter “is a weak communication in comparison to his mighty presence.”

Communication without presence changes everything.

Like me, you’ve probably had those moments when emails, WhatsApp messages, and even video conferencing has felt like weak communication. Our aim is not simply to get things done. We also want to develop and care for our people. Our goal is not simply performance but includes the hearts and lives of all on our team. Yet where we work and how we work and with whom we work means that we often can’t be face-to-face, at least not regularly. So, let me suggest a few ways to adapt your communication to make the most of it when your team is scattered.

A Fact of Life

Virtual teams are a reality for many of us. Whether scattered within a region or across the world, we gather in virtual teams to maximize limited resources. We want to tap into the deep talent, broad experience, and diverse cultural perspective of others. Yet we cannot afford the costs in terms of time, travel, and budgets to get together regularly. So, we create virtual teams. What makes virtual meetings different from face-to-face meetings?

• You are often dealing with multiple time zones
• There are distractions, including the temptation to multi-task on your computer
• You lack the visual cues, such as crossed arms and finger tapping, by which to read how others are engaging
• The group must operate without the casual conversations before and after meetings which deepen and maintain relationships
• Misunderstandings may go unresolved because you are not pressured by seeing your teammates in the lunchroom or by the copy machine
• Technological issues may delay or even derail your meeting
• Increased diversity can also introduce hidden cultural differences which may require extra effort to surface and process
• Team members may be dealing with physical and emotional isolation

How do we get the most out of our virtual communication? Are there ways, as the apostle Paul desired, to enhance your communication so that you can “change your tone?”

Key Practices

Technology continues to advance, and our work or ministry contexts continue to change. While there is no one answer to effective virtual communication, let me suggest seven practices upon which you can pursue efficiency with your tasks and effectiveness with your team.

I am going to assume that your team is clearly defined (who is on it and who is not), that it has a clear and compelling purpose towards those goals, and agreed upon ways of measuring progress. I am also assuming that each team member has adequate internet speed to manage and participate in your video calls and collaborative workspaces. Given these assumptions, let me suggest a few techniques for making the most of your communication when your team is scattered.

Foundation: Personal Relationships

1. Build and maintain the team through face-to-face meetings.

Over the past fifteen years, regular face-to-face meetings have built and sustained the relationships I’ve needed to work effectively.
with a team that is scattered in four regions of the world. I schedule at least three to four face-to-face meetings per year. Here team members can get to know each other better, build some shared (fun) experiences, and cement the foundational relationship on which the team functions. Convenience, cost, and technology shouldn’t prevent you from getting together. Email, video calls, and chats simply cannot match the emotional connection and intellectual engagement that real-time interaction provides.

2. Build understanding about your personal workspace.

A great way to bring out the human element of the team is to have each member take the group on a virtual tour of their workspace. Introduce your team to your home office, preferred coffee shop, shared workspace, or regular office from which you operate. Describe who else may be around and how you will deal with interruptions. If you are married and working from home describe the expectation which you have set up with your spouse and children. This helps people “see” you in your space and relate to your challenges. It prepares them for the distractions you may encounter. It makes you more than just a face on a screen, but a person with a context. Touring your workspace may even provide ideas for what they can do in their setting.

Frame: Establishing Predictable Patterns

3. Create a work platform.

Access to necessary information (like agendas, reports, announcements, and other documents) together with the confidence that you are looking at or working on the latest version of a given document is a must for good collaboration. An online team workspace allows you to create a shared understanding of team purpose, goals, strategies, resources, and progress. There are many good options for hosting your team project (Asana, Basecamp, Google Docs, Microsoft Teams, Podio, Zoho Projects, and others). Consider what kind of information your team needs to access and share. Consider how comfortable people are with a specific type of software or service. Collaboration software/services are only as good as the information inputted and accessed. Choose a team platform that is simple and reliable to reduce barriers, not create them.

4. Schedule regular meetings with clear agendas and agreed upon guidelines.

Teams that are scattered don’t experience the casual banter at the office and can face feelings of isolation. Regular meetings can be a lifeline for checking in and getting caught up on the greater community. Yet regularly scheduled meetings often get a bad rap. Common complaints are that meetings lack purpose and end up being a time waster. Carefully planned and well-articulated agendas create a positive pull for regular meetings. Be clear about the desired outcome for the meeting and its component parts. What items are for information? What items need a decision? What items need further input? What planning or coordination needs to take place? Vagueness on the agenda equals time wasted in the meeting. Consider identifying agenda items such as decide, develop, inform, and coordinate to set the purpose for each discussion. Scheduling across varied time zones can be a challenge. The World Clock Meeting Planner function of timeanddate.com is a great way to identify the best overlapping time opportunities for meetings.

Collect a set of guidelines for your meeting together. Post these on your team website and modify them as you learn from your experiences. For example:

- When you have a virtual meeting, arrive five minutes early so that you can ensure a good connection and catch up with other team members.
- Ban multi-tasking on team calls. Set a clear expectation that people will not be working on email while on the call (or scanning the web or reading news). Everyone should be fully present and engaged during meetings.
- Ask everyone to turn their camera on. If feedback is not an issue, keep all mics on so the group hears the garbage truck roll by or the dog bark or the baby cry, bringing real life into an otherwise sterile conversation.
- Agree on how people will be expected to participate during meetings. Virtual meetings make it difficult to get the attention of the group when you want to speak. I have found it effective to periodically ask quieter individuals if they have questions or anything to add to the discussion. This is especially helpful when you can’t see body language and will create space for those who might be more reticent to speak up.

- Determine how you will make decisions. When voting or affirming a direction, will the leader ask each person individually? Or just ask for dissent?
- Have a backup plan if your internet drops. Be able to connect to the group call by phone (and have that number available). Be able to text via an agreed upon app so that you can quickly determine what to do next.

5. Normalize communication between meetings.

Establish how you will contact people when you need them to engage with an issue right away. A helpful working style is to turn off your email notifications and create blocks of time during the day to focus on one topic or task. If your teammate is doing this and you need them to see an email right away, how will you get their attention? Agree upon a phone app or other web app by which you can direct their attention to a critical issue, and make sure they have those notifications turned on! For example, I have my email notifications turned off. I check my email twice a day. I have turned on my WhatsApp notifications as well as another app for secure communications. That way my team knows how to get me if they have a time sensitive issue.

Establish agreed upon response times to email. Determine how an email from this group will be prioritized and by when a team member can expect a response.

Craft emails wisely. Put the key focus in the subject line and indicate if a response is needed immediately. Know your audience. If your team is made up of more than one culture, understand how each person likes to be engaged. Do they want you to state the point of the email and your request right at the beginning? Do they want to see a case built first and then the point and request made? Understand how your email will be received and then craft it to fit the recipient. Perhaps your team will agree on one set format for emails. Either way, figure out how best to communicate through this often used medium.

Agree on shortcuts. If I have a very brief request, I will write it in the subject line of an email followed by EOM (end of message). That way the recipient knows they have everything in the subject line and don’t need to open the email. If I need a response by the end of the day, attach a red flag to the email and include PRT (please respond today) in
the subject line. These help team members triage their email and see which ones they need to get to first.

**Finish: Getting the Message Right**

6. Match your medium to your message.

When the apostle Paul needed to communicate, he had basically two choices: visit them personally or write a letter. We enjoy multiple communication channels, but they are not all suited for every kind of interaction. Select the right communication channel for your message. Talk individually with your team members about their preferences. As much as possible tailor your communication for greatest impact. Be sensitive to each person’s language ability and cultural background. How do they expect to be approached? If you are the leader, is there a power/distance barrier which inhibits how they communicate with you? Reaffirm your desire to both develop them and be developed yourself as you work together on the task at hand. Consider the following situations and how you can best communicate.

- **Urgent.** As mentioned earlier, have an agreed upon method by which you can connect with team members and point them to an urgent email or set up a quick call. Make sure they have the notifications for that app turned on!
- **Complex.** For those situations where a lot of detail and explanation is needed, consider using two modes of communication. A detailed email combined with a phone or video call.
- **Response needed.** If you need a quick turn around with a response, consider if the recipient will have questions or need clarification to get you what you need. If this is the case, contact them via phone or video call.
- **Emotional impact.** If a message has the potential of landing with a thud on someone’s day, generating a strong reaction, do it via phone call or video call.

7. Beware of communication overload.

Bing! The app notification goes off and you stop what you are doing to check your screen/phone/watch. Numerous studies have shown that these kinds of distractions diminish our concentration and lower our performance. One study went on to note that even if we know we shouldn’t check that message, the feeling of “divided attention” is so uncomfortable that we check it anyway. Too many notifications and we feel overwhelmed.

Virtual communication complicates this by cutting out one important step in normal office interaction—the personal act of getting your co-worker’s attention. Working at a distance means you don’t have to step into their cubicle or office. It removes the feeling of interrupting them. Thus, it becomes easier to send a barrage of email or messages. You can end up bombarding your teammate with chats and email without realizing how much you are distracting them or demanding their attention.

**Conclusion**

When you write that next email or send your next text, treat it as if you were stepping into your teammate’s office and interrupting them. How many times do you want to do that today? Talk it over with the team. Do they want each email to focus on only one topic? Or are they willing for a consolidated summary once or twice a day? Set the team’s expectations and then develop a template for routine status updates.

On the receiving side, test out limiting how often you check your communication channels. Other than your agreed upon emergency contact channel, try turning off all other notifications and only check your email twice a day. This will free you up to give undivided attention to your work and remove the struggle of a divided mind. “How I wish I could be with you now and change my tone.” By testing out and adopting some of these practices, even though you can’t be with them you may be able to change your tone.

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**Notes**

1. Scot McKnight, Galatians: The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 221.

**References**

Canada On Mission

An encouraging look at the current missiological thinking and unique contributions that Canadians are making to global missions in Canada and beyond.

More missiographics can be found at Missiographics.com

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The official beginnings of SIM are commonly dated to the arrival of the SS Accra in Lagos harbor on December 4, 1893. On board were three young men, two Canadians and one American: twenty-five-year-old Walter Gowans, the acknowledged leader of the band, twenty-three-year-old Thomas Kent, and twenty-one-year-old Rowland Bingham. Kent, the lone American, died along with Gowans in 1894 while on their first trek inland seeking to reach Kano, while Bingham was convalescing from fever in Lagos.

Though Kent is equally honored for his courage and sacrifice in the cause of Christ, the focus of this article is on his Canadian colleagues. That is an advantage to the author because the sources available to explore the spirituality of his colleagues is much greater and more readily available. For Gowans the sources include a fairly well-documented history of his family, a limited amount of correspondence, and his journal. For Bingham the most important sources are gleanings from his writings as editor for several decades of the Evangelical Christian and its predecessor periodicals, two books by him, and several books and articles about him and SIM. Of the two men, Gowans' spirituality is much simpler to discern and describe. He was very expressive, even emotional and transparent, in his writings. Bingham, by contrast, was more reserved about personal feelings, although he held strong convictions and opinions and could be quite expressive when addressing what he viewed as wrong. The depths of his spiritual commitment is hinted at in many quotes by him, but is most apparent in his perseverance and in his entrepreneurial pursuits to address the spiritual needs that God placed before him. Both men shared the blessing of being raised by parents with strong spiritual commitments, and both shared the challenge of emigrating from Britain to Canada in the years prior to their departure for Africa.

**Formative Years**

Walter H. Gowans was born September 17, 1868 in Kilmarnock, Scotland, in the same area from which David Livingstone had come. He was the fifth of nine children. His parents, John and Margaret, both of Presbyterian stock, raised a close-knit and devout Christian family.

Clearly Margaret seems to have been the dominant spiritual influence in the lives of her children, managing to establish strong bonds with each one. She mentored them in the Bible, in prayer, and in concern for those in distant places who had no knowledge of the Lord Jesus. In later years she would be a strong influence in the decisions of both Walter and his older sister Anne to enter missionary service, as well as being a key factor in persuading Rowland Bingham to join Walter in reaching the Sudan.

There is less information concerning John's life and his interaction with his children, but what there is seems to indicate a quiet and humble man, a brewer by trade, who loved his family and provided well for them. He emigrated with his family to Toronto in 1877. Walter still referred to him fondly as Papa at age twenty-five.2

Rowland V. Bingham was born December 19, 1872 in East Grinstead, in the county of Sussex in southeast England. This is the same place where seven years previously the China Inland Mission had been founded. He grew up in a God-fearing “dissenting” home (probably Methodist), one of the older of eight children. When his father died suddenly he felt an inner compulsion to do what he could to help support the family. Although his father believed he had made good provision for his family in the event of his death, an unfortunate legal ruling kept the estate unsettled for twenty-one years, with only a meager allowance being provided for his widowed mother and her children.

Providentially, because Bingham had convinced both his mother and teacher to allow him to start school at age three with his older brother, he was able to secure a position as “pupil teacher in an endowed school” at age thirteen, earlier than would normally have been possible. The school, where the local Anglican clergyman and curate alternated in presiding over chapel, was low church in approach and presented Bingham no crises of conscience for two years. A new high-church headmaster, however, introduced numerous rituals which Bingham described as “flummeries,” and said, “my puritan blood revolted.”

When he ceased attending the local Anglican church and began attending a nearby Methodist chapel, the headmaster threatened to fire him. After conferring with his mother, Bingham resigned instead, giving a three-month notice. Bingham described this time as “one of the most decisive periods in my life.” He was unsatisfied with all his efforts to be righteous, and abhorred unconquered sin in his life. It was during this period that he became acquainted with the Salvation Army. It was in hearing their message that he came to trust Christ alone for salvation and gained the assurance of sins forgiven.

When he shared what had happened in his life with his mother, she was mortified that her son had found among the simple people in the derided Salvation Army what he had not found in the Church. In the months that followed he began reading Scripture at breakfast, often with his siblings paying very little attention. Eventually, however, a woman visiting his mother responded with great interest in what he was reading, and the fifteen-year-old had the joy of leading her to faith in Christ.

It was not long after that a crisis of conscience led to his departure to Canada. The predicate for the move was the need to sell tobacco in the small shop that his mother ran. Though his father was a heavy smoker himself, he had warned Rowland as a small boy never to take up the habit which had
enslaved him. Additionally, as the Salvation Army also took a firm stand against smoking, he was put in a difficult position when boys he was dealing with in the Salvation Army would come in wanting him to sell them tobacco.

When his mother insisted in spite of his concerns that the store must continue to sell tobacco in order to make ends meet, Bingham quietly began to plan his departure, and at age sixteen boarded a boat for Canada. “I recognized from the Scriptures that I owed a duty to my mother; but there was also a duty to my conscience.” He went on to say that he never told his mother the reason “as it would never told his mother the reason “as it would never have satisfied her conscience.” He went on to say that he never told his mother the reason “as it would never have satisfied her conscience.”

Life in Toronto
Walter Gowans was nine when his family emigrated to Toronto. The family quickly became part of St. James Square Presbyterian Church, a flourishing body of middle-class folk, known among other things for their keen interest in foreign missions. Walter became very active in the young people’s society, also known for many years as Christian Endeavor. One of those whom Gowans was instrumental in leading to Christ through that ministry was Thomas Kent of Buffalo, NY.

While Walter’s interest in missions was fostered by his parents’ passion for the unreached, and that was an integral part of his upbringing as a child, it was the reinforcement of the mission emphasis at his church that led to his decision to become a missionary. In particular, it was the influence of its prominent pastor, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Henry Kellog, a Princeton-educated former missionary to India who had been instrumental in translating the Bible into Hindi. Besides stoking Walter’s missionary fervor, he also passed along his premillennial views on eschatology as well as his understanding of faith healing.

Walter’s moment of decision occurred sometime between 1886 and 1890. It most likely coincided with the great outburst of missionary enthusiasm in 1888, when dozens of young men and women from Toronto were stepping forward for missionary service. This was the same year in which Gowans turned twenty years old, and Hudson Taylor came to Toronto spawning the beginning of a great movement in Canada for foreign missions. The key to the movement was that finally there were clear outlets for the missionary zeal that already existed, certainly through the China Inland Mission, but also through the denominational and faith missions that caught the vision.4 That same year of 1888 found sixteen-year-old Rowland Bingham sailing alone to Canada. He first worked on a farm for about a year, and then found a job as a clerk in Toronto. In the evenings he played his autoharp in a Salvation Army band. He became troubled though, that while the Salvation Army was effective in leading many of the poor and delinquent to Christ, it was ineffective in grounding them and building them up in the faith.5

One day in 1890 while selling the Salvation Army magazine, The War Cry, on a main street of Toronto, he was approached by “a venerable looking gentleman in clerical garb.” Alywn Austin describes the interchange and its result:

“Tell me first if you are saved, Captain Bingham?” Pastor Salmon asked, “How do you know it?” Haltingly, Bingham answered that he had the witness of God’s Spirit, but Pastor Salmon persisted and took out his New Testament, “and there on Toronto’s busiest street undertook to drill the youthful Christian worker on the scriptural basis for assurance of salvation.”

This was a formative moment of Bingham’s life. Although they did not encounter each other for two years, Pastor Salmon invited him to live in his home and he became his pastoral assistant at Bethany Chapel. Pastor Salmon was the founder of the Dominion Alliance, the Canadian branch of The Alliance founded by Rev. A. B. Simpson in New York, that later became the Christian and Missionary Alliance in 1897.6

After a breakdown of his health and experiencing divine healing, Simpson left the Presbyterian church he was pastoring in New York City. He not only established what became a new denomination, but also articulated what became a new theological formulation—the “four-fold gospel;” Christ the Savior, Christ the Sanctifier, Christ the Healer, and Christ the Coming King. This man and his teachings became very important in the lives of all three of SIM’s founders, especially his understanding of divine healing and of premillennial eschatology. Gowans and Kent attended Simpson’s New York Missionary Training Institute in New York City from 1891-1882.7 The Institute had been founded in 1883, the first in North America modeled after Grattan Guinness’ East London Training Institute, which in turn was founded in 1873 as the first interdenominational mission training institute.8

Interestingly it seems to have been a visit by H. Grattan Guinness to North America and pleadings by him on behalf of the unreached millions of the Soudan that helped to solidify Gowans’ leaning that direction, though the great majority of those becoming missionaries from Toronto were heading to Asia. His mother would later comment that Walter had been drawn to the Soudan “because he felt he should go not just to the needy, but to those who needed him most. So he studied the great mission fields of the world and concluded that the interior of the Soudan, with its sixty-ninety million unreached people was to him the place of the divine call.”9 The place where Gowans studied to learn about the “great mission fields,” and where his desire to go to the Soudan in particular developed, was Simpson’s Missionary Training School.10

In 1895 Bingham also enrolled in Simpson’s Institute to gain more theological training. This was after his return from Africa following the deaths of his friends, and before the founding of a formal Council and structure for the mission in 1898. It was also during this time at Simpson’s Institute that Bingham pastored a Baptist church in Newburgh, New York, and came to worship as a Baptist for the rest of his life.11 Over the next decade he also moved away from Simpson’s understanding of Divine Healing, culminating in his formal repudiation of the view with his publication of The Bible and the Body in 1920.12

Africa and Beyond
The landing of the three SIM founders in Lagos harbor December 4, 1893 marked a pivotal moment in their lives—one that set a tragic trajectory for Gowans and Kent humanly speaking—but one that set in motion a divine plan that has achieved amazing things. To get there they had been rebuffed by numerous missions in both North America and Britain, and been told that their desire to enter the interior of the Soudan was unrealistic and unworkable. They had also gone with minimal financial resources in hand and little assurance, beyond their trust in God, that adequate funding would be available as needed. They were also told by Bryan Roe, the Superintendent of the Methodist Mission in Lagos, “Young men, you will never see the Sudan; your children will never see the Sudan; your grandchildren may.”13

The heart and spiritual temperature of Walter Gowans are captured in certain
entries from his diary and in a letter he wrote shortly before his departure for Africa to the Young People’s Society of the St. James Square Presbyterian Church in Toronto, with which he had a strong connection. Four very passionate and courageous spiritual commitments shine through:

1. Burden for the least reached: “As most of you are aware, I anticipate going to the Soudan—a pioneer for Christ. The Soudan, with a population of from 60 to 90 million, is, of all foreign fields, the most destitute of the gospel, being almost entirely without a representative for Christ.”

2. Love for the lost more than for life: “Our success in this enterprise means nothing less than the opening of the country for the Gospel; our failure, at the most, nothing more than the death of two or three deluded fanatics…. After all, is it not worth a venture? Sixty million are at stake? Is it not worth even risking our lives for so many?”

3. Faith over fear: “It is said that God has closed the door to the Soudan. Beloved! God closes no door to the Gospel. It is not God, it is the enemy who closes the door. With God no door is closed. We have simply to march forward in the name of Jesus, and in the faith of God, and the doors must and will fly open every time. Hallelujah!”

4. Maintaining an eternal perspective: “Diary for 9 August 1894: I am 3 days from Zaria. I would have been at Kano long ago were it not for the repeated delays caused by the war on the road. Written in view of my approaching end which has often seemed so near but just now seems almost imminent, and I want to write while I have the power to do it…

“I have no regret for undertaking this venture and in this manner my life has not been thrown away. My only regrets are for my poor Mother, and for her sake I would have chosen to live…

“Don’t mourn for me, darling dearest Mother. If the suffering was great remember it is all over now and think of the glory I am enjoying and rejoice that your boy was permitted to have a hand in the redemption of the Soudan.”

Rowland Bingham’s Perseverance
The story for Rowland Bingham was much longer, and as a result could be written about in multiple chapters. Bingham’s own book, Seven Sevens of Years and a Jubilee, was written in such a way and tells the story of the Sudan Interior Mission from its beginnings in 1893 until 1942, shortly before Bingham’s death. We pick up the story here with Bingham’s two-year pastorate of the Baptist Church in Newburgh, New York, to which he brought his new bride three days before the mission was reborn. He had taken the pastorate in Newburgh with the understanding that the emphasis of his ministry would be upon missionary work, and his new wife came sharing with him in that passion. He later said of her, “But for her loyal support, wise counsel, undimmed faith, sacrificial service, and able cooperation in every phase of the work, I question whether there would be any Sudan Interior Mission today.”

Bingham describes the transition from pastoring in Newburgh to giving his complete attention to the work of the mission in this way:

During the two years of my ministry at Newburgh I saw several workers go out from the church to the regions beyond, but I could not rest! Again and again I secured leave of absence to go on extended tours to plead the cause of the Sudan. The greatest interest and response came in the city of Toronto…. I was able to form a missionary council there. When God gave a gracious revival in my church I felt it was to set His seal upon my ministry and to release me to take up full-time work for the new Mission.

After moving to Toronto against the advice of his Council, because there were no funds to support him and his wife, Bingham suggested that there be separate accounts for the mission and for their living expenses. He said that they would trust God to supply both, but that the two would be treated entirely separately. He was pleased with the arrangement and said, “I was now where I could devote myself wholly to preparing for the next expedition to the Sudan.”

In 1900 Bingham again tried to penetrate the Sudan accompanied by two young men. Within three weeks, however, he was again stricken with malaria, admitted to hospital, and sent to Britain on a stretcher. The two young men, though assuring him they would continue on, listened to the many naysayers in Lagos, and followed him on the next boat. Bingham called it the darkest period of his life.

Despite Bingham’s sense of failure and despair, and the less than enthusiastic support of his Council, he continued to labor and saw four new recruits come forward for the Sudan within six months of his return. In 1901 this third party sailed from England and established the first station of the mission at Patigi, about two hundred fifty miles from Lagos. From that humble beginning SIM under Bingham was well on its way to becoming what was arguably the largest Protestant presence in Africa, with over four hundred mission members and hundreds of established churches.

Bingham Summary
Over the next forty-one years Bingham served not only as General Director of SIM, but also as editor of The Evangelical Christian, Canada’s only interdenominational evangelical magazine at the time. From that platform he not only spoke to the pressing theological issues of the day, but tirelessly promoted both foreign and domestic mission and outreach organizations. In addition, he personally initiated and supported several other ministries where he saw particular need including Evangelical Publishers (1912), Canadian Keswick Conference Center (1924), and the Soldiers’ and Airmen’s Christian Association (1940). Space does not permit sharing much from the plethora of significant quotes by Bingham during the course of his life. We shall conclude, therefore, with just three by him, and one summary about him by his biographer and close associate, J. H. Hunter. Together they say much about his spirituality:

No Christian can faithfully study the Word of God without being impressed with the solemn obligation resting upon the Church to make Christ known to all nations.

The problem of the basis of church fellowship is growing more complex every year, and we question whether it will be greatly relieved by the organic unions everywhere proposed…. In whatever ecclesiastical party one finds himself placed, he is blind who does not recognize that outside it are some of the best saints that God and grace have made, and to whom every yearning of Christian love
draws one….More and more it is being recognized that the lines of fellowship must be drawn horizontally, and that its sweetness will be measured by the plane of our fellowship with our risen Lord—fellowship dependent, not upon knowledge or assenting to common truths, but to "walking in the truth."22

Third stanza of three of a poem called "Neutrality":

Then why go ye limping between the two peoples?
Why not make choice between the two sides?
Why sit ye astride both sides of the fence line,
When rightness and truth on the highway still guides?
Neutrality never a right cause has furthered,
Compromise never made peace that abides,
Quit limping and halting 'twixt base things and true things,
When truth makes its challenge, take the right of two sides.23

"Dr. Bingham's visits to the field in 1915, 1928–29 and 1937 each gave the work on the field a big push forward. Nothing in the will of God daunted him, no matter what odds were against him. 'BY PRAYER,' 'FAITH MIGHTY FAITH,' and 'WAIT ON THE LORD' were his watchwords….Dr. Bingham said, 'It is not my "mighty faith" but my little faith in a mighty God.'”—J.H.Hunter24

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Notes
The full list can be seen at http://www.finishingthetask.com/downloads/FTT_UUPG_List.pdf.
3. This picture of Bingham’s early life is summarized from his own description written in 1933 and quoted at length in Hunter, Flame, 35–47.
6. Austin, “Toronto,” 44.
13. Bingham, Seven Sevens, 16–17; Corwin, By Prayer, 29–32.
15. Bingham, Seven Sevens, 24.
17. Bingham, Seven Sevens, 25.
18. Bingham, Seven Sevens, 29–31; Corwin, By Prayer, 44–46.
There are two opposite kinds of errors in cross-cultural communication. One is that a missionary seeking to communicate the gospel cross-culturally may underestimate the problem.

For example, the editor of a well-known Christian magazine visited Irian Jaya back in the early days when it was still called Netherland New Guinea. He arrived at a station called Mulia, and there were several thousand Dani who had just made their initial profession of Christianity. They were curious about this outsider from America, so they arranged a speaking engagement where Dave Scoville of the Unevangelized Fields Mission would be the interpreter. Dave said to the editor before he began his address, “Please try to keep the subject matter very simple. Remember, these stone-age people are not familiar with many of the concepts of the Western world. Also, please try to keep your vocabulary simple, because I’m still rather green in the Dani language.”

“Oh, I’ll remember to speak on a simple level,” promised the editor. When he started his first sentence, it went something like this, “Three weeks ago I finally got my visa from the Russian Consulate in New York City and was able to fly across to Europe; then I took a train across the Iron Curtain.” About that time he heard Dave Scoville heave a massive groan behind him. The opposite error is the danger of overestimating the difficulty and insulting the intelligence of those with whom we’re trying to communicate. There’s the story of a church that had a banquet to open a mission conference. A deacon found himself sitting next to an African brother who had just arrived in the States. Someone whispered in the deacon’s ear, “This fellow on the other side of you there, he’s just arrived from Africa and he probably doesn’t know English, and he probably feels very bewildered being over here in the United States. Keep that in mind if you enter into any conversation with him.” So the deacon waited until the African had his chicken on his plate, and then the deacon leaned over and said, “Munch, munch, munch. Good, eh?” The African turned and looked at him and said, “Mmm, good.” Later the coffee was served and the African was downing cup after cup, so the deacon thought he’d try again. He said, “Glug, glug, glug. Good, eh?” And the African replied, “Mmm, good.”

By a change of plans that the deacon hadn’t heard of, the African turned out to be the main speaker at the banquet. He stood behind the pulpit and delivered a speech in flawless English with an Oxford accent as crisp as lettuce freshly plucked from the garden. By this time the poor deacon was coming apart at the seams and wishing he could slide down under the chairs or through a crack in the floor. After the African finished his address, he walked down from the pulpit, passed the chair where the deacon was sitting, and said, “Blah, blah, blah. Good, eh?”

How can we avoid these two opposite errors? As I’ve traveled from Christian colleges to seminaries for our mission, I’ve received the impression from many students that they are overwhelmed. I know of one professor who gave lectures in a certain group of seminars arranged by a friend of mine who is truly a great missionary statesman. After the professor left, my friend said, “Our students were dismayed. It took me ten or 12 days to overcome the negative feeling that they had. He emphasized so strongly the multitude of mistakes that you can make that they were discouraged about the possibilities of future missionary work.”

As I look at the problem of cross-cultural communication and as I think back on my own experience and the experiences of many people, it hasn’t been all that grim. A lot of us have done the right thing, at least part of the time. Some people must have done something right or 13% of the population of Korea wouldn’t be Christian today. Nor would there be 100 thousand baptized believers among the Karen tribe of Burma or some 900 to 1,000 churches that have come into being in the last 25 years in the interior of Irian Jaya. There has been fantastic growth of the work of the gospel in so many lands, and all of this couldn’t have happened if the people concerned had been overwhelmed too greatly by the problems of cross-cultural communication.

One of the encouraging things I find in the Scriptures is the evidence that God cares about the problems of cross-cultural communications. He has foreseen them and taken certain measures to make it easier for missionaries to communicate the gospel cross-culturally. Acts 14:16, 17 says, “In past generations He allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways; yet he did not leave himself without witness.” And the apostle goes
on in the context to show that the beauty and the bounty of creation are at least part of that testimony to all men.

A little further on in the book of Acts is another example of God's work in preserving himself a testimony in that Altar to the Unknown God in Athens. There is some historical background behind that altar. There was a plague in the city in 300 B.C. and the people offered sacrifices to their thousands of gods. (Someone told me they had 30,000 gods in those days.) But it didn't help. So they had a council meeting and someone came up with the idea that there must be an unknown god who was good enough and great enough to help them. Although they didn't know his name, they'd build an altar and inscribe upon the side of it "To the Unknown God" and offer sacrifices to him and see what happened. Well, they did, and the plague was lifted.

The people quickly turned to the worship of the 30,000 gods who hadn't helped them, but they left the altar on the street corner, and it was still there three centuries later when the apostle arrived. As he moved about the city and saw it given over to idolatry and I can imagine with inflation that it was 40,000 gods by that time—he was groping for some conversation opener to make the relevance of the gospel clear to the people of that city. Notice that I said "make the relevance of the gospel clear." I didn't say "make the gospel relevant." Why not? What's the difference? If God hasn't already made the gospel relevant, we can't make it any more relevant.

The gospel has a God-given relevance. It's relevant to every man and woman—even those who reject it, those who despise it, those who don't know about it. We can't make it any more relevant than God has already made it, but we can make its relevance clear. And Paul found in that altar in Athens an ally—a fifth column agent planted there well in advance of his coming, and he used it. And you know what the result was.

But were the people of Athens the only ones on earth who conceived of a possible existence of an unknown god? I understand that when missionaries of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union, my colleagues, arrived in Katmandu, the capital of Nepal, shortly after the Nepalese government gave permission for the first missionaries to enter that land, they went on tour of a gigantic Hindu temple filled with hundreds of idols which from our viewpoint are grotesque. In one part of the temple they found an altar with no idol upon it and an inscription in Nepalese "To the Unknown God."
open, and held it up before Bruce. He repeated, “God’s truth will come to us out of these layers, these fibers in the banana stalk.” As Bruce looked at it, he suddenly saw that those layers of fibers resembled the interior of a book where the pages are spread apart. He got his Bible out of his pack, spread the pages, and held it beside the split banana stalk. “My dear friend,” he said, “could it be that this is the banana stalk out of which God’s truth will come to you. God has caused me to bring this portion of his banana stalk to you, and I know how to read what it says. I know how to let the words out from between the fibers.” He had found a freeway right into the heart of the culture, and the gospel moved in. Olson’s book goes on to tell of the remarkable transformation followed up by the reinforcement of that entire society so that it may withstand the encroachment of the exploitive world.

Some may say, “Is missionary work really that easy? You just make sure you walk in with the right color of Bible tucked under your arm and zap, you’ve got whole populations eating out of your hand.” Well, it isn’t always that easy, and it wasn’t easy for Bruce Olson. But sometimes it is amazingly easy as God guides his servants to exactly the crucial thing.

Albert Brandt, under the Sudan Interior Mission, went into the Walamo area in southern Ethiopia back in the 1940s, and he didn’t know that the people in that area had a name for God. They called him Mugano, the creator God, and they really believed that Mugano was up there in spite of the fact that evil spirits held sway down on earth where man lived. There was the potential that Mugano would reveal himself, and a man named Warasa was given a vision in which he saw light-skinned strangers coming and camping under a certain sycamore tree. He was told that when these strangers came, his people should prepare their hearts to receive the word of God. So Albert Brandt and his retinue came into the valley. It was a hot day, and off in the distance they saw a sycamore. They headed for it, and when they pitched their tents, Warasa came around and saw these light skinned people there under the tree. Brandt had an interpreter who could speak the local dialect, so Brandt began preaching to the people who gathered around. That interpreter, once again by the provision of God, used the name Mugano every time Albert Brandt said God.

I interviewed Howard Brandt, Albert’s son, when we were together at a mission conference. “Is this amazing story really true?” I asked. He said that it is and he had heard it many times from his father. He knows some of the people involved, “and, “ he said, “as a result of the work that was generated during those days, there are now about 500 churches in the Walamo area of southern Ethiopia.”

**Defeat of the Bird God** by Peter Wagner, written in consultation with Bill Pencille, tells how the Iori people believed in a god named Dupadu. They often prayed to him when they were short of food and asked him to show them where there was food. Once a group of Iori Indians came back from the jungle with a cache of honey in their hands and Bill said, “How did you find that honey?” They said, “We asked Dupadu, and he showed us where it was.” The Iori Indians were now worshiping a bird god who had supplanted Dupadu; yet they still knew about Dupadu and resorted to him for help whenever the bird god failed them. So Bill aligned himself with Dupadu against the bird god; hence the title, *Defeat of the Bird God.*

As I’ve traveled about, I’ve encountered missionaries from Japan who have come to me with pleading looks in their eyes saying, “Please, can you help us? What about the Japanese culture?” Well, Dr. Warren Webster, who is the executive secretary of the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society, recently told me that Conservative Baptist missionaries have made an exciting discovery.

The breakthrough began when they made a survey of the Japanese Baptist pastors and learned that from one-quarter to one third of the pastors were former engineers. Also, many missionaries working among middle-class people in Japan noticed that of every class of people in that nation, engineers are the most responsive. They began asking why, and by consulting with Japanese Christians, an answer gradually began to take shape. Apparently, Buddhism is a religion in which cause and effect are virtually non-existent. Dr. Webster said that Buddhism is basically an atheistic system. There is no personal god. The end goal of everything is a sort of nothingness. And Buddhism has not taught the Japanese to regard a logical cause and effect system as integral to religious belief.

As one Japanese student, who is now a Christian and a student at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary in Portland, said to Dr. Webster, “To the Japanese, religion doesn’t have to make sense. This cause and effect system doesn’t appeal to them. At least they don’t see it as necessary to religious belief. But as thousands of Japanese have begun working in laboratories and manufacturing plants and factories putting intricate machines together, studying the intricacies of electricity, the thing that stands out to them is the fact that cause and effect is absolutely important. Everywhere you scratch the surface, you find systems of cause and effect at work. The thing that caused me to become a Christian is that I came to the U.S. and I studied engineering, and I fell in love with the beauty of this cause and effect system. I extrapolated from that and reasoned that there must be a great cause to the universe, so I began reading books on Christianity to see if it had anything to say about the cause and effect relationship between God and the universe. I found that it did. Genesis was the thing that stood out to me and the thing that drew me away from the Buddhist position to the Christian position.”

Now Conservative Baptists are researching books written by scientists who have gone into some of the evidences for creation, and they’re trying to get these books translated into the Japanese language. More and more in their teaching they’re emphasizing creation-starting right at Genesis to build from ground zero the importance and the supremacy of this cause and effect relationship that is taught in the first chapters of Genesis. A missionary who doesn’t expect to find a key would probably never notice one right before him. He might be working on the language or doing something else instead of probing, sticking his nose in, keeping his ear to the ground. But if someone expects that God has probably prepared the way before him, he just has to find out what the particular preparation is that the Spirit of God has undertaken. And so you dig and you search. But if no one has ever forewarned you—hey, watch out, there may be something there, then you won’t be encouraged to take the time and the effort to look.

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**Don Richardson** (June 23, 1935–December 23, 2018) was a Canadian missionary, teacher, author and international speaker who began his missionary career along with his wife Carol, pioneering work among tribal people of southern Papua, Indonesia. He argued in his writings that, hidden among tribal cultures, there are usually some practices or understandings, which he called “redemptive analogies,” which can be used to illustrate the meaning of the Christian Gospel. His best known book is *Peace Child.*
Love them or hate them, short-term mission trips have become a prominent and seemingly permanent fixture in the strategy to minister across cultures. Many churches, denominational agencies, and Christian universities now send out teams of short-term missionaries, resulting in an annual flow of approximately two million U.S. Christians across international borders. While team members have an abundance of resources available for advice about trip preparation, few resources address the post-trip measures necessary for participants to make lasting changes in their lives. In fact, most groups—if they have any post-trip gatherings—only meet one time after they return home and thereby miss out on a critical learning opportunity to make these trips much more meaningful. For this reason, a significant number of crosscultural travelers demonstrate little, if any, change in their long-term attitudes and actions. Cory Trenda, a veteran trip leader and a senior director for World Vision, wrote his book, After the Trip, to help the participants move from an experience to a transformed lifestyle.

The work consists of seven highly readable chapters, covering a number of helpful topics. Trenda first explains how to identify, record, and share the most valuable part of the trip: the significant encounters with those in the host community. By learning to share properly about these life-changing encounters, the mission trip participants provide “picture-window stories” that become emblematic of the trip itself. Reflecting on these encounters can become the motivation for changing perceptions, actions, feelings, and attitudes. The author also shares other strategies for transformation such as reading Scripture through the eyes of the poor and learning how to use gratitude as a means to become more generous. He explains how intentional presence and vulnerability with those in the host community enable the mission traveler to build stronger friendships across cultures and maintain those connections with the people and their struggles after returning home. In this way, the mission trip participants can become “an effective voice for the voiceless within [their] sphere of influence” (80). All of the author’s recommendations serve as worthwhile practices to bring about lasting change. The ultimate goal is for the team members to be transformed, to become truly crosscultural.

Trenda’s work certainly helps fill the gap in post-trip resources. All short-term mission trip participants should read this book. While it would benefit those who are planning to participate in a trip by fostering a better understanding of how they should approach their upcoming journey, the author intends for these short-term missionaries to work through the chapters after they have returned home. Trenda includes discussion questions at the end of the book for each chapter to facilitate group reflection. By studying the chapters together with the team members for six or seven weeks after returning, mission trip leaders would create significant opportunities for the participants to appropriately process their experiences and incorporate lessons learned into their daily living.

For Further Reading
Corbett, Steve and Brian Fikkert. Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Missions.
Ashrams instead of seminaries? This is one example of contextual theological education by Indian Christians described in this intriguing book by A. Scott Moreau (70–71). Moreau is a prolific writer on the thorny issue of contextualization which has engendered widespread debates among many concerned with the relationship between Christian faith and culture. The controversial term itself raises suspicion since it was “adopted in World Council of Churches circles from 1972 onward” (vii). The author draws from Scripture to show that while the term may be relatively new, contextualization “resides at the intersection of God’s unchanging Word and the ever-changing settings in which people live out their faith as followers of Christ” (1). Moreau recognizes that syncretism, the “intermingling inappropriate elements of other religions into our Christian faith” (4), is a potential danger often associated with contextualization.

After defining contextualization in chapter one, Moreau describes dimensions of contextualization. The social dimension occupies four chapters treating association, kinship, economics, learning, and organization. Following chapters treat the mythic, ethical, artistic, ritual, experience (supernatural), and doctrinal dimensions. Moreau anticipates that evangelicals “may bristle at the use of the word ‘myth’ in relation to the Bible” (xi) and explains his use in an academic rather than popular sense. He closes the book with “The Future of Contextualization” (229). The sidebars with questions, case studies, charts and scriptural support provide opportunities for further reflection and refinement of issues encountered in cross-cultural ministry. Difficult questions need to be asked “to find biblically appropriate and culturally sound ways for Christians to understand local views” in the dimensions of contextualization under discussion (91, 104). For example, when studying cross-cultural ethics, “we cannot separate the study of their ethics from their theological and philosophical commitments” (133). He anchors his findings and proposals on the conviction that “the truths of Scripture do not change: what changes are only our insights into what Scripture actually teaches as we engage the Bible with sisters and brothers whose perspectives differ from ours” (226).

The breadth of Moreau’s grasp of contextualization is on display in this book. He interacts with many missiologists—Moon, Adeney, Priest, Van Rheenen, Hiebert, etc.—with one surprising absence, David Hesselgrave. This work is a welcome addition to the body of contextualization literature. Cross-cultural workers will particularly find this book beneficial and will return again and again to this wide-ranging volume destined to become a standard textbook on contextualization.

For Further Reading

Engaging Globalization: The Poor, Christian Mission, and our Hyperconnected World

By Bryant L. Myers

“We seem to have forgotten that the gospel is true and secular humanism is not...[T]here is little evidence that Christians and their churches are devoting much energy to understanding globalization” (5). This introduction from Myers’ early pages provides a good overview of this useful, easy to read (for an academic book), and invigorating analysis of globalization. Although this introduction might seem abstract, the book is thoroughly relevant to evangelicals of all walks of life, whether congregation members, pastors, or missionaries.

The book begins with four sections devoted to exploring globalization. It does this primarily by defining the status of the world today and looking through the lens of history. Myers does a good job of presenting key Christian and non-Christian political, economic, sociological and theological thinkers.

For those who do not normally keep up with global trends or thoughts, there will be startling news in these pages. For example, it will surprise some to learn that there is less absolute poverty today that at any previous time in human history. Although the sections on history are relatively easy to read, some people have little or no tolerance for history of any kind. These history and global trends sections are a significant portion of the book and will likely be slow going for some people.

After an overview and analysis of the problem, Myers spends the four final chapters working towards a proposal for Christian engagement with globalization. In this section, he does a good job of summarizing key proposals that have been offered by Protestants, Catholics, and non-Christians. He feels that responses to globalization have had “three significant theological limitations: a thin anthropology, a flawed understanding of power, and an inability to satisfy the human hunger for meaning and morality” (208).

As a solution Myers ultimately proposes that all Christians need to receive the kind of training traditionally offered to missionaries, so that all Christians can share the Gospel within their spheres of influence (250). He further argues that Christians have been sidelined to “private” spheres for too long and need to remember that Christians have something unique and necessary to offer a globalized world. As such, he encourages Christians to embrace globalization, become thought leaders, and engage people in all walks of life.

For Further Reading

Mission in Global Community Series
Baker Academic, 2017
Grand Rapids, MI
304 pages
ISBN: 978-0801097980
USD $26.99

Reviewed by Pam Arlund, Global Training and Research Leader, All Nations, Kansas City, Missouri.
Although the Gospel message never changes, each generation of Christians is responsible to make that message understood and available to those with whom they live and work. In Evangelism in a Skeptical World, Sam Chan has done just that. Writing from a complex personal ethnic background (an advantage in the increasingly multi-cultural context of the West) to an increasingly multi-ethnic Church, Chan seeks to help the reader communicate the Gospel more effectively to an increasingly post-modern Western context.

To do so, Chan begins by providing useful definitions and explanations of key concepts such as gospel, evangelism, faith, repentance, and conversion. In so doing he places himself and his text squarely in the evangelical tradition. With examples drawn from both the biblical record and his personal experience, Chan proceeds to walk the reader through what he considers to be fundamental building-blocks to constructing a coherent Gospel message for the current generation. Along the way he deals with topics such as crafting a Gospel presentation (chapter 3), Evangelism to Post-Moderns (chapter 4), and Contextualization for Evangelism (chapter 5).

The strengths of this text are multiple and include a clear articulation of an evangelical commitment to Gospel-centric evangelism, an understanding of the issues surrounding the challenges of bringing propositional truth to post-modern contexts, a range of helpful examples and approaches intended to assist the reader in constructing Gospel-focused communication and an understanding of the dynamics of conversion and the need to appeal to the affective/relational aspect in contrast to a cognitive/information based approach. Of particular interest is Chan’s evaluation (chapter 3) of the adequacy of three popular evangelistic materials/approaches (Two Ways to Live, The 4 Spiritual Laws, and The Bridge to Life) for Gospel communication in a post-modern context.

The highly readable, helpful text leaves little to critique. Though if pressed I would offer the following. In the first chapter in which Chan deals with the Theology of Evangelism, his discussion of Speech-Act theory and its effect on Gospel communication, though accurate, is a bit too technical for a book of this nature. Second, though Chan clearly articulates an accurate doxis and praxis of evangelism consistent with evangelical convictions, he fails to adequately place evangelism in relationship to the Church. Though he notes that the converted person becomes part of the Church at the moment of conversion, he fails to show how evangelism and the Church are complementary concepts and not separate experiences.

For Further Reading
Heading Home with Jesus: Preparing Chinese Students to Follow Christ in China

By Debbie D. Philip

Heading Home with Jesus, by Debbie Philip, provides insights for preparing Chinese scholars who convert to Christianity in the West to return home to China. Philip is concerned that not all Chinese Christian converts maintain their faith when they return home. She provides data and suggestions for United States Christians to help Chinese Christians re-acclimate to their home country in light of their new-found faith.

The book is based on over one hundred interviews with Chinese scholars who became Christians in the West. As part of Philip’s PhD research, these interviews were possible due to her more than twenty years of ministry experience among Chinese students. The book includes suggested readings, but there is no bibliography. The footnotes show that Philip has interacted with major scholars such as Fenggang Yang, Gordon T. Smith, Lewis Rambo, Christopher J.H. Wright, and Carolyn Chen. She does not reference Chinese language sources but occasionally includes Chinese terms.

The book contains five parts. Part 1 provides an innovative diagram to help readers visualize the process of a Chinese person crossing from their home culture into Western culture, coming to faith, and then returning home to China. As they travel, they carry a “Personal Framework” consisting of values, master stories, power concepts, self-concepts, and social bonds (categories developed by Charles Taylor). Philip’s study focuses on the factors that influence whether Chinese converts are transformed in these fundamental areas of their life.

Part 2 offers a summary of modern Chinese history, politics, and religion. Part 3 tells the story of seven of her interviewees. These diverse stories will especially broaden the knowledge of readers who may only have one or two Chinese friends.

Part 4 gets to the heart of the research. Philip focuses on nineteen interviewees and examines their core values. Before their conversion, their values perhaps focused on academic and professional achievement or a desire to feel loved. After conversion, their values typically include caring for family, desiring to be close to God, and caring for others in general.

Of these nineteen interviewees, only twelve are attending a church. The seven who are not attending church express fewer Christian values. “They lacked a community of people who shared a Christian story, identity, and values” (130). Those who returned and have remained the most faithful are those who were able to develop a “new story,” a “new boss,” and a “new identity.” And maybe most importantly, they are part of a new family, a Christian community.

Part 5 concludes with practical ideas of how Christians in the West can help. Most powerfully, Philip suggests that new Chinese Christians must understand they are “disciples and disciple makers—not consumers.”

This book will be of most value to Western Christians doing evangelism and discipleship with Chinese scholars. Chinese pastors and churches in the West will also benefit from the book. It provides insightful case studies and significant material for deeper reflection and discussion.

For Further Reading

The majority of today’s evangelical missionaries serve as members of teams. Although teamwork is an expression of God’s design for his people, it is not usually easy or straightforward. Becoming an effective mission team in any context requires team members and leaders to pay attention to what Lance Witt calls certain “universal principles and best practices” (25).

High-Impact Teams advances a set of principles and practices that Witt believes will help any team to work well. Its overarching message is that good teams are both healthy and high-performing. To become such a team, we need to have a “bifocal perspective” that keeps both team health and team productivity in focus. The author successfully applies this message to the structure of the book by dividing its eight sections equally between these two foci. The need for this twin focus is helpfully supported by scores of stories and vignettes drawn from his own experience as a leader or member of multiple church staff teams in North America.

The book’s focus on health encompasses both individual team members’ spiritual and emotional health and the team’s relational health. Convinced that the greatest gift team members can give to their team is their own spiritual and emotional health and growth, Witt devotes the first quarter of the book to explaining how team members can work on their relationship with the Lord. These chapters are enhanced by Witt’s honesty about his own struggles to keep growing in his relationship with God in the face of a busy life and demanding ministry. A later section of the book advances the theme of health by focusing on how to nurture good relationships with fellow team members. Prioritizing relationships, building trust, and applying the biblical “one another” commands with teammates are key emphases.

Paired with the need for health is the focus on achieving results that bring glory to God. These sections of the book are a treasure trove of practical advice framed in pithy and memorable statements. Particularly helpful are Witt’s emphases on the need to clarify vision, avoid distractions, and be good stewards of time and energies, and his deft interweaving of health and results into the final chapters on team culture.

This volume’s greatest contribution is the way it integrates the twin needs for health and productivity in teams. This much-needed message, together with the wealth of practical advice about how to apply it, will be of great help especially to team leaders. The book assumes a North American, monocultural context, and so leaders and members from this context who are serving in monocultural teams will benefit most from the book. Those from outside North America or who are serving in multicultural teams will need to do a little more work to think through how to contextualize its principles.

For Further Reading
Intercultural Discipleship: Learning from Global Approaches to Spiritual Formation

By W. Jay Moon

“One giant alone cannot catch a lizard.”
—Builsa proverb (1)

W. Jay Moon opens his readers up to a new world of approaches to discipleship in order to help them to improve their own discipleship ministry. He uses the Builsa proverb to illustrate that if we try operating only from our limited perspective, we miss out on valuable insights that could help us to be more effective disciplers. Moon’s book is a must read for anyone involved in or preparing for cross-cultural ministry, but also provides valuable insights for anyone in a within-culture discipleship relationship. The format, which includes case studies, sidebars filled with additional information and discussion, and activities for discipling, is conducive to meaningful discussions in a college classroom, a mission team, or a church small group.

The book starts broad, dealing first with worldview and common issues in intercultural discipleship. Then readers will dive into topics that will help them to be more effective disciplers. The topics covered include:

- “Symbols help you want to do what you should do.” (71)
- “Rituals drive meaning deep into the bone.” (90)
- “Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive.” (150)
- “A conversation without proverbs is like stew without salt.”
- Oromo proverb (162)
- “Everything important has its own song and dance.”
- African proverb (184)

Moon helps the reader to consider the social, economic, and ideological needs in a person’s life and also provides insights on discipleship in the context of postmodern ideologies. Many readers may feel skeptical or overwhelmed at the outset, but Moon walks with his readers by sharing stories and insights from around the world that bring abstract concepts down to earth. Each chapter serves as an insightful guide that will help readers to understand the critical contextualization process.

This book masterfully introduces new perspectives on familiar topics and then fleshes them out so that readers can implement them in their own context. It harnesses the reader’s imagination to consider new worlds of possibilities in discipleship strategies that will deepen all relationships of significance, with family, lifelong friends, and of course, with those whom we are pouring our lives into for the sake of seeing God’s Kingdom established in their lives and around the world.

For Further Reading


Examine the theologies from those who live in the Majority World is useful for Western theological educators and missionaries who seek richer, more nuanced theological approaches that take into account the lived realities of those outside of the West. As the church grows in the Majority World, those of us in the West must think more critically about our theological assumptions as a new world takes shape before us. In an effort to highlight the theological work of those from the Majority World, Allen Yeh and Tite Tiénou, two missiologists in the evangelical tradition, have assembled a volume that seeks to expose Western-based missiologists and educators to recent theologizing from diverse contexts.

The book is organized around theologies from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and “the ends of the earth.” In Part One, theologizing from African contexts, Kofi Amoateng explores the role and importance of symbols in the theology of the Akan people in Ghana, articulating the benefits of symbolic theology for missionary educators. Diane Stinton examines theological education in a Kenyan context to describe indigenous theologies. Robert Priest examines how the biblical word “witch” is translated and interpreted across African contexts in order to address the problems associated with witchcraft accusations. These chapters highlight the importance of symbols and language in African theological work.

In Part Two, focusing in Asian contexts, Natun Bhattacharya provides a theological appraisal of Hindu “insider movements” where people from non-Christian backgrounds who profess Christ retain their prior religious affiliation without joining a Christian body. Sunny Hong looks at the Korean concept of Han and its manifestation in the life of David. James Morrison looks at the evangelization of Tibetan Buddhists through their cultural paradigm of pollution and purity. These chapters wrestle with how to merge Christian faith and cultural contexts; the authors here manage to do this quite well.

Part Three examines theologies coming from a Latin American context. Jessica Brooks examines the evangelistic implications of Santería among Afro-Cubans. Rubén Tito Paredes explores the challenges and opportunities of a PhD program in theology in Latin America. Rolando Cuellar looks at various approaches to Christology in Latin American theologies. Part Four looks at theological perspectives that do not fit neatly into the continental categories the editors lay out. Yousef AlKhouri provides a critical look at Palestinian theologian Naim Ateek’s liberation theology while John Ferch constructs a theology of worship for ministry with Indigenous peoples in Alaska. All of these chapters emphasize the importance of context and culture in theological work.

Each chapter is well-crafted and helps to expand the boundaries of evangelical theology. Yeh’s introduction chapter states that the whole volume is from an evangelical perspective, but takes into account how culture informs and shapes the authors’ understanding of theology. Majority World Theologies may challenge some Western theologians, missiologists, and practitioners to re-examine their theological and cultural assumptions in light of the growth of the Majority World church.

For Further Reading
A quick search on Amazon will reveal there are very few titles dealing with the practical aspects of developing and leading healthy church mission committees or teams. This book brings much welcomed wisdom and guidance to anyone tasked with leading their church into greater mission engagement, especially in an increasingly complex world. Sharon Hoover provides solid counsel and direction based on her own experiences and knowledge of the issues facing mission committees in the local church.

The book is structured around seven conversations mission committees/teams would be well advised to have. The benefit of having these intentional conversations will be “an improved sense of direction… to navigate the terrain and improve our ability to serve well” (15). These conversations confront differing points of view and uncover hidden agendas that have the potential to render a church’s mission effort ineffective.

Each of the seven conversational topics span a continuum of viewpoints, which represent the opinions most committee/team members might have on each topic. The author thoughtfully presents the different positions without being judgmental, while moving toward a section of each chapter sub-titled “Finding Our Place.” This process serves the church well to educate itself on the topic and form an agreeable position for them to work from.

The topics presented are: doing good deeds or telling the good news, local or global focus, emergency crisis relief or sustainability, gifts of time or money, short term missions or long term only, caring for others or equipping believers, and finally minimizing risk or high-risk engagement. Each topic is explored, both sides presented and then each chapter closes with a set of questions the mission committee/team could complete and discuss together which will hopefully lead to a corporate position to assist the church in making decisions.

There are two additional resources provided by this book. First is Appendix 1—Beyond “Minute for Missions.” This has some great tips to connect an entire congregation with mission activities in a variety of ways. Second, the Notes section in the back lists a number of texts, articles, websites and ministries that can provide further information on all the topics covered. This book will be valuable to both existing church mission teams and those just starting to take form. I will be ordering copies for my own church mission team to read!

For Further Reading
It is not often that one hears the behind-the-scenes story of the development of a megachurch from an eyewitness. In *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered*, Wanjiru Gitau explores the development of megachurches in Africa by focusing on the Nairobi Chapel’s Mavuno church plant from the point of view of an insider. She is well acquainted with the African church setting and has contributed several scholarly works on the growth of megachurches. In this book, she argues that church communities that become megachurches do so because they provide a map of reality for specific populations to navigate a volatile world (5). Through examining the life of the founders of the Mavuno church and the context in which they grew up, Gitau shows how megachurches are affecting the millennial generation and are creating social change in Africa.

The book is divided into six chapters, plus an introduction and a conclusion. The book tells the story of the Mavuno church by looking at individuals and the contexts that shaped this movement. Chapters one and four focus on the individual stories of how two men, Oscar Muriu and Muriithi Wanjau, appropriated the gospel to make sense of their context. Chapter two discusses the challenges that faced the Mavuno church while growing, focusing on how the leaders made the gospel appeal to urban millennials. Chapter three introduces the Mavuno Marathon, a discipleship process the Mavuno church used to attract millennials and disciple them. Chapter five discusses how the Mavuno church impacted society by recognizing that post-colonial Christianity had to engage millennials in ways that colonial Christianity did not. Mavuno’s approach to faith superseded the cliché form of Christianity that focused solely on making it to heaven. In this new map, contemporary music, social media, and dress codes were adjusted to more clearly present the gospel. Chapter six deals with the challenges of Christianity for a modern world. In the conclusion, Gitau emphasizes that the gospel must be made relevant within a culture yet it also revitalizes culture (166). *Megachurch Reconsidered* successfully argues that megachurches are successful because they can look at contemporary urban trends and provide a response to the destabilization of modern societies.

The book also provides insights on how churches can disciple millennials. It is written in an easy to read narrative. Case studies allow the readers to put themselves into the story. However, the use of footnotes and citation is significantly limited so that it is hard to determine if this is an academic work or a popular work—the latter is the opinion of this reviewer. Overall, this book provides a practical guide and useful case study for church planters and those concerned about discipleship, megachurches, and ministry to millennials.

**For Further Reading**


The purpose of Tim Dearborn’s newly revised and expanded book on short-term missions is to “help individuals and teams make the most of their short-term experience—personally, for those they serve, and for the kingdom” (2).

As the title indicates, this short-term missions workbook is highly practical, designed to help leaders and participants prepare for a fruitful cross-cultural experience. To facilitate learning and spiritual growth, the book’s ten chapters include suggested group activities, questions for reflection and discussion, learning exercises, checklists, and suggested readings. Central to Dearborn’s approach to short-term missions is being a learner, and he especially highlights “Eight Great Questions,” which are introduced in the first chapter and further developed in the last chapter of the book. These eight questions begin with fundamental inquiries like “What can I learn about myself?” and “What can I learn about God?” as well as more specific questions like “What can I learn about a globally appropriate lifestyle?” and “What can I learn about my own vocation?” (8-10, 91-103, 126).

Besides being highly practical, Dearborn’s Short-Term Missions Workbook is also deeply theological, with the author sharing profound insights like, “Walk with humility. Remember you are showing up late to a meeting. God has been at work among these people long before you arrived!” (12) and, “In order to communicate Christ with clarity and conviction, we must know him and be satisfied with him” (50). The book benefits from Dearborn’s many years of experience in ministry and the profound wisdom and humility with which he approaches missions. Dearborn is not afraid to address difficulties and challenges, addressing critical issues such as understanding team dynamics, preparing for spiritual battle, examining our motives, developing a theology of suffering, and dealing with culture fatigue (when entering a new culture) as well as culture grief (after returning home from a mission trip).

In covering missions-related topics with both depth and breadth, this book is an extremely valuable resource for anybody preparing to go on a short-term mission trip, be it as a participant or as the leader of such an endeavor (a leader’s guide covering all ten chapters is included in the appendix). Despite its comprehensive approach, the Short-Term Missions Workbook is to be used in combination with other resources. In the introduction, Dearborn encourages readers to also study his book Beyond Duty: A Passion for Christ, a Heart for Mission (2013) in order to dive deeper into “the spiritual and theological dimensions of our participation in God’s mission in the world” (2). The author acknowledges that “This workbook doesn’t go through the issues of selecting a destination, travel planning, getting immunization, and trip logistics” (3), pointing the reader to other books that have already done an excellent job in covering these topics. By carefully reading Dearborn’s workbook and combining it with other resources, believers will be well equipped to act as responsible global citizens wherever God may send them to serve and learn.

For Further Reading
Mary Lederleitner, who has served as a consultant with Wycliffe Bible for over twenty years and is now leading Missional Intelligence, tells the stories of approximately ninety-five women in leadership from about thirty countries, for the benefit of both men and women involved in missions. The women come from evangelical backgrounds and are respected leaders in their context. Lederleitner’s purpose is to bring these women’s voices into the general discussion of leadership and to the specific discussion of service and leadership in God’s mission.

She acknowledges theological differences regarding women in leadership and clearly states that her aim is not to persuade the reader toward one point of view. The theological debate is polarizing and inadequate to describe the complexity of how God is working through women around the globe. Rather, Lederleitner’s goal is to foster understanding between men and women co-laboring in ministry so that all may see greater fruitfulness for the Lord.

Lederleitner recognizes that women have experienced discrimination, rejection, bias, and ill-treatment due to their gender from both women and men. Throughout her critique and retelling of these challenging experiences, she is respectful and gracious to all involved. She includes practical strategies various women have employed to counteract such challenges. Although much of her book discusses the injustice women face in leadership, she also tells stories of reconciliation and overtly praises the men and women who have supported women in leadership making it possible for them to lead effectively in God’s mission.

Lederleitner argues that leaders should evaluate ministry policies that perpetuate gender bias, whether implicitly or explicitly. For example, many ministries have a policy that prevents men and women from traveling together or meeting together one-on-one to avoid sexual improprieties. In most evangelical ministries, men hold the vast majority of leadership positions and decision-making power. Such policies may result in the exclusion of women. They may prevent women from being mentored by the incumbent leaders because they are men. This can result in career stagnation for women and a lack of gender diversity in leadership. Similarly, many times organizational strategy and vision are discussed among leaders in informal settings (e.g., when traveling for work or out for a meal). When policies are in place that limit the interaction of men and women informally, women are excluded from strategic aspects of decision-making. They miss participating in the discussions that occur in many informal settings because of these policies, and therefore, are not readily included in many of the organization’s direction-setting conversations.

This book is for both men and women. Its message is: Women, if you experience ill-treatment in your ministry, you are not alone. Men, you have an important role in encouraging and elevating women to flourish so that you also will flourish. Men and women, see the gifting of women who are leading in God’s mission and acknowledge the resulting goodness.
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