

Fulfilling the Apostolic Mandate in Apostolic Power: Apostolic Praxis: Driven by the Spirit or by the Wind and the Waves?

Part III of a Three-Lecture Series Presented by
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Third Hogan Chair Address, January 20, 2009

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" (Mark 4:35-41, NIV)

I love this text because it seems to accurately reflect my life. Like the disciples, I am trying to get to the other side, trying to be obedient to the Master's instructions, but so often in the middle of obedience, in the center of His will, storms come up. I work as hard as I can, use every gift, every experience, and every tool at my disposal to get the job done, but it doesn't seem like I am going to make it. Even though Jesus is

with me in the boat, He is on a break, sound asleep. (He must have been exhausted from ministry and able to rest so well because He was totally trusting in the Father.)

The disciples had made many trips across that lake. Most times, they crossed the lake through hard work. They knew how to do it—several were experienced fishermen—but this time their illusion of control was broken by the wind and the waves. They were confronted by the reality that the only way to get to the other side and experience peace was through faith and trust in Jesus.

While the truth of this text can be applied to personal salvation and the need to have Jesus as the Master of one's life to be able to get to "the other side," (i.e. an eternity with Him), I believe it is also a word to the Church regarding the missiological task. Jesus calls the Church to an apostolic praxis—to be about the business of carrying the good news of the gospel to those who have never had the chance to hear it. I see Him in the boat calling out to the Church, "Come on, Church. Let's go to those who

have never heard, to the least reached, to the inconvenient lost.”¹ He does not force individuals or local churches into the boat of apostolic praxis against their will, but to be truly obedient, to be assured of His presence (Matt. 28:19), the Church must enter that boat.

When we are in the boat, we cannot get to the other side without effort, but even with our greatest efforts, unless Jesus intervenes we will not get to the other side. Jesus brings order out of missiological chaos, for He is the Master of the wind and the waves. Apostolic power enables apostolic praxis. But what drives what, and how we do missions? What motivates the believer’s praxis? How do we determine direction and action? How do we evaluate our missional praxis? Are we driven by the Spirit or by alternative sources of power, such as the wind and the waves?

This afternoon, I am privileged to present my third and final lecture as the 2008-2009 J. Philip Hogan Professor of World Missions. This lecture on apostolic praxis is a work in progress; it may raise more questions than it answers and possibly provoke heated debate as we move to address specific missional actions in a Spirit-driven missiology.

I will begin with a brief overview of the previous lectures, followed by an affirmation of the need for missiological reflection to keep the missional enterprise driven by the Spirit. This will be followed by an examination of some of the alternative sources of power that can seduce Pentecostal leaders as we engage in missional action in our contemporary world.

A Review of Previous Lectures

Through these lectures I seek to call the Church, the apostolic/missionary people of

God, to a Spirit-driven missiology that recognizes the need for dependence on the Spirit for direction, empowerment, and fruit in the missionary enterprise. This Spirit-driven missiology does not merely give lip service to the Spirit’s activity but depends on the Spirit in missional praxis. In short, it seeks to fulfill the apostolic mandate in apostolic power.

The core values of a Spirit-driven missiology include the following: (1) the Lord fulfills mission through His Church by the direction and power of the Holy Spirit, (2) all members of the Church carry the responsibility for the apostolic mandate to reach all peoples with the good news of the kingdom, (3) leadership equips the Church by creating space for supernatural encounters that are held to the standard of the Word in contextually appropriate ways, (4) effective missional praxis requires the Church to paradoxically exert great effort while relying fully on the power of the Spirit, and (5) reliance on the Spirit requires a commitment to prayer.

Jesus gave His disciples the mandate to communicate the good news of the kingdom of God to every person of every nation. This good news was that through His life, death, and resurrection the will of the Father came present, revealing and creating—in spite of the impossibility of sin and alienation—the possibility of reconciliation of the universe in Christ (Eph. 1:10). Centered in Christ, this gospel calls men and women into relationship with God and a renewed relationship with each other; it forms a new people—the apostolic/missionary people of God.

Ray Anderson describes the apostolic mandate with the following diagram:

The Apostolic Mandate²



The apostolic mandate responds to the missiological questions: (1) What is our purpose as the Church? and (2) What is God's agenda in the world?

However, as Anderson correctly argues, to maintain Christ's ministry as His own, the apostolic mandate alone is inadequate.³ Just knowing the purpose for ministry is insufficient because ultimately, we, the apostolic people, will begin to rely on our own possibilities—deviant ministries created by our own hand, in our own power. One must ask not only, "What is our purpose?" but also, "Where does the power come from? Is Christ central? Is this Christ's ministry? Is this missional action the creation of possibility out of impossibility by the Spirit? Is the apostolic mandate fulfilled in apostolic power?" These are the questions that correspond to the oft-neglected theological mandate.

Anderson illustrates the theological mandate with the following diagram:

The Theological Mandate⁴



The theological mandate throws those involved in missional action back to total dependence on God. Gospel and mission—though often dichotomized—are not separated in the mind of God. Revelation and reconciliation are one, as illustrated by the incarnation. Christ's ministry of revelation and reconciliation is the only true

ministry of the Church. The apostolic and theological mandates cycle as the Church, the apostolic people of God, birthed in the gospel, goes out into the world in missional praxis giving witness to the gospel by fulfilling mission in the power of the gospel.⁵ Doing theology is a process of prayer that seeks to discern the will of God (the mind of Christ) for a given situation and in obedience acts according to that will as empowered by the Spirit.

Today much "good" is done in the name of missions, and in the name of ministry, but unless it leads to revelation and reconciliation, to new life in Christ, it is neither ministry nor missions. Are we willing to step out in faith and obedience to the voice of the Master and serve in the midst of the wind and the waves at the edge of missional chaos and allow the Holy Spirit to bring order—to make the impossible possible? The missionary people of God must create space for the actions of the God of the impossible. The greatest miracle of all is a sinner saved by God's amazing grace.

An indigenous church is a community of sinners saved by grace and birthed in a specific context. It includes the people who are Spirit-driven (Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered) to accomplish God's purposes for and through that community. Like the various churches described in the New Testament, particularly in Acts, these local and national communities of faith are to be Spirit-governed, Spirit-supported, and Spirit-propagated. God, by His Spirit, calls and equips local leaders to disciple and mobilize believers in the faith and guides them in discerning and fulfilling the will of God for their community. As a responsible community, the indigenous church turns to the unlimited resources of the Spirit for its sustenance so as not to depend on the missionary, institutions, ministries, or

agencies. As a community of faith, indigenous church members are impassioned and empowered by the Spirit to reach their neighbors, their nation, and their world with the gospel.

Because God has chosen to communicate through people, the apostolic mandate cannot be accomplished without apostolic leaders who operate in apostolic power. Leadership in a Spirit-driven missiology and praxis can be defined as a person (team) with the God-given call (responsibility) and the God-given Spirit empowerment (capacity)—both natural and supernatural—to create “space” for the Spirit to influence a specific group of God’s apostolic/missionary people toward God’s missional purpose for that group.⁶

The most important competency for apostolic leadership is the ability to discern the voice of the Spirit and to yield to Spirit empowerment (both natural and supernatural) in order to live in obedience. Apostolic leadership enables the people of God to live as people of promise—moving from future to present by the power of the Spirit by prioritizing the integration of the Spirit’s missionary call and His gifts of natural and supernatural empowerment in missional theory, leadership development, and apostolic praxis.

Apostolic Praxis: Driven by the Spirit

Before addressing specific missional actions, I want to reaffirm the urgency of missiological reflection noted above. I believe that the greatest contemporary crisis in missions is not AIDS, malaria, poverty, illiteracy, globalization, urbanization, the global economy, the least reached, or the inconvenient lost, but rather the lack of missiological reflection by those engaged in apostolic praxis. For apostolic praxis to be driven by the Spirit, the apostolic people of

God must continually engage in the process of missiological reflection where those active in missions cycle between the apostolic mandate and the theological mandate, between purpose and power, between right thinking and right doing, between New Testament methods and New Testament power, and between “the map” and “the fuel.”

Before I explain what I mean by “the map” and “the fuel,” I need to define what I mean by apostolic praxis. In a generic sense, praxis is simply the practical application of a theory; for theologians it includes both right thinking (*orthodoxy*) and right doing (*orthopraxis*).⁷ Truth is known as it is practiced. Paulo Freire affirms that true reflection leads to authentic praxis,⁸ and to be truly human one must engage in a cycle of experimental learning.⁹ Cheryl Bridges Johns notes, “Knowledge of God, therefore, is measured not by the information one possesses but by how one is living in response to God. A person is ignorant or foolish not because of the lack of awareness of facts about God but rather because of a failure to do the will of God.”¹⁰

Apostolic praxis is how the Church lives out the communication of the gospel in the world. More than just action, it is a cyclical process of action/reflection where the Church’s action in response to the apostolic mandate to make disciples of all nations by going, baptizing, and teaching is defined, directed, and empowered by the Spirit. It is a process of contextualized action and reflection by which the Church engages the Word and the world. Every member of the missionary people of God is called to apostolic praxis.

In the following story C. S. Lewis illustrates the importance of theology in order “to get to the other side.”

Everyone has warned me not to tell you what I am going to tell you ... They all say “the ordinary reader does not want Theology; give him plain practical religion.” I have rejected their advice. I do not think the ordinary reader is such a fool. Theology means “the science of God,” and I think any man who wants to think about God at all would like to have the clearest and most accurate ideas about him which are available. You are not children: why should you be treated like children?

In a way I quite understand why some people are put off by Theology. I remember once when I had been giving a talk to the R. A. F., an old, hard-bitten officer got up and said, “I’ve no use for all that stuff. But, mind you, I’m a religious man too. I *know* there’s a God. I have *felt* him: out alone in the desert at night: the tremendous mystery. And that’s just why I don’t believe all your neat little dogmas and formulas about him. To anyone who’s met the real thing they all seem so petty and pedantic and unreal!”

Now in a sense I quite agree with that man. I think he had probably a real experience of God in the desert. And when he turned from that experience to the Christian creeds, I think he really was turning from something real, to something less real. In the same way, if a man has once looked at the Atlantic from the beach, and then goes and looks at a map of the Atlantic, he also will be turning from the real waves to a bit of colored paper. But here comes the point. The map is admittedly only colored paper, but there are two things you have to remember about it. In the first place, it is based on what hundreds and thousands of people have found out by sailing the real Atlantic. In that way it has behind it masses of experience just as real as the one you could have from the beach; only, while yours would be a single isolated glimpse, the map fits all those different experiences together. In the second place, if you want to go anywhere, the map is absolutely necessary. As long as you are content with walks on the beach, your

own glimpses are far more fun than looking at a map. But the map is going to be more use than walks on the beach if you want to get to America.

Now Theology is like the map. Merely learning and thinking about the Christian doctrines, if you stop there, is less real and less exciting than the sort of thing my friend got in the desert. Doctrines are not God: they are only a kind of map. But the map is based on the experience of hundreds of people who really were in touch with God—experiences compared with which any thrills or pious feelings you or I are likely to get on our own way are very elementary and very confused. And secondly, if you want to get any further, you must use the map. You see, what happened to that man in the desert may have been real, and was certainly exciting, but nothing comes of it. It leads nowhere. There is nothing to do about it. In fact, that is just why vague religion—all about feeling God in nature, and so on—is so attractive. It is all thrills and no work; like watching the waves from the beach. But you will not get to Newfoundland by studying the Atlantic that way, and you will not get eternal life by simply feeling the presence of God in flowers or music. Neither will you get anywhere by looking at maps without going to sea. Nor will you be very safe if you go to sea without a map.¹¹

As a missiologist I resonate with the need for missiology to provide the map for missional action. Right thinking on biblical missiology must form our praxis, but the map alone does not get us to our destination. We need a vehicle—the community of faith, and the fuel—the power of the Spirit, to get there. We have a lot of “vague” missiology being practiced today. As Lewis notes, “It is all thrills and no work.” It’s hands-on but going nowhere. The Great Commission will not be accomplished by short-term missions work or social action in the name of mission that does not proclaim the truth of the

gospel. Nor will a clearly-defined missiology get the job done.

The need for a map, fuel, and a vehicle was brought home to me on a return trip from La Moskitia in Honduras. At 7:00 a.m., Valerie and I, with a short-term missions team, boarded Missionair's DC-3 on the gravel runway in Puerto Lempira, Honduras. Our take-off in this 1941 antiquity was uneventful, except for the steady stream of oil pouring out of the starboard engine. As we neared San Pedro Sula, I noticed that our flight attendant, wife of one of the pilots, was beginning to look a little nervous. Finally, she leaned over and said, "We need to pray!"

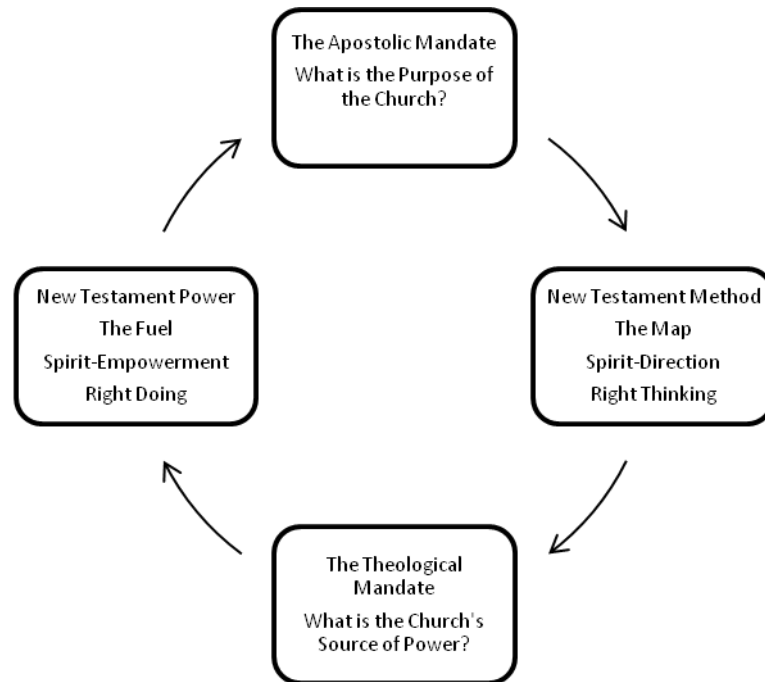
When it was all over, we were informed that there had been a tropical storm over San Pedro Sula, and the pilots had been unable to fly by instrumentation alone. Being unable to fly over the weather, they tried to fly under it. Because of the weather and because we did not have a detailed map of the mountain altitudes, we were flying blind and very low. At one point, as I looked out the window, we cleared the trees on a ridge by what appeared to be no more than ten

feet. Finally, we were forced to turn out to sea and head for La Ceiba, another airport on the Honduran north coast. When we communicated with the tower, they denied permission to land because of the storm. Our emergency ration of fuel was quickly being consumed. Praying that the weather would clear, we requested an emergency landing on the island of Roatan. We almost missed it, but the clouds cleared. After what seemed to be a vertical drop, we landed safely.

Upon disembarking, we discovered that fuel was not available. In an old hangar we found some empty fifty-five gallon oil drums. We put five of them in the back of an old pickup truck, whose owner drove me into town to a local gas station where I bought 260 gallons of "super" gasoline. When we returned, members of the airport personnel helped us fuel the plane. After opening the tank, one of the men asked us, "Were you on this plane?" We said, "Yes, why do you ask?" He said, "Because there is no fuel in this tank."

Apostolic praxis requires that the Church exercise right *thinking* and right *doing*. This interrelationship is illustrated in the following diagram:

The Church in Apostolic Praxis



Apostolic Praxis: Driven by the Wind and the Waves?

The remainder of this lecture, utilizing the metaphor of the boat, the ability to row, and the wind and the waves, will address various contemporary missiological issues through the lens of a Spirit-driven missiology, the missiology of the indigenous church. Will the Church fulfill the apostolic mandate in apostolic power, or will it be seduced by the wind and the waves—the seductive powers of a donor-driven, market-driven, ministry-driven, personality-driven, program-driven, or missionary-driven missiology?

What follows is a non-comprehensive list of potential “drivers” of missions that may not be Spirit-dependent with initial non-binding recommendations. I offer it in the same spirit of Melvin Hodges who stated in the preface of the first edition of *The Indigenous Church*, “The pattern presented in this volume is suggestive rather than mandatory,

and its purpose is to aid the missionary to proceed along right lines and avoid crippling errors.”¹²

The Boat: A Reliance on Material Resources

On occasion, missionaries act as if all that is needed to get to the other side is a “really good boat” (i.e., material resources, money, organizational structures, strategies, programs, ministries and donors). If you can just raise enough money, buy that new satellite or building, promote the project, write the book, develop the curriculum, grow the largest organization or ministry, devise the most effective strategy, then the job of global evangelization will be accomplished. The related but non-verbalized assumption is that if I have the money or the resources, I have the power; but if not, then apostolic praxis is impossible. In order to gain access to the resources, missionary action is driven by the wants and vision of the donor (the

photograph of the newly built church, the feeding of the starving, the schooling of the child), the ego of the missionary, or the forces of the ecclesial market (i.e. that which can be financed by the church).

The missionary must be willing to say “no” to “boats” not under the authority of Jesus and be accountable to the national church and to fellow missionaries in the use of resources. Getting the approval of an immediate superior or meeting the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service is insufficient. Accountability demands submission one to another and requires effort and time, but it is a long-term investment in Spirit-driven apostolic praxis. A practical recommendation that I give to new missionaries for accountability is, “Send your newsletters to your missionary colleagues and to national leadership.”

As an example of a “boat” issue, examined through the lens of a Spirit-driven missiology, I would like to address the construction of buildings. The missionary needs to ask: Are buildings really a part of apostolic praxis? Are they important and necessary to the local and national church to give witness to the glory of God and His Church? Or is it about my legacy, my need to see tangible evidence of my ministry or pleasing my supporters and generating personal and ministerial income? Are buildings a *means* or a *barrier* to the communication of Christ? What should they look like? In response to these questions, I offer a few practical recommendations:

- Assist in building only what the national church desires, needs, and can maintain.
- Avoid building local churches. Invest in building projects that can serve the entire national church.

- Avoid multiple teams on a single project.
- Avoid creating individual “missionary” empires. Buildings should be the result of corporate agreement by missionaries and national leaders.
- If building local churches is absolutely necessary, be culturally sensitive; do not sabotage local initiative or create dependence. Include local leadership in the decision-making process and allow local participation. (e.g., providing foundation, walls, and roof).
- Build simply and functionally, but aesthetically pleasing to local congregation and culture. What is built in the name of Christ should reflect positively on Him in the perspective of locales without violating biblical principles of stewardship and modesty.

The Ability to Row: Reliance on Human Effort

Missionaries are easily seduced by this alternative power source. We act as if the fulfillment of the Great Commission is “up to me.” If I just work hard enough, pulling on missional oars both night and day, by the sweat of my brow I will get the job done. It produces a missional praxis that is missionary-driven, personality-driven, and results-driven—one riddled with competition, division, burnout, and broken relationships.

Scripture affirms the need for individual effort. Everyone is responsible before God for their actions. In Assemblies of God World Missions parlance, “Every tub sits on its own bottom.” This means everyone is responsible to work hard, raise their own support, discern God’s will for their life and

ministry, and provide for their own spiritual life and “member care.” Each individual is released to exercise his or her function as a member of the body of Christ.

The negative side of an emphasis on individual effort is that there is an unbiblical focus on the missionary rather than a biblical focus on Jesus. In such case, actions do not point to Jesus and end up creating competition between missionaries. “My ministry is the only important ministry,” claims the missionary. “If you were a really good missionary, you would be doing what I’m doing.” As with extreme ecumenism, this missionary-centered praxis violates the body metaphor, binding finger to finger and hindering flexibility and effectiveness. This perspective makes the toe try to be a finger or feel guilty or inferior because it is not the finger. Missionaries get so wrapped up in their “ministry” that they ignore missions history and miss the kingdom perspective. As a result, they constantly “reinvent the wheel,” committing the same mistakes, ending with an ineffective missional praxis that is not Spirit-driven.

The Wind and the Waves: Reliance on Alternate Sources of Direction and Power

The wind and the waves can drive apostolic praxis in directions and powers contrary to the Spirit. A partial list would include praxis driven by culture, fear, security/comfort, technology, globalization, political power, and need. Due to the constraints of time, I would like to briefly examine cultural relevance, need, security, and short-term missions.

Frequently, the claims of culture do conflict with the demands of the gospel. The demands and assertions of Scripture are not “politically correct.” When truth is subjugated by relevance to culture, sinners are *not really lost*, *hell does not exist*, and

Jesus is *not the only way*. Tolerance becomes the ultimate virtue. “If we will just learn to get along, communicate better, and help each other,” people say, “there will be global peace.” Love makes no demands.

Relevance is important. We cannot communicate the gospel unless relevant, understandable cultural forms are used, but the *forms* do not save. The good news of Jesus saves, and to be good news, it must be communicated in word and deed. Communication experts claim that verbal communication is the least effective and that preaching should be eliminated as irrelevant. Or more subtly, this generation seems to identify with the words associated with Francis of Assisi, “Preach the gospel always, and when necessary use words.” It was our chapel theme for the year we served at Bethany University as missionaries-in-residence. On the positive side it is a call for integrity in the Church and the Christian walk and an indictment of a duplicitous church. Yet, words are *always* necessary for salvation.

Could political correctness or the fear of being perceived as intolerant radicals be the wind keeping the Church from apostolic praxis? As Dick Brogden noted, Francis of Assisi endangered his own life to speak to a Muslim sultan in Egypt.¹³ Yes, word and deed must match, but the reality is that no one can fully live out Jesus in this age; it is the gospel that transforms, not my life. My life is simply a tool to communicate His truth. We are ambassadors, not kings. We do not rule, He does. Through the foolishness of the preaching of the gospel people are saved (1 Cor. 1:21). It may not make sense to the world or this generation, but preach the Word.

Apostolic praxis responds to human need but is not need-driven. The ultimate need is

for reconciliation with God; all other needs are temporary. Jesus fed the five thousand but rebuked those who sought Him only for temporary gain.

I want to be clear: responding to temporary needs creates space for encountering Christ, but apostolic praxis demands we keep our focus on Jesus. Not every need constitutes a call. Divine direction leads to reconciliation with God. We must ask, “Are we motivated by the compassionate love of God or guilt at our abundance? Is it possible that we give to be justified in our comfort? Is it good praxis or God praxis?”

Experiencing fear in the midst of the storm is a natural response, but to refuse to obey His instruction out of fear is unacceptable for any disciple. It parallels the response of the rich young ruler to Jesus’ charge (Matt. 19:16-22). Craig Keener makes the following astute and powerful commentary on this passage: “The kingdom is not meant to be an extra blessing tagged onto a comfortable life; it must be all-consuming, or it is no longer the kingdom.”¹⁴ Why do we seek God’s will? Is it His will we desire or is it access to His power to guarantee a comfortable life? Do we think that if we are in His “perfect” will, we will be insured against difficulty, turmoil, struggles, and pain? We in the West truly have no notion of the suffering of the global Church and the thousands of followers of Christ who die for their faith each year. We are so comfortable that biblical eschatology and the urgency of proclaiming His death until He comes are undermined. One of the greatest threats to apostolic praxis is the sense of entitlement to a comfortable life, which is why the largest number of missionaries of this generation will come from the majority world.

One of the byproducts of globalization is the increase of short-term missions as missional

praxis. It lends itself to Western cultural values. The hands-on, “get it done” mentality appeals to our individualism, our pragmatism, and our time and task orientation. Short-term missions participants, in a very limited amount of time, experience an exotic, romantic environment, erect a building with their own hands, experience the gratitude of a “destitute” people, and return to their comfortable home believing that they have done their part to save the world and fulfill the Great Commission. Some return again and again to get their missionary “fix.” Missional praxis in such cases is defined by what can be done by missionary tourists in two weeks.

Short-term efforts are especially vulnerable to the missiological storm and the wind and the waves. However, short-term missions is not going to disappear in our global environment and can make a positive contribution to missional praxis if tied to long-term effective apostolic praxis. These contributions include:

- the mobilization and formation of “world Christians” as God’s missionary people;
- the creation of space where potential missionaries can hear, confirm, or inform their missionary call;
- an introduction into the process of raising support, travel, cross-cultural communication, missiology, and apostolic praxis;
- encouragement to national believers and provision of field needs;
- direct participation in spiritual warfare;
- intense communal discipleship;

- a connection to the broader body of Christ.

The concerns that must be addressed include:

- No Map! No missiological formation or reflection, resulting in flawed praxis;
- a de-emphasis on career missionaries and the need for incarnational ministry;
- a de-emphasis on the Church and proclamation in word and deed (Church planting and discipleship take more than two weeks, two months or two years.);
- a disproportionate percentage of missions budgets are designated to short-term praxis;
- faulty missiology—many short-term participants come to believe that missions can be accomplished with short-term missions alone;
- lack of contextualization and cultural sensitivity;
- not connecting to nor submitting to national leadership;
- the experience of a lifetime does not convert to a lifetime of commitment.

Recommendations to maximize the effectiveness of short-term efforts:

- prioritize long-term missions;
- balance financial investment;
- provide orientation for long-term effect, include missiology and spiritual discernment;

- affirm the potential positive impact of short-term missions;
- create space to hear the voice of the Spirit and experience Spirit-empowerment;
- provide concrete venues of praxis to express deeper commitment post-experience;
- eliminate multiple trips;
- increase connectedness to career missionaries.

Ultimately, short-term efforts will be only as effective as they are linked to missionaries and national churches in long-term apostolic praxis.

Practical Recommendations for a Spirit-driven Apostolic Praxis

Hodges' description of the missionary's ministry provides solid advice for contemporary missionaries:

- Remember the missionary's primary function is as a church planter/pioneer (Two phases: (1) evangelism, (2) teaching converts including the training of national workers and leaders.)
- A missionary is temporary in any local area; the church must be the center of the work.
- Avoid maintenance ministries; move to new fields.
- Avoid measures that would stifle indigenous efforts.
- Refuse to occupy a position that a national can fill.

- Do not be jealous of his or her authority or position, but be willing for others to take the lead. The missionary's spiritual ministry will always provide his or her proper place in the Body of Christ whether he or she holds an office or not.
- Withdraw at the proper time. Assume new roles.
- Influence through spiritual leadership. Above all else, let the missionary maintain his or her standing as a "man or woman of God." With this relationship maintained, all other relationships will be made easy.¹⁵
- Focus on people not programs. The battle of this age is for souls; the proclamation of the kingdom not its realization.
- Emphasize the importance of the career missionary, incarnational ministry, and the long-term. The missionary should strategically invest for a life-time of service in any given context, but be willing and able to change at a moment's notice when directed by the Spirit.
- Tell the Story. Narratives create space for divine encounter. Testimonies empower, build our faith, and provide an environment where we can trust Jesus for the impossible.

To this I would add that to be involved in a Spirit-driven apostolic praxis, you must:

- Think and act missiologically. Continually affirm the need as a missionary people for the map, the fuel, and the vehicle of the Spirit in order to get to the other side and fulfill the Great Commission.
- Keep your eyes on Jesus. Peter began to sink because he was distracted by the wind and the waves. The full gospel is a Christocentric gospel. Nurture the spiritual life; tend your own spiritual power base. Be accountable. Individually and corporately create space to discern Spirit direction and experience Spirit-empowerment and renewal.
- Make disciples: Plant and nurture the Church. Christocentric means ecclesial-centric because the Church is the Body of Christ. The vehicle for apostolic praxis is the Church.
- Preach/proclaim the good news; only the gospel saves.

Conclusion

Jesus is already in the boat with the willing on His way to those who have never heard. He calls out to the rest of the Church, "Let's go over to the other side." Those in the boat are assured of getting to the other side because He is in the boat. His presence will go with us as we fulfill the Great Commission. An indigenous New Testament church does not just emerge. It is birthed by intentionally following the way of the cross in the power of the Spirit. The antidote to a donor-driven, market-driven, ministry-driven, or missionary-driven missiology is to surrender our rights to power, recognizing that it is not "my" ministry; it is God's ministry.

Most of the time being in the missionary boat with Jesus is just hard work—a constant battle to trust Him in the face of the wind and the waves. I am so glad that sometimes He stands and speaks peace, bringing order to chaos. Apostolic praxis is possible, because the Master of the wind and waves promised it.

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¹I first heard the term “inconvenient lost” in a message presented by Dick Brogden at the Assemblies of God World Missions Summit 2 in Cincinnati, OH on December 31, 2008.

²Ray S. Anderson, *Minding God’s Business* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 6.

³*Ibid.*, 7-8.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Ray S. Anderson, “A Theology of Ministry,” in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, ed. Ray S. Anderson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 6-21.

⁶This definition is based on that given by J. Robert Clinton in *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988), 197.

⁷Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 10.

⁸Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), 52-53.

⁹*Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁰Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 35.

¹¹C. S. Lewis, *The Joyful Christian* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. 1977), 32-34.

¹²Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), 5-6.

¹³ Dick Brogden at the Assemblies of God World Missions Summit 2 in Cincinnati, OH on December 31, 2008.

¹⁴Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 98.

¹⁵Hodges, 126-129.