

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**FRIENDS IN MISSION:
FOLLOWING THE WIND & RIDING THE WAVE**

THIRD LECTURE

BY

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Friends in Mission: Following the Wind & Riding the Wave

For those who have joined us late on this journey . . . this lecture series, entitled “*Following the Wind & Riding the Wave: Pursuing the Hogan Legacy into the Second Pentecostal Century*,” has been an attempt to evaluate how the Pentecostal mission movement which exploded onto the global stage with spectacular momentum and vitality in the previous century, is poised to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. Our focus has been on the extraordinary convergence of two global megatrends—*the Wind* of the Pentecostal movement and *the Wave* of globalization. In our first lecture we made what is at the least a *prima facie* case for believing that as the quintessential “religion made to travel,” the Pentecostal movement thrives in a “world in motion” created by the social processes of globalization. In evaluating the first set of globalization trends in our second lecture, we saw how massive people movements have given rise to a world of “cultures in motion,” marked by multiculturalism and religious plurality. This new “world without borders” requires a paradigmatic megashift in mission thinking, so that missions today can no longer be viewed only in terms of a movement from western Christendom to eastern pagan tribes. Christian missions of the future will have to be multidirectional—from everywhere to everywhere.

In this last phase of our journey, we begin with a brief theological critique of the globalization phenomenon before looking more closely at the four remaining globalization trends and mission priorities outlined in our opening lecture. This will lead us to a concluding description of the second crucial megashift that needs to take place in missions in the second Pentecostal century.

Globalization and God’s Kingdom Mission

Up to this point in our journey we have evaluated the impact of globalization upon Christian mission as a largely neutral sociological phenomenon. Apart from the broad

theological inference that we drew from the remarkable convergence between the movement of the *Wind* of Pentecost across the globe and the *Wave* of globalization, suggesting coordinated orchestration by a divine conductor, we have studiously avoided any theological critique or ethical evaluation. Globalization is, however, a hotly debated issue among Christians today, with advocates and critics both drawing support from different biblical themes.¹

On one hand, there are those who argue that globalization and the integration of markets is the only hope for overcoming world poverty. Those who oppose this view, however, maintain that globalization is increasingly the cause of political oppression and social injustice. Those who defend globalization see it as facilitating human development at every level, enabling substantial gains in the fields of science, technology, transport, and communication to be shared with the rest of the world. They point out that economic liberalization and the free market have facilitated prosperity and boosted the standard of living in significant sections of society, that growing global consciousness has promoted greater ecological awareness, and globalization technologies have improved means to control our world and monitor environmental change.²

Opponents of globalization see it as widening the chasm between the rich and the poor, as global giants relentlessly further their economic prospects by co-opting the support of institutions like the World Bank, World Trade Organization, IMF, and the United Nations, leaving behind significant sections of humanity on the margins of disempowerment and misery. They regard the homogenization of cultures through the imposition of a “world market culture” as dealing a deadly blow to indigenous cultural identities, and view its inherently secular and materialistic

¹Richard Tiplady, ed. *One World or Many? The Impact of Globalization on Mission*. Globalization of Mission Series (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2003), 6-7.

²Michael Pocock, Gailyn V. Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 22-30.

values as fundamentally incompatible with a religious world view that fosters greed and an enticing new form of idolatry.³

Max Stackhouse traces the influence of Christian faith upon the emergence of some aspects of globalization by drawing upon Arend van Leeuwen's work *Christianity in World History*.⁴ The central thesis of this work is that the sociohistorical forces of modern technology, urbanization, democracy, and human rights were in fact grounded in Christian theological presuppositions and carried deep implications for social transformation. The spread of these "spiritual forces in secular garb" could both open the way to world evangelization and further the development of a global community.⁵ This adds credence to one of our key concluding observations in the opening lecture that Christianity is inherently a globalizing movement and the Christian missionary movement at the forefront of the globalizing process.

As those attentive to the signs of the time, Christians recognize that globalization is a social reality that cannot be wished away. It is inherently neither good nor evil. It has outcomes that are simultaneously good and bad. Its complexity reflects the nature of twenty-first century

³Alex Araujo, "Globalization and World Evangelism", in *Global Missiology for the Twenty-first Century: The Iguassu Dialogue*, ed. William D. Taylor (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 64-67; Fiona Wilson, "Globalisation from a Grassroots Perspective," in *One World or Many? The Impact of Globalization on Mission*. Globalization of Mission Series, ed. Richard Tiplady (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2003), 181-183.

⁴Max L. Stackhouse, "The Theological Challenge of Globalization," Religion Online, http://www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/researchd.dll/showarticle?item_id=60 (accessed on October 26, 2009); cf. Max L. Stackhouse, and Peter J. Paris, eds. *God and Globalization: Religion and the Powers of the Common Life*, vol. 1. (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2000), 26-27.

⁵Stackhouse's thesis is closely linked to his conviction that as a leading player in globalization, the U.S.A. has been thrust into the leadership of a global civilization, a civilization that will not survive if it is built only on technological advancement, economic expertise, political power and military might, without a deeper foundation in faith and a normative vision of eternal truth, justice, and goodness. The Christian faith has been a critical catalyst and facilitator of the globalization movement and the normative vision that has shaped most of the institutions of American civilization. The United States thus has a crucial role to play in furthering the global Christian witness in the twenty-first century; Stackhouse, "The Theological Challenge of Globalization." This case is argued from a different direction in Dinesh D'Souza, *What's So Great About America?* (Washington: Regnery Publishing, 2002). If this is true, the economic power and the political influence the U.S.A. wields in our world should help promote world peace and create the right conditions for the furtherance of Christian mission.

human society, and it is here to stay, although its dynamic nature leaves us uncertain about the kind of world contemporary globalization is creating.⁶ What we do know is that contemporary globalization creates conditions which can facilitate Christian witness, and discerning identification and application of its helpful impulses can greatly advance the cause of Christian mission.⁷

We must, however, qualify this positive assertion with two important riders. In the first place, we must be careful, not to confuse modernization or globalization with evangelization. It is possible to ride the forces of modernity without acknowledging Christ's lordship or being aware of the Christian sources that may have nurtured these forces. In fact, given distance and detachment from their original roots, these forces easily become idols of modernity, which frequently work at cross purposes with the rule of God in Christ. Second, we dare not suggest that everything that takes place under the broad rubric of globalization is directly ordained by God. For instance, as we have noted in our earlier lecture and above, much of economic globalization is driven by greed and love of mammon, and thus accentuates social disparities, driving a significant proportion of the world's population into extreme forms of poverty, all of which is at cross-purposes with kingdom values and the church's mission.

⁶David Claydon, ed. *Globalization and the Gospel: Rethinking Mission in the Contemporary World*, Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 30 (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 2005), 24; Larry V. Ort, "A Christian Response to Globalization," http://www.racu.org/faculty/articles/ort_globalization.html (accessed on October 27, 2009).

⁷Tiplady points out that prior theological perspectives condition our response to globalization. Human beings made in the image of God are capable of good cultural innovations, but due to our fallenness, every human enterprise is tainted by sin. Those concentrating on human fallenness will tend to adopt a "Christ against culture" viewpoint, focus on the negative aspects of globalization, and see it as something to be resisted. Others with a more positive attitude to culture tend towards an unqualified appreciation of globalization, readily focusing only on its prospects for civilization's progress. A balanced assessment sees human cultures as reflecting simultaneously both God's image and human sinfulness, and globalization as neutral in and of itself, with the potential to advance God's design for world evangelization, Tiplady, 6-7.

Christian mission's appropriation of globalization is thus not indiscriminate or undiscerning. The Church is rather called to apply its resources in a redemptive interpretation and employment of globalization so that the *Wind* of Christian mission can effectively ride the *Wave* without compromising essential kingdom commitments to peace, justice, and compassion. With these riders, however, we are then able to celebrate the convergence between the globalization movement and the Christian kingdom vision of all things in heaven and on earth coming together under one head, Christ. With this brief theological critique of a concept germane to our discussion, we continue our analysis of the impact of globalization on Christian mission as we consider the four remaining globalization trends identified in our opening lecture.

***The Explosion in Information-Communication
Technology: Innovate Creatively***

Life in the twenty-first century is marked by rapid and relentless technological change. Its influence seems to be not only all-pervasive, its pace continues to accelerate. The components of the contemporary globalization engine are thus the “wonder” devices of modern technology like the personal computer, the Internet, cell/i-phone, fax machine, digital technology, satellite, cable television, and jet travel. Technological advances in travel, communication, and media have traditionally always facilitated the efficiency of the global missionary enterprise. There is, however, a growing realization that technology is not always a neutral medium, but that some aspects of modern technology carry innate problems and concerns as well.⁸ The strides in

⁸See especially Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Knopf, 1992). As a professor of Media Ecology and cultural critic, Postman is well positioned to comment on the relation of technology to culture. Postman's pessimistic critique sees culture as subservient to and controlled by both invisible (I.Q. scores, statistics, polling techniques) and visible (television, computers, automobiles) technologies. His scathing verdict concedes few benefits of technology, regarding it as essentially an intrusive and dangerous enemy of culture. He describes *technopoly* as “. . . the deification of technology, which means that the culture seeks its authorization in technology, finds its satisfaction in technology, and takes its orders from technology”, 71.

technology today not only impact our use of equipment and methodology in missions, but potentially have a bearing on our understanding of mission itself.⁹

The most significant impact of technology upon modern life is in the area of enhanced connectivity through reduced telephone rates, the Internet, cell phones, email, satellite television, DVDs, and other forms of global communication. This has amazing and positive benefits for missionary communication and sharing of worship experiences across the globe. The Internet has made a mind-boggling amount of information and mission resources available to anyone who can access the worldwide web.¹⁰ It further enables convenient transfer of funds internationally and enables missionary families to communicate regularly with loved ones in distant countries. Internet technology also facilitates efficient and cost-effective delivery of online education through e-learning courses into even restricted-access nations.

Technology has helped reduce the emotional pain and trauma of missionary families relocating to a foreign country. Through e-mail, social networking sites, and other online technologies such as Skype, missionaries can be half a world away and still be in regular and close touch with family and friends. Some have serious objections to this, since it seems to relieve missionaries of the pressure to enter a new culture deeply, and instead encourages them to

⁹Pocock, Rheenen, and McConnell, 301.

¹⁰Internet connectivity is shaping a new discourse of interpersonal relationships called social networking, which has begun to rewire the way people meet, interact, and stay connected. In the past, missionaries would return from the field and return to give their supporters a report every three to four years. Today, supporters want to do more than give regularly, they also want to stay connected with the missionary, and modern internet technology facilitates not only constant exchange of information, but also increased global awareness, “Unsolved Mysteries in Missions” in *World Gospel Mission blog* (July 8, 2009) <http://unsolvedministries.blogspot.com/2009/01/understanding-and-commitment-short-term.html> (accessed October 28, 2009).

have a foot in each culture.¹¹ This is, however, the more natural and necessary direction of the future missionary identity, in step with changing global realities.¹²

Employment of new technologies thus raises a staggering range of ethical issues since technological solutions are often more task-efficient than people-friendly. The escalation of the pace of life precipitated by technological efficiency seems to be at the cost of relationships, in-depth reflection, and face-to-face interaction and learning. There is also the problem of the “digital divide” between the techno-savvy who are frequently privileged due to more effective communication, and those who are disadvantaged by lack of access to sophisticated technology. A serious problem generated by enhanced technological connectivity is that of security, as public access to cyberspace makes confidentiality of information and communication increasingly difficult, placing missionary personnel at risk in restricted entry countries.¹³

Many of the pitfalls of technology can be avoided through discerning and creative innovation. For instance, the “high touch-high tech” approach recognizes that technological solutions never exist in isolation, but must be complemented by greater face-to-face human interaction. The key is to see technology as facilitating greater intimacy in relationships rather than controlling them.

¹¹Pocock, Rheenen, and McConnell, 303.

¹²Cf. Hanciles’ description of the missionary as the “classical” transmigrant, referred to in our previous lecture; Jehu J. Hanciles, “Migration and Mission: Some Implications for the Twenty-first Century Church,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 27(4):148.

¹³A recent *NY Times* article, “Surveillance of Skype Messages Found in China,” noted that “Researchers in China have estimated that 30,000 or more “internet police” monitor online traffic, Web sites, and blogs for political and other offending content in what is called the Golden Shield Project or the Great Firewall of China.” For missionaries in that country and those like it, using Skype or other online communication tools thus actually increase their personal security risk; John Markoff, “Surveillance of Skype Messages Found in China,” *New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/02/technology/internet/02skype.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=%E2%80%9Csurveillance%20of%20Skype%20Messages%20Found%20in%20China.%E2%80%9D%20&st=cse (accessed October 28, 2009).

The use of technology in mission raises a number of questions, some of which have no easy answers.¹⁴ To what extent have modern advances in technology actually enhanced mission efforts around the world? Have technological advances impacted missions more radically and at a deeper level perhaps than we envisage? For instance, missionaries are now able to use the internet and computer courses to train nationals in countries not open to Christian missionaries. Is this the future of missions? Why send individuals overseas to conduct training that could be done over the Internet? Is there still benefit in sending missionaries to foreign fields for extended periods of time? Have technological advances changed the face of missions forever or, on the other hand, are we in danger of losing elements of what was once an efficient and effective tradition?¹⁵

***The Rise of Global Poverty & Threat to Human Life:
Develop a Theology of Integral Mission & Interdependence***

In delineating this trend in our opening lecture, we pointed out that the positive impact of globalization on the global economy and the rise of free market capitalism has also driven a significant proportion of the world's population into extreme forms of poverty and given rise to a number of other threats to human life.¹⁶ The poor and socially marginalized are especially vulnerable to infectious illnesses and epidemics, HIV-AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, the scourge of human trafficking, cross-border terrorism, and environmental disasters.

¹⁴“Unsolved Mysteries in Missions” in *World Gospel Mission blog*.

¹⁵Some mission organizations even have manuals for people wanting to get involved in becoming a virtual missionary. We try to respond to these questions provisionally in the conclusion of this paper, but our purpose is not always to provide pat answers, but rather to stimulate awareness on certain issues with serious long-term implications, requiring careful ongoing study and honest critical reflection.

¹⁶For a concise but fair analysis of the causes and consequences of this trend, see Wayne Ellwood, *The Nonsense Guide to Globalization* (London: Verso, 2003), 90-106; for an evangelical Christian summary perspective, see Samuel Escobar, “The Global Scenario at the Turn of the Century” in *Global Missiology for the Twenty-first Century: The Iguassu Dialogue*, ed. William D. Taylor (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 32.

The Lausanne Grand Rapids report of 1982 on “Evangelism and Social Responsibility” brought considerable clarity and resolution to the ongoing evangelical debate on the issue. Some expression of social concern is thus today an indispensable component of evangelical mission.¹⁷ The Grand Rapids document sets out clearly the integral link between evangelism and social responsibility. First, social concern is viewed as a *consequence* of evangelism—the means by which God brings people to new birth, and their new life manifests itself in the service of others (Gal. 5:6; James 2:18; 1 John 3:16-18). Second, social engagement can be a *bridge* to evangelism. It can break down prejudice and suspicion, open closed doors, and gain a hearing for the gospel. Third, social action is a *partner* to evangelism. Jesus’ words explained His works, and His works illustrated His words: both were expressions of His compassion for people. Evangelism and social responsibility are thus integrally related in our proclamation of and obedience to the gospel.

Pentecostals were not totally insulated from the ongoing evangelism-social action controversy, but Pentecostalism has always been essentially a religion of the poor. Its origins in North America were among the poor and socially marginalized, contributing to its distinctive appeal among the poor in South America, Africa, and Asia.¹⁸ But while the Pentecostal *praxis* was marked by an intuitive engagement with the actual felt needs of the poor and dispossessed, it was not until the closing decades of the twentieth century that a robust Pentecostal theology of holistic mission began to emerge. In one of the finest early illustrations of such a well-articulated

¹⁷John Stott, ed. *Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Commitment*, Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 21 (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1982), <http://www.lausanne.org/all-documents/lop-21.html> (accessed October 29, 2009); cf. Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone*. Christian Doctrine in Global Perspective Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 152-154.

¹⁸Robert M. Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992); David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 4; Paul Freston, “Evangelicalism and Globalization,” in *A Global Faith: Essays on Evangelicalism and Globalisation*, ed. Mark Hutchinson and Ogbu Kalu (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1998), 72-74.

and Pentecostal holistic mission theology, Dempster affirmed the vital organic link between kingdom social ethics and the mission of the Church:

. . . where God reigns, a new redemptive society is formed in which brothers and sisters enjoy an affirmative community; strangers are incorporated into the circle of neighbour love; peace is made with enemies; injustices are rectified; the poor experience solidarity with the human family and the creation; generous sharing results in the just satisfaction of human needs in which no one suffers deprivation; and all persons are entitled to respect, are to be treated with dignity, and are deserving of justice because they share the status of God's image-bearers.¹⁹

Grounding his construct in a sound kingdom theology framework, Dempster outlines an integrated Pentecostal theology of mission which includes the church's *kerygmatic* ministry of evangelism, *koinoniac* ministry of social witness, and *diakonic* ministry of social service. He insists that all of these are essential for the integrity of the church's mission of proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom in word, life, and deed.²⁰

A recent study by two sociologists of religion has furnished unmistakable confirmation of the Pentecostal tradition's strong orientation towards engagement of social issues. At the conclusion of a four-year, extensive grassroots research journey, covering various expressions of Pentecostalism in twenty different countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and East Europe, Miller and Yamamori conclude that:

. . . there is an emergent movement within Pentecostal churches worldwide that embraces a holistic understanding of the Christian faith. Unlike the Social Gospel tradition of the mainline churches, this movement seeks a balanced approach to evangelism and social action that is modelled after Jesus' example of not only preaching about the coming kingdom of God but also ministering to the physical needs of the people he encountered.²¹

¹⁹Murray W. Dempster, "Evangelism, Social Concern, and the Kingdom of God" in *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, ed. Murray W. Dempster, Byron Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 24.

²⁰Ibid., 38-39.

²¹Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 212.

Miller and Yamamori observe that Pentecostal social engagement encompasses a wide range of issues, extending from emergency humanitarian responses to natural calamities such as drought, floods, and earthquakes to medical work, counselling, education, and community development. Their essentially positive assessment is, however, tempered by the following telling observation: “Many churches are still putting bandages on problems and only recently have begun to think structurally about social issues.”²²

So, in the midst of a world of dire need, armed with a resolute commitment to biblical faith and convinced that the Spirit’s empowerment can enable them to overcome all odds, Pentecostals are making a difference. They are healing the sick, uplifting the powerless, rescuing children at risk, fighting against AIDS and other deadly diseases, serving the needs of the poorest of the poor, but they are also preaching the good news of Jesus, delivering the demonized, making disciples of Jesus, planting new churches, taking the gospel to unreached people groups, and offering hope to the hopeless.²³

Although the mounting problems of global poverty and threats to human life are formidable, as Miller and Yamamori’s study clearly illustrate, the Pentecostal movement has the theological resources and missionary passion for credible ongoing engagement with the global need. The global presence of Pentecostalism provides a unique opportunity of a truly global movement of witness against these forces of evil in our world. However, crucial to the

²²Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 213.

²³A crucial question that frequently comes up in this regard is the question of priority: which should take precedence, evangelism or social responsibility? In terms of logical priority, there can be no doubt that since social concern presupposes a Christian social conscience and discipleship, and is a consequence and aim of evangelism, evangelism must take priority. Evangelism must take priority also because it relates to the supreme and ultimate need of all humankind for the saving grace of Jesus Christ, acceptance of which will determine a person’s eternal destiny. We should, however, never have to choose between satisfying physical hunger and spiritual hunger, or between healing bodies and saving souls, since an authentic love for our neighbor will lead us to serve him or her as a whole person. In practice, as in the public ministry of Jesus, the two are inseparable, and can mutually support and strengthen each other; see John Stott, ed.

effectiveness of this endeavour is the emergence of a model of missionary engagement that links various segments of global Pentecostalism together in a relationship of mutual interdependence.

***Political Resistance to Traditional Missionary Activity:
Pursue Creative Avenues of Access***

In defining the concept of globalization in the opening lecture, we noted that the heightened *awareness* of global interconnectedness that globalization brings by bringing distant cultures into closer proximity gives rise to a corresponding response of “localization” by which local cultural traditions are reinforced. This assertion of local identity frequently takes the form of nationalist reactionary movements which zealously seek to shield the indigenous cultures from foreign intrusions. Missionary efforts are accordingly regarded as a carry-over from the cultural imperialism of the colonial era, to be staunchly resisted. Consequently, today many nation-states have closed the doors to foreign missionaries. The challenge facing the Christian missionary enterprise: How do we evangelize and establish faith communities in restricted-access countries of the world where vocational missionaries are not permitted to enter?

The issue has come into prominence since the last quarter of the twentieth century, as following the end of the colonial era of missions, vocational missionaries were no longer welcomed in many parts of the world and missionary visas simply not available. In response to this new reality, several missionary agencies came up with the concept of *creative access platforms* as a practical means for providing missionaries the opportunity and relational basis for entering and working in restricted-access regions of the world.²⁴ Creative access avenues of mission include bi-vocational or “tent-making” networks and kingdom business platforms, which add value to a community and help build bridges for witness and making disciples.

²⁴Pocock, Rheenen, and McConnell, 211.

Although the creative access idea is gaining widespread acceptance today among evangelicals in general, Pentecostals have been relatively slow to adopt this strategy. This is largely due to the high degree of professionalization of ministry and mission, and the distance we have created between the specialist, ordained clergy and the non-professional laity in our theology of ministry and mission. Paul, the greatest missionary of all time, was a philosopher, tentmaker, lecturer, and fund-raiser, and at the same time, a preacher, pastor, teacher, and church-planter. The early spread of the gospel in the post-apostolic period was spearheaded by merchant missionaries. The Moravian Brethren represent an entire mission movement of tentmakers who went to some of the most unreached regions of the world, even reaching the remote mountain kingdom of Tibet. William Carey, perhaps the most well-known missionary in modern times, was a bi-vocational cobbler-pastor.²⁵

Seventy percent—a vast majority—of the world’s unreached people groups live in restricted access countries, representing 55 percent of the world’s population. At present only about 6 percent of the Christian missionary force serve in these “closed” countries, and only one dollar of every \$10,000 of the money spent on missions is invested in these regions. In the light of this massive need, should Pentecostal missions give serious attention to redefining the function of missionaries and creative diversification of their role? Should all missionaries always have to be theologically trained and ordained vocational ministers? Could missionaries in the twenty-first century be not only full-time vocational missionaries—evangelists, pastors, teachers, and cross-cultural church planters, but also missionaries who are doctors, nurses, university

²⁵Carey entered India as an illegal missionary immigrant, and in the course of his thirty-two year missionary tenure, worked variously as a translator, university professor, factory manager, agriculturalist, social activist, scientist, medical worker, and author; Pocock, Rheenen, and McConnell, 229-234.

professors, development workers, and business-entrepreneurs, with more free and privileged access to “closed” countries along the communication highways globalization provides?

***The Shifting Centre of Christianity:
Work Towards Partnership/Covenant Relationship in Mission***

A little over three decades ago, the Swiss missiologist, Walbert Bühlmann, hailed “the coming of the Third church” as an “epoch-making event of current church history.”²⁶ Bühlmann used “Third church” to signify the emerging church in the South, the first millennium of Christianity having been dominated by the Church in the eastern half of Roman Empire, and the second millennium by the Western Church. A decade later Bühlmann made the following far-reaching observation: “Now the Third Millennium will evidently stand under the leadership of the Third Church, the Southern Church. I am convinced that the most important drives and inspirations for the whole church in the future will come from the Third Church.”²⁷

The most important development in Christianity during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is, undoubtedly, the dramatic shift of global Christianity’s demographic centre to the southern hemisphere and parts of Asia.²⁸ For the first time in more than a thousand years, western Christianity is in the minority: 60 percent of the world’s two billion Christians now live in the global South, and that proportion is rising. Andrew Walls thus observes that although the church historian, Latourette, described the nineteenth century as the “great century

²⁶Walbert Bühlmann, *The Coming of the Third Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1977), 131.

²⁷Ibid., 6.

²⁸This southward shift has been thoroughly documented, statistically validated, and carefully analyzed; David B. Barrett, G. T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, eds., *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World, AD 1900-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Mark Laing, “The Changing Face of Mission: Implications for the Southern Shift in Christianity,” *Missiology: An International Review* 34 (April 2006):165-177.

of missions”, according to Walls, “the most remarkable century in the history of the expansion of Christianity has been the twentieth.”²⁹

A recent work by the evangelical historian Mark Noll draws from Walls’ seminal work in analyzing the contribution of American missions in shaping the new world Christianity. While Noll does not see American missions trying to control the shape of world Christianity, he does observe significant American influence in bringing the gospel to indigenous peoples who, in turn, shape Christian faith and practice into culturally relevant forms. He also sees newer expressions of Christianity around the world, despite many differences, sharing many characteristics of Christianity in the United States, because of a shared historical experience.³⁰

This assessment concurs essentially with that of Walls who, while conceding the complementary roles of both missionary and indigenous agencies, regards the missionary movement as “the detonator of the vast explosion” that brought about the demographic transformation of the Christian church, and thus “one of the most important developments in the entire history of western Christianity.”³¹ Walls traces the growth of the Christian movement in six sequential phases. Each phase is marked by the translation of the Christian faith into a major culture, during which it takes on the distinctive features of the culture. Walls shows how Christianity seems to spread serially by a process of expansion and concurrent recession, so that remarkably, at every stage, “a threatened eclipse of Christianity was averted by its cross-cultural

²⁹Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (New York: Orbis, 2002), 64.

³⁰Mark Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2009).

³¹Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, 65.

diffusion.”³² Cross-cultural diffusion has been necessary to Christianity: it has been its life’s blood, without which the Christian faith could not have survived.³³

The missionary movement from the West during the past century is the most recent instance of cross-cultural diffusion in which the Christian faith crossed cultural frontiers into African and Asian communities. However, during the period that the Western missionary acted as a connecting terminal for this cross-cultural diffusion process, Christianity lost its hold on much of the West.³⁴ The recession of Christianity in the West was thus accompanied by a strong resurgence in the south:

. . . we seem to stand at the threshold of a new age of Christianity, one in which its main base will be in the Southern continents, and where its dominant expressions will be filtered through the culture of those countries. Once again, Christianity has been saved for the world by its diffusion across cultural lines.³⁵

According to Walls, this demographic shift to the south, resulting from the modern missionary movement, presents us with twin challenges: a post-Christian West and a post-Western Christianity.³⁶ He predicts that Christianity in the third millennium will be more culturally diverse than all its earlier expressions, even as Africa, Latin America, and Asia become the defining hub of mainstream, normative Christianity. More than ever before, Christianity will need to be understood as a multi-cultural and global movement, an enduring tradition that has found new life in the lived realities of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Walls cites Newbiggin to support his conviction that within this changed scenario western Christians

³²Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, p.32.

³³Ibid., 67.

³⁴Ibid., 66.

³⁵Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (New York: Orbis, 1996), 22.

³⁶Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, p.65.

will need the assistance of Christians from the non-Western world, but goes on to sound a note of warning:

The demographic transformation of the church brought about by the missionary movement opens the possibility of testing our Christian witness by that of others, of experiencing one another's gifts and sharing our combined resources. Equally, it opens the prospect of a score of local Christianities operating independently without interest or concern in one another. Either of these processes is possible; only one of them reflects the New Testament view of the church or the Spirit of Christ.³⁷

In pointing out the impact of the southern shift in Christianity upon the future course of the global mission movement, Mark Laing observes that the growing mission movement emerging from the non-western world will inevitably change the nature of the world missionary enterprise. He points out the adverse consequences of western and non-western missionary efforts developing independently of each other, and either essentially attempting to maintain the *status quo* of western domination, or "like ships in the night unaware that we are passing each other by," in needless competition or duplication of efforts.³⁸ The potential benefits of a south-north partnership are incalculable, but what should be the shape of such a partnership? Our concluding section is devoted to exploring a solution to this question and suggesting what the contours of future south-north partnership should look like.

Megashift Two: From Paternalism and Partnership to "Friends in Mission"

The relentless advance of the juggernaut of globalization is bringing about socio-political, economic, and cultural changes of momentous proportions that will have a deep and inexorable

³⁷Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, 69.

³⁸Laing recommends Pate and Keyes' model of task-oriented partnership involving increasing cooperation and interconnectedness, quoting Paul Hiebert in support: "the future of mission is based in the formation of international networks . . . which will exhibit a willingness to share resources of people and intellectual property rather than to compete, Pocock, Rheenen, and McConnell, 174; cf. Larry D. Pate and Lawrence E. Keyes, "Emerging Missions in a Global Church," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 10(4): 156-161.

impact on Christian missions in the twenty-first century. We concluded our evaluation of three globalization trends in our previous lecture with a proposal for a radical megashift in the traditional paradigm of Christian mission. In the context of a world without borders and an emerging church that is truly global, mission must be multidirectional - *from everywhere to everywhere*. Our consideration of the four remaining globalization trends in this lecture leads us to propose a second megashift: from neo-colonial paternalism and foreign-indigenous partnership in mission, to *servicing as friends together in mission*.

The western missionary posture during the “great century” of missions and the early decades of the twentieth century was largely marked by what Andrew Walls describes as a spirit of “imperial religion.” “The White Man’s Burden”³⁹, on which this posture was based, viewed the culture of Britain and the West as a whole as intrinsically superior to those of the newly-discovered colonized territories, and believed that they had been entrusted with a God-given civilizing mission to the pagan cultures of the East. This was what eventually gave rise to a condescending attitude and paternalistic relationship with the native Christian converts and churches. Paternalism assumes the lack of ability and knowledge of the people of the receptor cultures, requiring the perpetual dominance of the sending culture over the mission process.⁴⁰ The missionary-native Christian relationship during that era was thus marked by western control and dominance on one hand, and subservient dependence on the other.

Meanwhile, there was an awareness emerging by the middle of the nineteenth century which saw this “colonial captivity” of mission methodology as detrimental to the enduring legacy of the Christian church and mission. Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson were the earliest

³⁹Derived from Rudyard Kipling’s famous poem of that name which – along with other Kipling poetry— captured the prevailing ethos of that time; see Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, 177-193.

⁴⁰Pocock, Rheenen, and McConnell, 285.

proponents of a missiology which opposed long-term foreign control and advocated empowerment of indigenous leadership and local support of national churches. The indigenous church formula of self-government, self-support, and self-propagation, developed by Venn and Anderson, was adopted and developed further by John Nevius towards the end of the twentieth century. In the twentieth century, under the influence of Roland Allen, Melvin Hodges, and others, the indigenous church principles have gained widespread popularity and acceptance, almost acquiring the status of a doctrine in some circles.⁴¹

The indigenous church principles have helped further the Christian global mission in many significant ways. They have helped loose the church from indefinite overseas missionary control, instilled a sense of worth and dignity among the national leadership, facilitated the emergence of strong and vibrant national churches, and enabled them to move from an unhealthy dependence on foreign support and expertise to administrative autonomy and financial independence. There is, however, a growing feeling in mission circles that a paradigm forged essentially as a corrective reaction to deficient colonial missionary practice needs to be updated and morphed into a model which addresses more closely the needs of a rapidly globalizing twenty-first century world. The following is a summary proposal, not a blueprint as much as a sketch or map, submitted as a basis for further discussion.

From Self to Servanthood

The term “indigenous” literally means “born from within”—what is local or native to a culture in contrast to what is foreign or alien. All cultures are fallen, and an overemphasis of the indigenous perspective can sometimes compromise the Church’s call to distinctiveness and countercultural living in pagan settings. Furthermore, some view the three “self” model as

⁴¹ John Rowell, *To Give or Not To Give?* (Atlanta: Authentic, 2006), pp. 27-35; Pocock, Rheenen, and McConnell, 285-286.

reflecting the reality of western individualistic cultures more than group-oriented cultures of the majority world. Western individualism breeds the ideal of self-reliance not as highly valued in more closely-bonded and community-oriented African, Asian, and Latin American cultures.⁴²

The emphasis on “self,” self-sufficiency, and autonomy also seems to mitigate against Jesus’ call to self-denial in the service of the other. Jesus began his closing discourse to His disciples prior to His passion with an acted out parable on servanthood, a prophetic prefigurement of His death on the cross by which He modelled servanthood as an irrevocable pattern for ministry (John 13). Jesus’ explicit teaching rather seems to place a high premium on the kingdom value of servanthood, giving, sharing, laying down one’s life in costly service of the other.

From Competitive National Agencies to Collaborative Global Networks

In the times in which we live, ethnic identities are becoming increasingly fluid and national allegiances will become less and less relevant when it comes to responsible missionary stewardship. Western and majority world mission agencies will thus need to learn from each other. Agencies from different countries sometimes target the same areas and fail to coordinate their activities.⁴³

We need to borrow a page from the increasingly well-coordinated Islamic and Hindu plans for expanding their global presence. While the indigenous emphasis has pushed our

⁴²Pocock, Rheenen, and McConnell, 287-289. The rich West can learn the occasional lesson from the poorer nations. I was personal witness to an occasion when Bible students in India heard about the food crisis in a Bible College in an East European country. In response they fasted one day, collected the money, took up an offering and mobilized support for a week’s food bill for fellow students in East Europe. God loves to take the weak, the little, the poor and multiply the impact of sacrifices made by the poor. Widow’s mites, little jars of oil and five loaves and two fish are the most prized currency in the kingdom of God.

⁴³This was to a great extent what exacerbated the problem of persecution in Kandhamal district of Orissa in India last year.

churches to stronger nationalization and isolation, the pan-Islamic axis continues to grow and the Hindu global movement is getting more organized. There is a movement toward greater collaboration among agencies and churches within the global Christian community. The Assemblies of God World Missions has already facilitated a global network, but our cooperative efforts will have to be supported by a more sophisticated organization in the days ahead.

From “Mission to all the world” to “Mission from all the Church”

The previous era of missions was marked by a strong motivation and impetus to reach every tribe, nation, and people group with the gospel. But to-date, missionary work remains largely a specialist enterprise, to be engaged in by only those who have been trained and ordained to the task. Preparation and training are always of critical importance, but the world of the twenty-first century presents us with challenges and opportunities which are beyond the scope of any full-time professional missionary force.⁴⁴

We need missionary doctors who will help fight deadly epidemics, bi-vocational missionaries who will be able to enter restricted access countries as teachers, development workers, corporate executives, government officials on temporary assignment, and business entrepreneurs who will help create wealth and jobs and be seen as adding value to various overseas communities. The challenge is to mobilize awareness and training for all of these. All the church must be co-opted to reach all the world with all the gospel.

⁴⁴Commenting on this, Marty Shaw notes: “Every aspect of globalization offers an opportunity for Christians to share and demonstrate the Gospel. There are non-Western businessmen who are starting factories as an intentional and effective means of doing missions. There are artists and educators who do not see themselves as missionaries, but rather as Christians who are living out their faith and influencing the thinking of their discipline and thus a society. . . . Globalization is affecting all aspects of societies today. Missions in this reality must seek to intentionally model the Gospel in all areas, not just the religious. The idea of the Gospel going from everywhere to everywhere should not be just a geographical issue, but one that involves all aspects of culture and society, that is a holistic gospel for a holistic mission.” Marty Shaw, “The Future of Kingdom Work in a Globalizing World”, *Globalization and the Gospel: Rethinking Mission in the Contemporary World*, Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 30, ed. David Claydon (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 2005), 49.

From Independence to Interdependence

The paternalistic dependency that marked native-missionary relationships in an earlier era of missions was effectively arrested by the rise of the indigenous church movement. The unhealthy reliance on outside resources, accompanied by colonial control and missionary dominance has rightly had to give way to autonomy and independence, but is ethnic or national insularity and entropic independence the New Testament ideal? Paul's clear teaching on the Church as the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:14-26; Eph. 4:16) clearly emphasizes interdependence rather than dependence or independence.⁴⁵ The Church in our times should be encouraged to move closer to the New Testament ideal, from dependence to independence, from independence to interdependence.

From Foreign Partnerships in Mission to Friends & Family in Mission

The concept of partnership between the sending mission and receiving church is a great advance from the paternalism which treats natives as though they are at best children or at worst a deficient or inferior race. Commenting on the importance of the Assemblies of God missions philosophy,⁴⁶ John York makes the following crucial observation concerning partnership: “. . . partnership rests upon a foundation of mutual respect and warm personal relationships. There must be ongoing love, prayer, and fellowship. In short, unless genuine and abiding friendship develops between the partners, their relationship cannot hope to achieve the goals for which it was formed.”⁴⁷

In explaining the meaning of true partnership, York introduces the phrase “genuine and

⁴⁵Rowell, *To Give or Not To Give?*, 46.

⁴⁶A key contribution in this regard is a work of much historical significance by Morris O. Williams, *Partnership in Mission: A Study of Theology and Method in Mission* (Springfield, MO, 1986), 160-246.

⁴⁷John V. York, *Missions in the Age of the Spirit* (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 2000), 158.

abiding friendship,” suggesting perhaps that the language of partnership may fall short of the biblical ideals of family and friendship so integral to the Church’s body-life. For partnership still implies the existence of racial, ethnic, or national distance between partners. In John 15:13-15, Jesus invites us to share in an intimate, loving, family relationship and friendship with Him. Friends share what they learn; friends open their hearts and minds to each other without secrecy. True friends allow the other to see right in and know them as they really are. True friends are eager to help and to spend ourselves for the other without counting the cost.

The Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910 is regarded as a watershed event in Christian history. Bishop V.S. Azariah was one of the seventeen non-Western representatives out of a total of 1200 participants. Azariah is not a name many here would recognize, but he is widely regarded as one of the most successful modern Christian leaders ever to emerge from the non-Western world.⁴⁸ What Gandhi was to the nation of India, Azariah has been to the Church in India. Azariah was invited to speak at Edinburgh 1910 on the problem of co-operation between foreign and native workers. His closing words have become the most famous spoken at the historic conference:

I do . . . plead for . . . the foreign missionary to show that he is in the midst of the people to be to them not a lord and master but a brother and a friend . . . Through all the ages to come the Indian Church will rise up in gratitude to attest the heroism and self denying labours of the missionary body. You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for love. Give us FRIENDS!⁴⁹

Conclusion

The Christian missionary enterprise may be facing the most formidable challenge of its history in the twenty-first century as it encounters aggressive religious resurgence that

⁴⁸Susan Billington Harper, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma*, 236.

⁴⁹Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*. Studies in the History of Christian Missions (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 125.

globalization is spreading all across the globe. The questions that presently threaten the jugular of the Christian faith are essentially twofold: How can we keep from tribalizing the gospel by demonizing and alienating the Christian Church from other religions and cultures? On the other hand, how do we reach out to them with a loving and tolerant witness and yet resist their deadly embrace? Liberal Pluralism has demonstrated its bankruptcy as it invites the Christian Church to suicide by recommending that we abandon the decisiveness of Jesus. Fundamental Evangelicalism is likewise found wanting as it circles the wagons and beckons us to follow a constricted notion of Christ into a theological and ecclesiastical ghetto.

The Pentecostal Movement has been blessed with the resources needed to face the missionary challenge that awaits us in the twenty-first century. God is at work in globalization and we must exploit the opportunities it offers for furthering Christ's Kingdom mission, while eschewing points at which it is at cross purposes with kingdom principles and values. If we steward our legacy wisely and follow the *Wind* and ride the *Wave* responsibly, we will see a religion made to travel in the previous century become mission made to travel in the power of the Spirit in this century. While some may balk at the triumphalism implicit in this vision, the triumphalist note in Scripture can hardly be missed by anyone who takes the biblical witness seriously: *The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever* (Rev.11:15b).

The paradox of the cross reminds us that while Christian triumphalism is inevitable, it is a triumphalism centered in death and servanthood. We thus need not recoil from a triumphalism that is rooted in the self-giving love of God as revealed in Christ crucified, which seeks to advance the kingdom mission of God in humble dependence on God's Spirit. However, if Pentecostal mission in the twenty-first century is to fulfil its stewardship, it is essential that we

live out this reality at the heart of the gospel, critical to the credibility of our mission. Jesus calls us His friends, Azariah cried out for friends. We are in the midst of friends. I will be boldly presumptuous in representing all our friends in the majority world as I invite you to continue this missionary journey, a journey in which our witness to Christ flows out of a radiant faith and deep authenticity, because it is grounded in community, in our relational interconnectedness – let us continue to travel together as Servants of Christ and of one another as *Friends in Mission*.

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