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From the Editor's Desk

Non-Western Missions: Changing the Face of Missions

Jeffery Nelson, Editor

Introduction

This issue of the International Journal of Pentecostal Missiology contains articles from prominent influencers in the emerging Pentecostal Non-Western missionary sending world. Authors represent the highest level of missions leadership in the World Assembly of God Fellowship, World Pentecostal Fellowship, as well as Latin America, Europe, and Africa. Authors share not only recent successes, but honestly wrestle with the challenges and growing pains that non-Western sending churches face.

You do not want to miss the article on Carceral Ministry by Jonathan Cantarero. He shares a unique approach to planting churches in America's death row prisons led by prisoners trained in prison.

Finally, Lowenberg's article on the Canaanite woman sheds a fresh perspective on the reason Jesus instructed his disciples to go only to the lost people of Israel first. You may be surprised as I was at the conclusion.

I appreciate the extra work of Brad Walz working with me to put this issue together.

An Airplane View and Current "Snapshot" of WAGF Missions by Brad Walz

Brad Walz serves as the founding chairman of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, and President, Latin America Assemblies of God Missions Network. For 37 years Walz has been at the forefront of developing and guiding receiving nations becoming sending nations in missions. His article presents the big picture which he calls the airplane view from 40,000 feet. He also presents a snapshot of the current situation with the hope that with the right person in the right place at the right time things can change for greater impact in missions. Walz is an authority in the field and this article gives great insight into the worldwide picture of state of Pentecostal Majority World missions today.

Contribution of African Pentecostals in Finishing the Task by Arto Hämäläinen

Arto Hämäläinen (D. Min) founding chairman of the World Missions Commission of the Pentecostal World Fellowship and Lead Team member of the Missions Commission of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship is another authoritative practitioner in Pentecostal Majority World missions. With his vast experience in developing the sending are for the Finnish Pentecostal Mission, founding chairman of the Pentecostal European Mission (PEM), Pentecostal Asia Mission (PAM) and Africa Pentecostal Mission (APM), there may be no one more qualified to write on the contribution of African Pentecostals changing the face of missions.

Embracing the New Mission Paradigm with Joy by Murray Cornelius

Murray Cornelius speaks to non-Western church changing the face of missions from a place of leadership. Murray Cornelius is the Executive Director for Mission Global, the sending agency of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, with over 300 Global Workers serving in 65 countries. His article encourages Western churches to joyfully accept receiving missionaries from the Majority World into their countries and churches as the result of missions coming full circle.

Keys to Romania's Growth in their Missions' Vision and Response by Ileana Kopjar (Hrișcă) & Gheorghe Rițișan

Kopjar and Rițișan write from experience and expertise as national and international leaders. They have been involved in sending missionaries from Romania from the beginning. Through the growing pains of a developing church, they have seen success in building a sending agency that is helping the largest Evangelical, but financially challenged, church in Europe find ways to effectively support foreign missionaries.

Lessons Learned from an Experiment in African National Church Missions by Jeffery Nelson

In this article I share lessons learned from my experience developing a school of missions for the Kenya Assemblies of God Missions. I had the privilege of serving on the national

missions committee and as chief executive officer of the KAG EAST University we were able to offer solutions to the attrition of missionaries. The school provided encouragement and best practice options which turned the dropout rate of missionaries around.

Towards a Missiological Approach to Carceral Ministry by Jonathan Cantarero

This is one of the most exciting articles I have read in years concerning new avenues of missions. Cantarero shares from inside experience how death row inmates are not only coming to the Lord but are becoming trained ministers. Then they are finding ways to apply the Great Commission even behind bars in federal prisons and go into other prisons and share the Gospel. These current death row inmates can be transferred to other prisons and begin evangelism and discipleship programs that result in other inmates becoming missionaries as well.

Have we Missed the Main Point? The Purpose for Jesus' Encounter with the Canaanite Woman (Matthew 15:21-28) by Doug Lowenberg

Doug Lowenberg, Ph.D., brings an exegetical article to the journal that challenges readers to consider the reason Jesus told the disciples to not go to the Gentiles early in their ministry. His journey to and healing of the Canaanite woman is unwrapped by Lowenberg with a new and surprising twist. Could it be the disciples were still too prejudiced against the Gentiles for Jesus to allow them to minister to them. Could they minister the saving message of Jesus and the healing power of Jesus before they embraced the unfailing love of Jesus for the Gentiles?

IJPM

The *International Journal of Pentecostal Missiology* (IJPM) is a peer-reviewed, electronic journal with periodic publication.

The IJPM seeks to facilitate the engagement, research, and investigation of missiology from within a Pentecostal perspective; to encourage thinking and interaction among Pentecostal missionaries and/or Pentecostal missions scholars; and to provide a forum for dialogue and reflection about issues current within Pentecostal Missions. These parameters allow for biblical, theological, historical, and/or missiological articulations, as well as book reviews based on relevant contemporary works.

Articles

An Airplane View and Current "Snapshot" of WAGF Missions

Brad Walz[*]

Abstract

Brad Walz shares insights into 160 General Councils of World Assemblies of God Fellowship (WAGF) involvement. Walz is uniquely qualified to write this article as the founding chairman of the WAGF Missions Commission as part of his 37 years of involvement in developing sending agencies in Latin America and beyond. The article is based on extensive surveys conducted with all 160-member national churches in 2013, 2018, and 2022 concerning missionary involvement.

Walz gives a realistic analysis concerning the national churches missionary programs and provides suggestions for further development. He concludes the article with a postscript article by David Kensinger, Integrating National Missions into our World Evangelization Program, originally written about 1968.

Introduction

Since most of you fly a lot, we all understand the perspective of looking out of the airplane window, and seeing a "big perspective," rather than just a short distance from the ground. At the same time, the word "snapshot" reminds us that things are constantly changing. You get the right person, the right leader, and the right circumstances, and things can be totally different just a year or two later. It is truly a hope that in a few short years the reality might be quite different from today.

The World Assemblies of God Fellowship (known as WAGF as in the title) officially formed their Missions Commission in 2009. I have had the privilege of being the founding chairman. Before that we worked both in Argentina to develop their Foreign Missions program,

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[*] Brad Walz, Missionary, Assemblies of God World Missions since 1986; Chairman, World Assemblies of God Fellowship; and President, Latin America Assemblies of God Missions Network.

and in Latin America with their missions network of 22 countries. So, we have a perspective of 37 years of the growth of new sending countries. Though I will draw from those experiences in this article, I want to focus as well on a "big picture" perspective, in a sense an "airplane" view at 40,000 feet.

A final comment before I make some observations, is that we have done three surveys of all 160 General Councils to gauge their missions involvement. We have had 100% participation in two of them, the first and the most recent. We did the first one in 2013, a second in 2018, and the most recent one in 2022. So, all these observations are also based on research from that survey. The 2022 survey has a 26-page report that goes into detail. We have chosen not to put it online, but you can request a copy of it from the author (e-mail contact to request 2022 WAGF Missions survey: bradwalz@fastmail.com). Some of these observations as well I'm taking from that 26-page report. We'll look at six observations, then seven challenges, and finally there will be a historical exhortation as a "postscript."

Thirty years ago, they weren't correct!

I recall in the 1990's missiologists declared that "the new senders (at that time often referred to as "non-Western missions"), had surpassed the West (I prefer the term "historical senders"), in the number of missionaries sent. (I remember as well that declaration in the 1980's, when I attended Fuller Seminary School of Missiology. A similar declaration was being made even at that time). Yet, over 30 years after, many missiologists declared that our snapshot of the Assemblies of God, the largest Evangelical body in the world, shows that to have not been true, and just now we are at a "breaking point." There is no doubt that at some point in the future, should Jesus tarry, the new senders should greatly outnumber the historical ones. That would be healthy and correct, since they represent 92.5% of the church worldwide in our Assemblies of God context. It should be natural and should happen! But how little statistical evidence there was in the 90's for those exaggerated claims, and how tragic that it has taken so long for much of the 92.5% of the world's Christians to just be awakening now to the call of God upon them for the world harvest.

There are several reasons for the exaggerations that took place in the 1990's. To illustrate one of them, let me share from a personal experience in 2018. Taking advantage of being invited to the same missions conference in the country of a new sender, I talked personally with a leader

recognized by many for his impact on world missions. He had stated that a certain country he was associated with was one of the largest senders of missionaries, and used figures surpassing 10,000 missionaries, yet our own experience in that country reflected about 20 foreign missionaries having been sent by the Assemblies of God. Despite being one of the largest churches in that country, and as well an incredible potential to have that number be in the hundreds, there were only a few foreign missionaries. So, I asked him: "Why the discrepancy between the figures you give and the figures we have observed in our denomination, recognized as well to be one of the largest of that country?" He did not want to give details and did not wish to answer the question and was obviously uncomfortable with it. Finally, after continuing to insist, he said that the many construction workers and household domestic help of that country often had been "trained" to have a spiritual impact in the places in the Middle East that they would serve as employees, and that they considered them "spiritual missionaries." But even in his shallow answer, he realized his "exaggeration" had been exposed. These were not even "tentmakers" by any true standard. They were maids and construction workers who were Christians, who no doubt worshipped with others from their country in international churches and though they are probably praying for the household or colleagues they interact with, they are not "sent missionaries." He finally admitted: "Well, at least we got the church to have a burden for unreached peoples within their own nation." Excellent. And I congratulated him on that front. But I also reminded him that the exaggeration of the other figure had brought confusion to many who thought "something was taking place, that in fact was not taking place." He had no choice but to agree with my observation unfortunately and uncomfortably. Many other illustrations could be found to reflect the same point.

To not invest more time on this issue, I will express that Jason Mandryk of "Operation World" feels our research of our WAGF world is the most accurate and detailed they have come across when it comes to new senders and their date of sending. They face the same problem as the mentioned illustration in gathering solid and credible data of foreign missionaries that have been sent from new senders. Traditional senders tend to have more data to provide. Before closing out this point, the numbers of our 2022 survey were: For foreign workers only, historical senders sent out 4,233 workers, compared to 3,083 for "new senders." (57.8% of the missionaries sent by historical senders). Adding cross cultural home missionaries changed the dynamic of course, but still at a break-even point. The historical senders sent out 4,323 workers

(home missionaries for the United States was not included) and new senders sent out 4,653 workers. With that number they slipped over the 50% number, with 51.83%.

Most countries are still in a "pioneer stage."

The reality is that most of the 112 programs in 103 countries are still not sending missionaries, but in a "pioneer stage." It is wonderful that there are now over 100 countries with a missions leader or department. But the reality is 24 of them (22.2%) have not sent a missionary. Another 30 of them (27.7%) have sent less than 10 missionaries, many of them sending out only one or two missionaries. So, 54, which is 50% of the 108, have sent out none or less than 10 missionaries!

Here is the statistic on how many countries are sending out what range of missionaries:
0 missionaries: 25 countries
1-10 missionaries: 30 countries
10-20 missionaries: 13 countries
20-50 missionaries: 18 countries
50-100 missionaries: 8 countries
100-200 missionaries: 10 countries
200-500 missionaries: 2 countries
500-1,000: 2 countries
1000+: 1 country

Most countries in Latin America have seen a breakthrough in the missions leadership.

In 1987, in an event in Brazil sponsored by Comibam, an interdenominational missions network, the declaration was made: "Latin America is not long just a mission field, but also a mission force." On an interdenominational basis, Latin America has not had a breakthrough, and one would wonder how 35 years have not shown more fruit. The Assemblies of God show a bright contrast in the Spanish-speaking countries. Most of the "breakthrough" on a massive scale has taken place in the last 10 years, though leadership of Argentina in the 1990's, and later

in El Salvador, helped to foster a "We can do it!" attitude as opposed to the previous "It can't be done." mentality. Many leaders observed, "Argentina is like the engine of a train, pulling the rest of us behind her." As well, a strong and vibrant Latin America network, which had an official start in 1998, provided networking and mentoring opportunities on almost a yearly basis.

Despite that, in 2013 the leadership of the Latin America missions network opened their hearts to the superintendents at a lunch meeting in Costa Rica. The commission expressed to the leaders present: "We need your help. You are naming leaders that in many cases are not credible, not committed, and the instability of naming a new leader every few years causes us to have to re-boot a process of orientation and mentoring on a cyclical basis, repeating the same basic principles over a 3–4-year period instead of being able to go on to more in-depth issues and themes. Probably half of the countries did not have credible and/or competent leadership. And it reflected in the chaos and instability of their missions sending structures, or alternatively viewed, "lack of them."

In the last few years, we have seen a breakthrough. In several problematic countries, the superintendent became intentional in not only naming a good leader, but in mentoring them and giving them the space needed to grow and mature. Even just a few months ago, a newly elected superintendent declared, "I'm tired of us not having a missions department that has the trust of our churches and is growing and moving forward." He intentionally convinced a new leader to take over. Latin America has seen a breakthrough and is going through a good moment. As an example, 5 of the 10 fastest growing countries in numbers of missionaries sent are from Latin America. (And it almost was seven, as a couple of the top ten probably in part made that statistic because they didn't give correct statistics in the first survey in 2013). Spanish speaking Latin America is sending out 848 foreign missionaries, 148 domestic cross cultural, for a total of 996. But more important than actual numbers are their trajectory. One country alone recently informed me of having almost 30 new candidates to "commission," their highest number since 1996. Spanish speaking Latin America is going through a wonderful moment of credible leadership and growing programs.

A final note on Brazil: Brazil continues to be a challenging paradox. Though they have more missionaries than any other country, proportionally their numbers are far behind the rest. (As an example, Argentina sends out one missionary for every 10 churches, and Brazil's number

is one for every three hundred). Brazil, as a distinction from the rest of Latin America does not have a centrally organized missionary sending structure, but rather a "secretary" who coordinates information between the 52 "ministerios." "Ministerios" can be described as a large mother church with potentially hundreds of smaller churches under their spiritual umbrella. Missions sending is therefore done from a large mother church/affiliate daughter church structure. Brazil potentially could send out over 10,000 missionaries. (They officially have informed of 210 foreign workers and 329 trans-cultural domestic workers, for a total of 539). Still, the biggest challenge Brazil faces is the vast majority of their workers minister in either Portuguese or Spanish. People who speak one of those two languages as their first language are only 11% of the world population. Brazil has the challenge to reach the 89% of the world that do not speak "Latin based languages." They have done relatively little among Unreached People Groups. They are a "sleeping giant" for Latin America and for the world, should they be able to send both according to their potential and as well with a greater focus on Unreached People Groups.

Praying for continued breakthroughs in Africa and Asia.

We talk about the great potential in Africa and Asia. Yet these same areas can give great resistance. We will look at the need for continued breakthrough in Africa and Asia. Asia: If you take away Korea and some of the stronger economies, Asia's numbers reflect a pioneer stage. The WAGF Missions Commission do believe that breakthroughs have taken place and Asia will have great growth in the coming years. A network/commission was formed in 2021 and they have made incredible progress. There is a fresh season of growth in Asia Pacific that gives us great anticipation and encouragement for what God will do through churches there. The network formed has great momentum, good leadership, and there is an increase in vision and commitment. I personally am very optimistic about the next years in Asia Pacific.

Southern Asia also has seen some great breakthroughs. Despite being the host of some of the greatest numbers of "Unreached Peoples" in the world, most countries now have a missions dept. The Tamil district of Southern India has sent out 400 workers and gives over a $600,000 a year to missions. There is a growing missionary vision, and the present leadership shows great promise.

Africa is the area we are most concerned about and are praying for miracles and breakthroughs. In 2009 then AAGA Chairman Lazarus Chakwera (currently the president of

Malawi) declared: "Africa for years has been talking about missions; it is now time stop talking and do it." Yet, the current "snapshot" of Africa in 2022 is weaker than that of 2009. Instead of moving forward, they have in fact taken a step "backward." Two strong senders of that time have either entered a "plateau," or declined rapidly. Some of the strongest churches still have not sent out even a single foreign missionary. As well, half of the countries (17 of 34) have not yet sent a single foreign missionary. A goal made in 2018 by AAGA leadership to impact North Africa still has not seen even one practical response of sending to the North African and Horn of Africa nations. Except for the growth in Ivory Coast, Africa's survey is one of great concern. We believe that surely the Holy Spirit is moving there in missions and calling people. Assuming we are correct, the problem then is most likely that the correct and right leadership have not emerged in many of the countries to channel what the Holy Spirit is doing into a practical response.

As well, it appears that many of the programs are "institutional" rather than "influential." (Explanation of "institutional contrasted with influential:" A missions department and leader exist because the constitution says it should, rather than actually doing something to make missions vision and sending a reality and being an "influence" in the country). Many involved in the WAGF Missions Commission, including the Africa Missions Commission, are asking God for a breakthrough in missionary vision and response in Africa. Many of us also believe there is "spiritual warfare" involved with this present cycle of not advancing forward. The enemy knows there are strong churches in Africa. Eight countries have more than a million believers, as an example. The enemy does not want them to become engaged with missionary vision and in the world harvest. Since the African church is large and represents over 18 million believers (25% of the total of WAGF members and adherents) their eventual practical response must be one of the major priorities of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship.

An increased focus on Unreached People Groups

A positive trend of the survey is that there continues to be a focus on intentional targeting of Unreached People Groups. As one person observed: "Being Pentecostals, we will always respect and appreciate the Holy Spirit's call and burden upon a person's life. At the same time, we wish to be certain their call is not just motivated by circumstances (a missions trip at a key time of their life, for example), and at least challenge them to pray and consider being part of a team working among UPG's." Virtually every country expressed an interest in being more

strategic and focusing more on Unreached People Groups, both now and in the future. Obviously, the challenge is seeing that expressed in practical ways. It is observed that the newer senders have a higher percentage of their workers among UPG's than the historical ones. Most likely because the historical senders have relationships with many countries that continue to be viable, even though the church has grown.

Generally, the historical older senders had between 20-35% of their workers among UPG's, and the new senders range was higher, at 30-60%. It is also recognized newer senders have less workers so their percentage can more easily be higher.

Areas where workers are laboring.

We were able to again track what percentage of workers are being sent to what type of area. See the general responses in the statistics below. In 2018 Latin America was able to do a detailed census of where Latins were serving. This was not updated in 2022. However, once can see how similar it is to the world average.

Nominal, secular humanistic, Post Christian: 50%	(Latin America: 67%)
Tribal, Animistic: 20%	(Latin America: 15%)
Islamic Peoples: 20%	(Latin America: 10.5%)
Hindu Peoples: 5%	(Latin America: 4.4%)
Buddhist Peoples: 5%	(Latin America: 3.1%)

It is understandable that many potential workers with a burden for Hindu peoples have visa issues that limit them responding in the long term; but it was surprising how few people are working with Buddhist peoples. This has been a blind spot in our world missions focus. Most countries had no workers among Buddhist peoples. (It is interesting that AGWM has a new aggressive focus on Buddhist people groups).

Also, it is recognized that there is a growing need in many countries of secular humanistic, post-Christian peoples.

Seven Challenges for the future

Our report concluded with seven major "challenges" for the future of World Assemblies of God Fellowship missions efforts. As the report observes: "While we rejoice that WAGF

churches are making great strides in missionary vision, sending, and programs, there are many challenges that lie ahead in this strategic eleventh-hour harvest. Really, the challenges are the very similar to those expressed in 2013 and 2018 reports."

      A.   Missions vision is needed on a worldwide basis. Without a doubt, missions vision is just starting to be expressed in the vast majority of Global South new emerging senders. It needs to be accelerated by the Holy Spirit!

      B.   There is a need for strong leadership and a stronger commitment is needed in most of the countries. There is a need for the superintendents to be more engaged and hold the missions leadership to account and do all they can as well to support and accelerate potential growth.

      C.   There is incredible potential for growth in the number of missionaries in the future. If we sent one missionary for every 10 churches, we would have close to 40,000 missionaries, more than quadrupling the current number!

      D.   There is also incredible potential in growth in giving in the future. Every church giving $149 a month on average would result in one billion dollars for missions! Or another way of looking at it: if every believer would give $1.19 a month!

      E.   A growing missions vision will not only help the WAGF in reaching future goals, but also be key in reaching the least-reached countries and peoples.

      F.   It is not that we feel the traditional senders will not continue to bless and impact the world. But 7.5% of the church can't do the task by themselves. The other 92.5% must fulfill their potential!

      G.   As the WAGF prepares for the challenge of MM33, and to reach one million churches by 2033, it is essential that Africa, Asia, and Latin America raise up to become a part of that harvest response! They must of course plant churches among their own countries. That is part of the growth. But for the WAGF to reach the 50% of the world where the church is small or has very little presence, missions is the key for many of those 630,000 new churches (using 370,000 churches as a base) to be planted! We can't have a true decade of harvest and reach one million churches only working where the church already exists or is strong. The vision must also engage the Unreached People Groups.

Conclusion:

As our name even in the IJPM states, we are Pentecostals. We believe the Holy Spirit is the source of the call, and often is a step ahead of the institutional church. We are reminded that the Holy Spirit began calling Argentines during the revival movement, before the church understood, responded to, or embraced the vision. The Holy Spirit was a step ahead of the church.

We are reminded from scripture that even as the disciples did not understand the true impact of "Go ye into all the world," and often their early efforts were focused on the Jewish diaspora "spread throughout the geographical world," but not truly taking the gospel to most of the world's population: the Gentiles. In fact, God had to raise up a terrorist named Saul, who later became Paul, to take the gospel to the Gentile peoples. So, it is ironic that the original 11 surviving disciples (and recognized as "apostles"), did not in fact fulfill the commission that was given to them of going "unto the ends of the earth," though their work among the Jewish people and church was pioneering and notable. One could argue that the vision given to Peter in Acts 10 preparing him to minister to Cornelius family, was not to prepare him for future ministry to the Gentile people, but rather that he would be "less of an obstacle" to Paul's efforts to see a breakthrough in the church being established among the Gentile people.

Therefore, it is also understandable how historical senders did not always understand that in fact the receiving church was not just to reach out to their "Jerusalem and Judea," but also, they eventually had the call to also go to "Samaria and the ends of the earth."

I remember growing up in a great missionary church. My pastor would declare "God has raised up America to win the world." It was motivation and we applauded and responded with commitment. But it wasn't a biblical truth and it caused us to form a human paradigm rather than a biblical one. We were supposed to be the missionaries. The world received us. With God's help, we were going to "win the world." Yet, the truth was (and is) that the Great Commission was for the Church, not just one country. And even then, we were ignoring other historical senders such as Canada, the Nordic giants of Norway, Sweden and Finland, and other historical senders. America was going to win the world, not the worldwide Church.

As missionaries then were sent out by the "historical senders," it is understandable if some or potentially many of them had a mentality "You reach your country. We'll reach the

world." Would anyone have verbally expressed that? Most likely not. But the "worldview" existed and contributed to the resistance all countries of Latin America expressed in the 90's and early 2000's and is still a part of the contemporary scene today in many other regions and countries. David Kensinger, a missionary sent out by the United States to Costa Rica, observed this and wrote a penetrating and insightful article that was certainly ahead of its time, sometime in the late 60's. So impacting is it and at the same time it gives us a "snapshot" of the mentality prevalent at that time, that I'll include it here as a "postscript."

We are optimistic for the future. There is a momentum. There are models today that are not just from "historical senders." There is an understanding in many countries that the "Great Commission is for the Church, not just a handful of Western nations."

So, as we land the airplane after getting a "airplane view" of WAGF missions, there is that tension: The Holy Spirit must lead us to see missions being a "normal" part of the DNA of dozens of countries, not just a few. Yet just as human vessels did not understand the Great Commission given to them by their own mentor and disciple maker, Jesus, so it should not surprise us that there is also resistance to a full embrace of missionary vision by a large percentage of our 70 million WAGF adherents.

We will continue to seek that tension within that balance depending on the Holy Spirit. We will also continue disciplining and teaching the church that has long considered themselves to only be a "mission field," that they are also, by the very nature of the character of the Church, a potential "mission force."

End of author's article

Postscript: Article/exhortation written by David Kensinger. (Used by his permission, before his passing, which took place in 1998)

Integrating National Missions into our World Evangelization Program

By David Kensinger (Originally written about 1968)

In speaking of "National Missions," it would first be well for us to clarify what we mean by "missions.' The basic pattern of missions is found in the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 10:14-16. He first states that all who call on the Lord shall be saved. He then sets forth the classic reasoning for missions: "How shall they call on Him in who they have not believed? And

how shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard?' He then defines what constitutes missions: "How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent."

Ever since the era of modern missions began some two hundred years or more ago with William Carey, these two basic concepts have been followed—those who have consecrated their lives to go and those who have consecrated their giving to send. All of us who are gathered here are testimony to this fact. Our nearly one thousand missionaries (currently in 2000, 1,800) and great missionary enterprise scattered around the world testify not only to the fact that there were not only those who were willing to go, but also to those who were willing to send.

Our purpose, then, in speaking to you on the subject of national missions is to emphasize the fact that this biblical pattern for the evangelization of the world is not the prerogative or responsibility of one certain segment of the Christian church located in the U.S., and a few scattered countries of Europe, but that EVERY CHRISTIAN *in EVERY CHURCH throughout the world is EQUALLY OBLIGATED to spread the gospel to the entire world either by going or by giving.*

National missions is not a mere program to be set up in the framework of the national church to facilitate evangelization in outlying areas. National missions is the AWAKENING IN EVERY INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN HIS SPIRITUAL RESPONSIBILITY IN REACHING THE LOST, NOT ONLY BY TESTIFYING OR PREACHING TO THOSE AROUND HIM WHOM HE IS ABLE TO REACH PERSONALLY, BUT ALSO TO FULFILL HIS RESPONSIBILITY OF REACHING THE ENTIRE WORLD BY SENDING THE GOSPEL WITH HIS MISSIONARY OFFERINGS TO THOSE PLACES IN THE WORLD WHICH HE CANNOT REACH PERSONALLY.

I would like to call our attention to the fact that when the Assemblies of God was born at the beginning of the century in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, missions was woven into the very fabric of our movement. The pattern set forth in Acts 1:8 became the pattern of our existence. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Even before the Assemblies of God was organized in 1914, there were those pioneer missionaries newly filled with the Spirit burning with a vision to go to those regions beyond where God had called them. Immediately upon the organization of our movement a

Foreign Missions Dept. was formed, and affiliated churches and individual Christians in our ranks began sending in their missionary offerings for the fare and support of those whom God had called to the foreign field. This pattern of giving and sending has continued in our movement throughout the years. Today ours is one of the foremost missionary movements in the world. The statistics recently published in Key magazine on our total missionary enterprise this past year thrills our souls. 969 active appointed missionaries (1,814 in 2000) working in 82 countries (162 in 2000) around the globe. 17,683 churches and preaching points on foreign soil (200,467 in 2000) with 13,612 national pastors and lay workers (79,732 in 2000) and a total of over two and a half million saved, born again Christians. (32,002,437 in 2000). All this is being accomplished through the missionary offerings of 7,355 of our U.S. churches (11,937 in 1999) who last year contributed a total of $8,765,133.20 to foreign missions (about 150 million in 1999). We humbly thank God for every soul that has been born into the kingdom of God through this great effort.

But we are faced with the fact that with all we have been able to do in winning these millions to Christ, on the basis of an approximate three billion world population (6 billion in 2000) we have only reached about one of every twelve hundred people on the earth today. And we are further faced with the fact that the population growth is much faster than the increase in converts, so that we are losing ground. Clearly there is a phase in which we as Assemblies of God together with existing missionary bodies have failed in meeting the demand for the total evangelization of the world. *It is my conviction that much of this failure is because we have failed to carry the concept of the individual spiritual responsibility of EVERY Christian participation of missions to our converts on the foreign field.*

I have been amazed and somewhat saddened by the fact that though during our past furloughs here at home I have preached hundreds of so called missionary messages to our people here in our churches in the U.S. encouraging them to give for missions, it was not until the beginning of this last term on the field that I preached those same messages to our Costa Rican Christian encouraging them to also give of their missionary offerings to send the Gospel to the whole world. And as yet in all my twenty-eight years of service on the foreign field, I have yet heard any other missionary preach a missionary message with the purpose of encouraging Christians on the foreign field towards missionary giving. And I ask myself "Why?"

We believe in missions. It has been a part of our teaching and heritage ever since we came into the Assemblies of God. We as missionaries are products of missions. We have also had the privilege of giving missionary offerings with the satisfaction that in so doing we were also reaching other lost souls by sending the message of life to those we could not reach personally. *Then why should we withhold this equal opportunity and blessing from our Christians on the foreign field by failing to teach and preach to them and encourage them in their missionary giving to a lost world?*

Contribution of African Pentecostals in Finishing the Task

Arto Hämäläinen[*]

Abstract

This article looks at the great potential of the African Pentecostal/Charismatic church in missions. Hämäläinen conducts a S.W.A.T analysis of the current church with a look to the future. Missions to the rest of Africa and the world is possible. Obstacles include cultural, economic, and social, but the greatest issue identified is attitude. The article concludes that when African churches see themselves as sending rather than simply as receiving missionary churches the potential will be realized. This article explores the great potential that lies in the African Pentecostal/Charismatic church.

Introduction

Through the last century, the continent of Africa has been a great success story regarding the numerical growth of Christians. Viewing mission prospects for the future, Africa represents great potential. This is particularly true for Pentecostals/Charismatics. Following the categories given by Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, these churches grew 4-6 percent between 1970-2020. In 2020, Pentecostals/Charismatics numbered 874,000 in Northern Africa, 29.8 million in Southern Africa, and 80.7 million in Western Africa.[1] Altogether, these statistics indicate over 111 million members.

Todd M. Johnson divides Pentecostals/Charismatics into three categories. Type 1 are those which are designated as classical Pentecostals. Type 2 are Pentecostals/Charismatics and Type 3 are the Independent Pentecostal/Charismatic denominations and networks.[2] In 2020, it

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[*] Dr. Arto Hämäläinen served as Executive Director of the Finnish Pentecostal Mission organization, Fida International, 1987-2009. He earned his doctorate (DMin) from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 2005. He has a chair of Mission Studies at Continental Theological Seminary in Brussels, Belgium. Dr. Hämäläinen is the founding chairman of the World Missions Commission of the Pentecostal World Fellowship and Lead Team member of the Missions Commission of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship. He is the founding chairman of the Pentecostal European Mission (PEM), Pentecostal Asia Mission (PAM) and Africa Pentecostal Mission (APM). He serves also as chairman of the Pentecostal Commission on Religious Liberty. He is the author of several books published in 15 languages.

was observed that of the number of Type 1 Pentecostals, five out of ten were found in Africa: Nigeria (16 million), Ghana (5 million), Kenya (4.7 million), Congo DR (4 million) and South Africa (2.8 million).[3]

The statistics show that Africa has a huge potential for accelerating the fulfilment of the Great Commission. What then are the obstacles that still hinder Africa from making its maximum contribution? This study reflects the observations of some key African mission executives and gives attention to thoughts on this theme from different perspectives.

The finalizing of the mission task requires collaboration within Africa as well as between the continents. This study analyzes how effective the efforts are now and how they should be further developed.

To reach the goal Jesus gave and the task He left to us, His disciples, means crossing borders. The national frontiers are not the only challenge. Cultural, economic, social, and other barriers hinder successful advancement in many attempts. The toughest obstacles are often in attitudes. Paradigm change is needed to move from a 'receiver' attitude to that of a 'giver' and 'sender'.

To finalize the task requires strong motivation. It is a spiritual challenge. Only working with biblical foundations can lasting results be achieved by mission-minded people, churches, and organizations. Are the churches, training institutions and mission organizations properly equipped for this?

African Pentecostals and Charismatics can become a major power in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. A positive result requires an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the African churches. This study will attempt to identify some steps to move forward along that path.

Historical Background

From the very beginning of the Christian church, Africa has played a central role. An Ethiopian eunuch brought the gospel to the Horn of Africa (Acts 8). Simon called Niger and Lucius of Cyrene (Acts 13) were representatives of the African continent in the early phase of the church. Three African lawyers; Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine, laid the foundations for Christian theology. Young Syrian Christians were shipwrecked off the Horn of Africa and settled in Axum which became one of the centers of Christianity in Africa. Egypt and Nubia had a

significant number of churches, and North Africa was among the notable Christian areas of the world in the first centuries.[4]

Those early developments, however, became paralyzed and so those areas did not become hubs of expansion in further centuries. A new beginning was needed for reaching the entire continent of Africa, and it is not yet complete. A significant push for this took place on the heels of colonialism. The protestant missionary movement was, by nature, an anti-slavery manifestation. Key figures in Great Britain, which was the leading protestant missionary-sending country in the 19th century, were the evangelical Parliamentarian Thomas Fowell Buxton and the missionary explorer David Livingstone. Buxton argued that nominally Christian nations and the West are in debt to Africa.[5]

On the other hand, missionaries were under the pressure of colonialism. According to Andrew Walls, "Colonial rule changed the basis of missionary life. Missionaries ceased to live directly on terms set by Africans."[6] Paul G. Hiebert describes the historical process of the paradigm shift as development from the colonial era to the anticolonial era, and from that to the global era. The colonial era engendered arrogance and segregation. The anticolonial era made a necessary corrective. It forced a differentiation between the gospel and culture. In the global era, missions ended up focusing on critical contextualization. It is "an ongoing response that sees the gospel as outside culture. It comes as the message of salvation, not from West to East, but from God to people in all cultures."[7]

We still see remnants of the old paradigms, but the floor is now generally open for healthy collaboration in missions between the former receivers and former senders. When the gospel and its center, Jesus Christ, is the core issue, the focus is not on our culture or their culture. When He is the focus, we naturally will use ways that lead us to communicate our message in a contextualized manner. We become Jews to the Jew and Greeks to the Greek.

One of the big questions in the past was how to establish churches that are not viewed as being foreign. This means that churches are not ruled by people who are regarded as foreign. In the beginning, the role of the missionary was more central, but soon the need for self-determination was recognized. The three-self or four-self-principle was introduced. Churches in Africa should not be ruled from London, Berlin, or New York.

The first wave of missionary work went from the African coastline and moved inland at a time when the main transportation took place on the sea. However, many of the far corners were

left untouched. Often the main ethnic groups were reached but thousands of others were left untouched. Still today, around 7,000 of the 17,500 people groups on the earth are unreached. Recent statistics (2022) show that of the 3,706 people groups in Africa, 991 are still unreached.[8] Another big challenge is the many languages that are without the Bible. Of the 7,388 languages in the world, 1,680 are without access to the Bible in their own language.[9]

One big paradigm shift in the last century was the effort toward a more holistic way of working. All the needs of people, besides the most urgent, that of the connection with God through Jesus Christ, were taken into consideration. However, big, costly social projects have not been within the reach of many Africans which has caused the misunderstanding that mission efforts are only possible where plenty of money flows. That has hindered poorer churches from starting missionary work. Mission is, however, not dependent on money. It needs people. And there are many in Africa.

Creative ways of doing missions have increased. Global professionals now may have access to many places where a missionary visa is denied. Healthy businesses can be of a benefit to the development of society. Ethical Christian business can heal and transform homes, villages, and cities.

Strengths of African Pentecostals

African people generally have a strong belief in the supernatural. That is why the Pentecostal message of a miracle-working God is easy for them to accept. A danger to be aware of is the quick detour towards an unbalanced focus on demonology. It is noteworthy, however, that in this context of the supernatural, the gospel has won huge acceptance.

Community orientation is a second factor which is helping the growth of the church. Belonging to family and extended family paves the way for strong identity within the church. This feature sometimes does develop into a hinderance. Missional orientation means broadening one's view outside of your comfort zone; your own community of believers. If Peter was in need of encouragement to dare to cross the border between Jewish and Gentile cultures, it is also needed by believers today in regard to cross-cultural contexts.

Thirdly, Africans have a holistic world view. Spiritual, physical, psychological, social, and environmental elements all belong together. The Africans realize this and do not separate them, but instead, they face these factors and look for solutions.

Other central features in the African culture are the sense of hospitality, good relationships, sanctity of life, respect for elders and authority, morality, language, proverbs, and time.[10] These attitudes exist in harmony with biblical values and may be a strong factor which has aided the success of missionary work in Africa. The cultural distance between biblical views, beliefs and attitudes and the traditional culture is, in some non-African cultures, much greater.

The Challenges World Missions Presents to African Pentecostal Churches

The growth rate of Pentecostals in Africa from 1900 to 2020 is 7.99 percent. That is significant growth compared, for example, to the population growth (1.51percent).[11] We will see later that the growth in world missions by Africans has not advanced equally.

What then are the weaknesses to be overcome in the African Pentecostal context? To find answers to this, the author surveyed a few key African Pentecostal leaders. They were the vice chair of the missions commission of the Africa Assemblies of God Alliance (AAGA): Rev. Uche Ama (UA), from Nigeria; Dr. Timothy Balbone (TB), the mission director of the Assemblies of God in Burkina Faso; Rev. Esme Bowers (EB), the chairperson of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa; and Professor, Apostle, Dr. Opoku Onyinah (OO), the co-chair of the Africa Pentecostal Mission (APM), from Ghana. The following questions were asked:

1. Africa has great potential for sending missionaries and influencing the whole world in this way. According to your understanding, what are the main reasons hindering or slowing the increase in the number of cross-cultural missionaries? Indicate 1-3 factors.

According to UA, "most Africa Pentecostal Church leaders do not have the missional understanding that it is their responsibility to reach the whole world with the gospel. Many do not even believe that it is their responsibility to go beyond the communities." UA thinks that the same thing which hindered the early church to go and to leave Jerusalem until they were forced to do so is also delaying the spread of the gospel from African churches. UA also sees that many expect the existing churches in a country of focus to come together and if needed "invite us and pay the costs." He feels that there are "few or non-existent regional, inter-ministerial or interdenominational collaborative strategies among us."

UA is longing to find a credible global platform to promote partnership, networking, and sustainability, and more global plans. He points out the differences between the Northern Hemisphere and Africa and the Southern Hemisphere concerning the ideological orientation of

the role of the church. For the former it is more a tradition, but for the latter, it is their life, culture, and livelihood.

TB sees the reasons for weak response from Africa for world missions in this way: The main reason is a lack of vision. "If you don't see with the eyes of your heart, you won't see with your natural eyes." The need is to provide teaching and training in missions.

A second obstacle according to TB is the culture of poverty. "Many African leaders develop a poverty mind-set." They feel the cost of missions to be too heavy for them to carry. "That conclusion is a simple lie from the devil. They have a lot to give, yet they still see themselves as not able to start."

TB finds one more reason is a lack of practical mission strategy. "They want to gather many things before they start…The best strategy is to begin with even one couple somewhere."

EB sees a positive starting point in Africa now. Therefore, "The rise of African indigenous mission movements has provided a platform for Africans to be mobilized and sent especially to the unreached people groups in Africa." Many leaders in these actions come from Pentecostal churches and are also part of MANI (the Movement for African National Initiatives). EB wants to emphasize the large potential in partnerships for missions. New senders are opening avenues where old paradigms are no longer functioning. Africa has become a center of Christianity, and "the mobilization of the Independent Pentecostal and Charismatic churches for missions is well on its way."

EB stresses the ownership of African churches in mission activities. Both human and financial resources need to be held in the hands of Africans.

For OO the understanding of the concept of mission is paramount. "Many churches do not see the need of sending people out. Contemporary Pentecostals are influenced by the mega-church idea where churches are built within their vicinities. They see the need to go out when some of their members leave for other countries and request them to come and establish branches for them. In this case, their services become like chaplaincy services." Financial challenges greatly affect the churches regarding engaging in missions. "Even if the churches are strong financially, changing money into local currencies…makes it quite difficult."

OO finds training as a big challenge. "Lack of training and enough preparation may deter some churches from sending missionaries out."

2. Very few Pentecostal churches in Africa have a missionary sending program or structure. What are the practical steps (name 1-3 actions) needed to change the situation? What is lacking?

UA points to the lack of a credible global platform to promote partnership, networking, and sustainability. He would like to see more global plans. Some attempts at global actions in the broader context of missions have started well but have not moved forward. He also identifies poor preparation for persecution which is an increasing phenomenon in many countries. He considers the support of the family as crucial for missionaries. Going "solo" brings many challenges. The Northern Hemisphere has developed systems and infrastructure for supporting missionaries, but the situation in the Southern Hemisphere and Africa is different. He finds that the "Africa Pentecostal leaders are generally more inward-looking than outward-looking in their missional goals."

As practical steps forward, UA suggests a regular information sharing global platform, support for the mobilizing and training of indigenous pastors and leaders, and sustained promotion and strengthening of collaboration among Pentecostal leaders. The action of the World Missions Commission (WMC) of the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) in enabling the establishment of the African Pentecostal Mission (APM) is an encouraging model for him.

TB identifies the mind-set problems in need of transformation. Some changes are urgently needed. "Missions are a luxury in ministry, and they cannot afford it yet." His observation, however, is that they are never ready to go. There are weak points in the support program such as a lack of good financial reporting and accountability. Trust is easily lost if people who give do not get transparent reports about how the money is used.

EB thinks that "The historical Pentecostal denominations have lost their vigor." "Many young people having a calling are joining whatever vehicle is available to take them to the place they sense God is calling them to." Antiquated structures are discouraging innovative youth, and their creativity is lost.

The advice of OO is to teach the churches about the importance of putting structures in place for mission. The churches need encouragement to do this. The Bible Colleges and theological institutions can promote this development by assigning mission structures for consideration to the future and present leadership.

3. What are the main areas of teaching and training needed for missionaries being sent out
    and for the senders in the home church? Indicate some urgent subjects.

The following subjects were identified.

Missional Opportunities of the African churches

Statistics show that Africa has great potential for growth in world missions. In 2010, Africa was one of the top continents in its percentage of evangelical Christians. The situation has not radically changed since then.

North America 26.8%

Australia 17.8%

Pacific 17.8%

Africa 17.2%

Latin America 16.7%

Asia 3.5%

Europe 2.5% [12]

The percentage of Christians, however, is not a fully trustworthy indicator of the mission impact of the church or denomination. A large church can lack mission-mindedness. The most effective mission impact requires collaboration. Mission societies and organizations have been the tools of achieving long-lasting results. In view of that, Africa is still in the embryo phase. Some countries and denominations are already active, but the potential for growth is not yet fully utilized.

Africa has taken steps in forming mission collaboration. The Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI**)** is catalyzing the body of Christ in Africa to work in strategic partnership to disciple the nations and to send Africans in mission around the world. Its starting impulse came from the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement. In 2001 leaders from 36 African countries gathered at the Africa Millennial Consultation in Jerusalem. They affirmed God's powerful work across the continent and committed themselves to accelerating the advance of the Gospel through networking and collaboration. This gathering gave birth to a continental network called the Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI).[13]

African Assemblies of God churches have formed the African Assemblies of God Alliance (AAGA). It is the largest Pentecostal collaboration organization in Africa today. In the

middle of the 2010s, the author, chairman of the World Missions Commission of the Pentecostal World Fellowship at that time, started a discussion with the World Assemblies of God Missions Commission chairman, Brad Walz, about the need of a collaborative Pentecostal organization for Africa. The idea was presented to African Pentecostal leaders and welcomed as a necessary action. As a result, the first Africa Pentecostal Mission Consultation was organized in Nairobi in 2016. Various Pentecostal denominations and missions were invited. The next step of this kind of collaboration was taken in 2018 in Addis Ababa. Around 300 key leaders gathered in the capital of Ethiopia. They felt a need to establish a collaborative organization naming it the Africa Pentecostal Mission Fellowship (APMF). The author was elected chairman and the Board, Executive Committee and Advisory Committee were formed.

The coronavirus epidemic prohibited the organization of consultations so the Kampala Consultation which was already in the planning process had to be cancelled. The process of developing the APMF however was not stopped. Virtual meetings took place in the years following. To obtain legal status, the APMF was registered in Kenya. In the registration process, the name was shortened to APM. At this time of writing, it has been decided that the next consultation will take place in Nairobi, April 11-14, 2023.

APM has created a strategy for the future. Its Executive Committee approved this proposed strategy on September 3, 2021.[14] This strategy will be presented in Chapter 6.

Concerning other Pentecostal networks in Africa, the UKIAMKA (ECAPA) must be mentioned. It is the organization uniting the Pentecostals with a background from the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden). UKIAMKA is the Swahili name for the organization. The English name is East and Central Africa Pentecostal Association (ECAPA). The chairman is Rev. David Batenzi from Tanzania, the former chairman of the Free Pentecostal Churches of Tanzania. World missions is part of ECAPA's activities.

The African Assemblies of God Alliance (AAGA) published its latest statistics in 2022, reflecting the situation in 2021.[15] The total number of transcultural missionaries sent from African countries was 922. They were working in 32 countries. The largest number of missionaries were sent from Ghana (285), Nigeria (125), Ivory Coast (119). Ethiopia (62), Benin (41), and Burkina Faso (38). Seven denominations from a total of 39 had not sent any missionaries (about 18%). There seems to be a trend for growth in numbers of sent workers in African AG churches. A significant factor behind the growing numbers are the intercessors.

Jesus asked us to pray for workers in the harvest. The intercessors numbered 20,648 which averaged 529 per denomination.

In the top 20 listing of AG missions departments worldwide which sent out the most missionaries in 2021, Africa had three countries (Ghana, Nigeria, and Ivory Coast) named among them. Africa has much potential for growth because of its large population representing Pentecostal/Charismatic and evangelical Christians. As to the number of churches needed to send out one missionary, Africa has no country represented in the top missionary-sending countries. The top countries were Netherlands (0.65), Singapore (1.12), Finland (1.49), Denmark (1.94), Sweden (3.25).

The fastest growing missions departments in the last nine years were in the Netherlands, Ivory Coast, El Salvador, Germany, Argentina, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Ethiopia, Peru and Romania. Among these ten were two African countries, Ivory Coast and Ethiopia. It is noteworthy that half of these ten countries are from Latin America.

The financial capacity of a country is, of course, a factor which relates to the potential for growth. The WAGF survey 2022 unveils that the average giving globally for world missions is 3.76 USD/person/month. The same document states that this sum indicates a "vision gap" rather than an "income gap."

Concerning its future goals, WAGF churches have committed to the goals of MM33 (2033). MM33 is a mission and evangelization campaign aiming to give a genuine possibility for everyone on earth a chance to hear about Jesus and accept him as Savior. This includes a vision to have 1 million AG churches by that date. The Missions Commission of the WAGF also encourages an increase in the number of missionaries so that every ten churches would send one more missionary. That would increase the number of AG missionaries to around 40,000. (Presently the number is close to 9000).

Although we still lack the statistics of all Pentecostals in Africa, we can see from the AG statistics that Africa has a capacity to become a central player in world missions in the near future. It has good spiritual starting points, and much manpower for the mobilizing and sending of missionaries. If it succeeds also in partnering and forming strong Pentecostal and even broader collaboration, it can grow into a spiritual superpower in world missions.

Threats in the African Context

Doctrinal Threats

The core issue in fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ is the message of salvation. Therefore, all attacks against the biblical doctrine of salvation are threats against the mission given to the church from the triune God. Tokunboh Adeyemo, the former General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar has pointed out four dangers in relationship to this. Number one is Pluralism. He refers to Dr. Kibicko at the University of Nairobi who asserts that there is fully salvatory revelation in any religion. He also claims that African worship has been experienced much longer compared to Christian worship which dates back only 2000 years.

Kibicko seems to forget that the roots of Christianity are far older than 2000 years. Worship is one of the central themes of the Old Testament. Adeyemo sees the weakness of the Pluralistic arguments because it begins from the point of anthropology and sociology rather than theology. It errs also by confusing the means of revelation with the means of salvation.[16]

Another threat to the church concerning its fulfilment of the Great Commission is Universalism. It was introduced early on through some church Fathers like Clement from Alexandria, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Naziamus. Gregory of Nyssa, along with Origen, shares the view that Satan himself will be saved some day.[17] That doctrine nullifies the need for evangelism and missions.

There is also a doctrine which states that people will get a second chance of salvation after their death. The concept of purgatory from the Roman Catholic church is one version of that understanding. The Bible, however, clearly states that after death will follow the judgement (Heb. 9:27).

Syncretistic soteriology asserts that there are many ways to reach divine reality, and that Christ's atoning sacrifice needs to be supplemented. According to Adeyemo, other types of syncretism are found in all kinds of legalism, Gnosticism, and false mysticism.[18]

Humanism has attracted people in different ways. The basic argument is that a person is inherently good. The Bible teaches us that from a salvific point of view, there is no good in anyone (Rom.7:18). On the way to making social changes toward a better society, at least some versions of liberation theology accept violence. This leads to the neglect of the vertical

dimension (relationship to God) at the price of the horizontal dimension (relationship to fellow humans and society). Salvation is, however, inseparably linked to the Kingdom of God.[19] If not, it becomes only one more version for secular politics. Missions should include both vertical and horizontal dimensions to serve people holistically.

To avoid such mistakes, meaningful and effective hermeneutics is needed. Rene Padilla suggests four-dimensional hermeneutics: 1) communal, 2) pneumatic, 3) contextual and 4) missiological. The first point focuses on deriving interpretation from the community of believers, the second point is illumination by the Holy Spirit, the third point is taking meaning from the cultural context, and the fourth point is the implementation of the Great Commission.[20]

Cultural Threats

The Rwandan genocide in 1994 shocked the world. How was it possible for a nation with such a strong Christian population[21] to erupt into such human tragedy? Up to 800,000 deaths were reported.

Paul G. Hiebert explains the different levels of culture, dividing it into three categories. The surface level deals with cultural products, patterns of behavior, and signs and rituals. The deeper level includes the belief systems. The deepest level is the home of worldview themes.[22]

Concerning the Rwanda genocide, the problem was tribal. Hutus and Tutsis had had long-enduring tensions. What kind of worldview lies behind this tension? The other tribe is viewed as just not human. That is why Hutus called Tutsis cockroaches. The same kind of dehumanization took place with Nazi propaganda. The Jews were subhuman. Therefore, the Aryan people, like the Germans, were on a higher level.

Cultural superiority does not only incite violent conflicts like massacres and wars, but insidiously infiltrates human relationships even in churches. We see this between the Jews and the Samaritans in the Bible. This caused Paul to write: "Here there is no Greek, or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and in all" (Col.3:11).[23]

Africa has great potential for missionary sending, but one of the most important preparations is equipping the missionary to face cross-cultural challenges. This means preparedness to understand differing worldviews and belief systems. Often, new believers are

still connected to traditional behavior and ways of thinking. They should be rooted in the word of God to discern what aspects of their culture are acceptable and what needs to be abandoned.

Strategic Pitfalls

The key elements in mission strategy are the questions of why, who, where, how and with whom? Why? This leads us to the foundation of missionary work. We should go because it is God's will. He invites people to join His work. Missions is 'Missio Dei', God's mission, which started when God sent His son as a missionary to the world. Jesus said: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21). The first pitfall is to send missionaries out without a clear understanding of the biblical basis of missionary work.

Who is called? The whole church; every believer. All are needed. In prayer, or in going, or in giving money, or in offering practical help to missions endeavors in different forms.

Where? For Paul it was a pivotal matter to work where the name of Jesus was not yet known. There still are 7000 unreached people groups and 2000 language groups without the Scriptures.

How? We are called to make Jesus known. There is no other name offering salvation. Jesus did not send his disciples without first training them. Neglecting training results in wasted time, money, and human resources.

With whom? Paul always worked with others in a team. To facilitate this, we have mission organizations, mission teams, mission leaders and those serving in other various roles working together. People with a Barnabas attitude are valuable. Barnabas introduced Paul to the church when people were still afraid of him. He brought Paul from Tarsus to Antioch. A 'Barnabas' paves the way for others. Such people are urgently needed in missions.[24]

The pitfall for Africans or anyone is to go alone without a proper sending structure. The church is the basic agent for sending, just like the Antioch church was for Paul.

Collaboration is needed, not only in sending, but also in finding partners. In order to work effectively, Paul always formed teams. He worked with Priscilla and Aquila, a partnership which helped establish the church in Corinth. Too often missionaries have started working on their own although there were churches or believers already in existence.

Two Pentecostal umbrella organizations, the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) and the World Assemblies of God Fellowship (WAGF) have missions as the central focus of their

structures. PWF has had the World Missions Commission (WMC) since 2005 (led by the author, 2005-2022, by Max Barroso from 2022). WAGF formed its Missions Commission in 2010. It was preceded by the Acts 1:8 Committee which was started in 1999, having its first consultation in 2001. Both initiatives have been chaired by Rev. Brad Walz from the USA, the former mission director in Latin America.

Different continents also have their Pentecostal mission organizations. The Pentecostal European Mission (PEM) was started in 1991, the Pentecostal Asia Mission (PAM) in 1994, and as mentioned before, the Africa Pentecostal Mission (APM) in 2018. In North America, the Pentecostal mission directors have established a joint forum.

Persecution and Discrimination

When Jesus taught about the end times in Matthew 24, He mentioned persecution. Interestingly, it is connected to the promise that the gospel should be preached to all nations (literally to all ethnic groups). So, victory and persecution go hand in hand; are parallel. Pastor Uche Ama (UA) mentioned, in his response to the questions above, that African churches have not been prepared for persecution. It requires training and information sharing in the churches. Advocacy must also be provided. The Pentecostal Commission on Religious Liberty (PCRL) is developing such tools for Pentecostal churches. PCRL is a joint organization between PWF and WAGF, representing about 100 million believers.

Building Strategy and Structure for African Pentecostals in World Missions

APM is the largest Pentecostal mission organization in Africa. During the Covid pandemic it created a strategy. APM Strategy 2033 and its Goals are the following:

Mission (Main task)

Motivate and mobilize the African Pentecostal denominations and local churches for fulfillment of the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ.

Vision (Description of future status)

African Pentecostal churches fully involved in reaching people unaware of the salvation Jesus has provided for them including both eternal and earthly needs.

Values (Directing decision making)

- Collaboration –As Pentecostals, unity and working together is the divine model to be followed and will include other Christians as much as possible.
- Sense of urgency – people are eternally lost without knowing Jesus as their personal Savior.
- Holistic approach – recognizing the needs of the whole person and community.

Principles (Signposts for policy)

- Leadership of the Holy Spirit – in finding those to be sent, in motivating the senders, and to focus on the right targets with suitable methods.
- Attitude of giving – not depending on affluence but using what we have.
- Focusing on the younger generation – they are the future leaders.
- Life-long learning attitude.

Success factors (What promotes success?)

- Prayer – necessary for breakthroughs, identifying workers, and finances.
- Well-functioning, work-fostering mission structure.

APM Goals 2033:

· Every Pentecostal denomination (PD) has a functioning mission department
· Every PD and local church have an effective fundraising system
· Every PD has a mission training program(s) for senders and goers
· Every PD is involved in reaching UPGs
· Every Pentecostal local church has sent out at least one missionary

·   Every Pentecostal local church has one Sunday monthly dedicated to world missions

The strategy and goals will be tested in the next years. They can become concrete steps forward or, without proper implementation, will remain empty promises.

APM is in the process of becoming registered in Kenya. It already has an office and a part-time office manager functioning there.

Conclusion

The African Pentecostal and Charismatic churches have great potential for becoming decisive players in the final lap of world missions. Statistics show tremendous growth in the last hundred years. The Pentecostal message has an excellent sounding board in the African context. There are, however, some obstacles to overcome. Some of them are cultural, some historical, some financial, some dealing with attitudes. On the other hand, many cultural features promote rather than hinder the process, like the African worldview with its strong supernatural emphasis.

The existing Pentecostal networking organizations have the capacity to provide the structure needed for collaboration and fulfilment of the Great Commission. In this globalized world, working together is not an option, it is a must. From the theological point of view, working together is the desire of Jesus Christ. The world will believe if believers live and work in unity.

The survey made among some key mission leaders shows that the challenges in world missions for finishing the task have been identified. As these challenges are addressed and the weaknesses are overcome, the goal of going into all the world and making disciples will be achieved.

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[8] https://joshuaproject.net/continents

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[14] The minutes of the APM Executive Committee meeting on 3 September 2021.

[15] Missions Sending and Vision, 2022 WAGF Report, prepared by WAGF Missions Commission, Coordinated by Brad

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[16] Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Salvation in African Tradition* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1997), 94-95.

[17] Ibid., 98-99.

[18] Ibid., 105.

[19] Ibid., 108.

[20] Ibid., 109.

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Embracing the New Mission Paradigm with Joy

Murray Cornelius[*]

Abstract

The last command of Jesus to be witnesses to the ends of the earth now rests heavily on the Majority-World church. Cornelius, the executive director of Mission Global, the sending agency of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, shares insights into who the Western and non-Western can work together to fulfill the Great Commission. This will include humility, unity, and working as partners in the harvest. When both sides come to value the gifts and contributions of the other in this partnership, the goal is achievable.

Introduction

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) recently welcomed two missionary families from Côte d'Ivoire. Sent by the Assemblies of God and focused on Quebec, they represent a new sending nation responding to the Great Commission. The PAOC sent two families to Cote D'Ivoire about 40 years ago and now we have received two families – Missions Full Circle (see photo). This should not be a surprise and is a most welcome reality. More Christians live in the Majority World than the West and most of them are Pentecostals and Charismatics. More than 80% of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship (WAGF) family live in the Majority World.

The last command of Jesus to be witnesses to the ends of the earth now rests heavily on the Majority-World church. If the WAGF is going to make a significant contribution to finishing the task and offer back to Jesus one million churches by 2033[1], we need the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world. The view of "missions" as primarily Western countries sending to the rest of the world is a paradigm of the past. The mission agenda, as set by the

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[*] Murray Cornelius is the Executive Director for Mission Global, the sending agency of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. We have over 300 Global Workers serving in 65 countries. He also serves as the Chairperson of ERDO, the humanitarian agency. Together with my wife Cindy, they served in Zimbabwe for 20 years.

traditional sending church, must no longer dominate the present missional agenda. That agenda needs to be a collaboration that engages traditional and new sending nations.

In this article, I will offer three reasons why traditional sending nations, like my own Canada, must embrace and welcome the burgeoning of new sending nations. With joy and with humility we must welcome these new sending nations and collaborate so that all may hear the good news and the whole earth be filled with God's glory.

The Joy of Renewed Spiritual Vitality

I have often heard it said that the African church is a mile wide but only an inch deep. This rather pejorative statement is simply not true. This assumes that the only measure of maturity is theological acumen. Our tendency in the West is to measure maturity purely in terms of intellectual depth. While the West may have historically focused on theological correctness and written more theology, it may not measure up as mature in the practice of prayer and

devotion, and it certainly has not developed the maturity that is rooted in suffering and enduring hardship and persecution for the sake of the gospel. The missionaries landing on the shores of Canada and other Western nations bring a spiritual life that has been forged by "suffering grief in all kinds of trials" (1 Peter 1:6). They arrive with an urgency to evangelize and an expectation that God will authenticate the witness with 'signs and wonders'.

The primary emphasis of the early church and early Pentecostals rested in being sent by Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit resulting in a dependency focused more on the leading of the Spirit than on formal structures. As with the early church, the Majority World church is not hindered by the fact that they may be marginalized and relatively poor. With an expectation of the soon return of Christ, and with an urgency because time is short, the church has passionately multiplied, particularly in Latin America and Africa. This living faith and passion for witness can help revitalize our routinized Western churches that have lost their outbound passion to reach the lost.

Increased Access to Reach the Unreached

Finding and developing landing platforms that provide access to the countries with the most unreached people groups is increasingly difficult. New sending nations may at times have easier access to hard places than traditional sending nations. Countries with a history of communism may not require work visas to certain places in the world. Since many nations are now sending, we can strategize collaboratively with respect to which nations can most easily send workers into restricted contexts.

In addition, there are many positive examples of cross-cultural mission endeavors in the WAGF family among near culture and proximate peoples. The church in Ethiopia is an excellent example as they send missionaries into neighboring countries where cultural and language barriers are not as formidable and immigration access is possible. The tent-making sending model also opens doors to places that traditional sending nations may find difficult. With migration so prevalent, it is possible to train and encourage people to live with missional purpose, to be witnesses and to plant churches "as they go." We must not be limited to only one sending model. New sending nations can develop multiple sending structures.

A further opportunity for the church today is to send new immigrants, that came to our Western nations, back home to their own countries or to serve as cross-cultural missionaries.

People who come to Canada through migration as immigrants or refugees may also receive a call from God. It may be a call to go back home to what may be very restricted contexts, or it may be a call to serve in a neighboring country amongst their own people or it may be a call to be cross-cultural workers. Regardless, the opportunity to build diverse and inclusive missionary agencies must not be missed. New sending nations can open new doors for the gospel.

The Opportunity to Build Multi-national, Multi-agency Teams

The early church modeled their new and unique identity on the incarnate Christ by demonstrating love, justice, and mercy for all. They embodied their beliefs, made room for diverse ethnicities, races, gender, and socio-economic classes to worship and fellowship together in unity and in the bond of peace. In his commentary on Acts, William Jennings observes that "the deepest reality of life in the Spirit depicted in the book of Acts is that the disciples of Jesus rarely, if ever, go where they want to go or to whom they would want to go. Indeed, the Spirit seems to always be pressing the disciples *to go to those to whom they would in fact strongly prefer never to share space, or a meal, and definitely not life together.* Yet it is precisely this prodding to be boundary-crossing and border-transgressing that marks the presence of the Spirit of God" (2017, 11). If the church is to be a model of diversity and inclusion, then our teams of workers who go across cultural and linguistic barriers should also be marked by inclusion and diversity.

The new reality that in the WAGF we have many sending nations provides all of us the opportunity to build teams of workers from multiple nations, representing multiple countries and languages. These teams will serve to demonstrate obedience to the command of Jesus to love one another and "by this everyone will know that you are my disciples" (John 13:35). In a world that is increasingly divided on racial and religious lines, the church must be counterculture and show the opposite. A multi-racial team demonstrates the unity in diversity that Christ envisioned for his church.

In Luke's expansive theological vision, race, gender, and ethnicity are central to his view of the Church. Eric Barreto suggests that Luke does not erase ethnic difference through the creation of a new ethnicity but uses the flexible bounds of ethnicity to illustrate the wide demographic ambitions of the early church (2010, 3). Biblical scholar, Larry Hurtado describes how the uniquely trans-local and trans-ethnic identity of being "in Christ" created the first

multiethnic religion in history, because Christian conversion relativized cultural and social identities without effacing them (2016, 90). The impulse from the Spirit was to "form a broadly connected and cooperative trans-local and trans-ethnic religious movement" from the start (Hurtado 2015, 1).

The Pentecostal and Charismatic movement today has that same unique opportunity. Just as the Greco-Roman cities of the first century were prone to riots because of deep-seated racial conflicts and hatred (Stark 1997, 158), so the cities and nations of our world today are marked by ethnic conflicts, racial discrimination, and marginalization based on sex, religion, race, culture, and ethnicity. Into this racialized world, the church can send multi-cultural, multi-racial teams that embody the love of Christ. When the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples in the upper room and they began to speak in tongues and to preach publicly, God performed a miracle that was an intentional reversal of the judgment of Babel.

As we develop multi-cultural, multi-racial teams, it is important that traditional sending nations do not automatically assume leadership and simply co-opt new senders into their vision and strategy. To co-opt, the root for cooperation, carries the implication that we look for people to join what we are already doing and serve into our purpose. To co-labor, the root for collaboration, implies that people join hands and determine together the purpose and mission. The opportunity for collaboration, to co-labor, demands a humility from all that will allow our God-given gifts to determine our roles and for leadership to be gift related, not culture, or race related. The different racial and cultural backgrounds on the teams will provide different gifts and the more varied the team is, the more adaptable they will be to the context they are resident in.

Forming teams may be simple, but bonding into true family is much harder. We will need to take time to understand each other, to accommodate and respect our cultural differences. We will need to foster humility and grace. But the opportunity before us to demonstrate to the world that we love one another must not be missed. We must build multi-cultural, multi-racial teams of Asians, Africans, Latinos, Europeans, Indians, and North Americans for the glory of God.

Fostering the humility to receive and collaborate

Finally, the West must foster a humility to receive missionaries to our countries and we must submit ourselves and our gifts to serve on multi-national teams. We must ask these important and perhaps hard questions.

1. Are we prepared to work on teams led by Majority World team leaders?

2. Are we prepared to humbly welcome workers from other countries to our own shores to help us in our own nations?

3. Can we submit to being followers, to release control of the vision, to share our resources and collaborate for the sake of the Kingdom?

Let us covenant together in the WAGF to be a missionary movement and do all we can to bring the gospel to those with little or no access to the good news. This kairos moment in history must not be missed. We can and we must collaborate that all may hear that Jesus died for them.

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1 The World Assemblies of God Fellowship (WAGF) has adopted a vision to offer back to Jesus one million churches in 2033. This initiative is called MM33. Currently there are approximately 370,000 churches. https://mm33.global/

Keys to Romania's Growth in their Missions' Vision and Response

Ileana Kopjar (Hrișcă) & Gheorghe Rițișan[*]

Abstract

To do. In this article Kopjar and Rițișan explore the challenges and obstacles for Romania, the sleeping giant (the largest Evangelical church in Europe), to reach its mission potential. Both authors speak authoritatively from inside the developing mission sending agency, Romanian Pentecostal Agency for Foreign Missions. The article explains reasons for the growth from zero foreign missionaries sent around the year 2000 to 80 missionaries sent currently and a goal of sending 200 missionaries by the end of the decade.

Introduction

In December 2021, the doctoral program of The Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Missouri, offered a class entitled "Special Studies: Contemporary Issues in Missiology." Most of the students attending the class were from the United States of America, one from Canada, one from Venezuela and one from Romania. When the professor

[*] Ileana Kopjar (Hrișcă) served as the Executive Director of the Romanian Centre of Cross-Cultural Studies (CRST) from Constanta, Romania for fifteen years (2007-2022). In April 2022 she married Christian Kopjar, a German missionary who served in Liberia for more than ten years. Currently they are leading a Youth with A Mission base in Liberia and are appointed by the Romanian Pentecostal Agency for Foreign Mission (APME) as the regional coordinators for the APME missionaries who serve in Africa. In 2015 Ileana earned an MA in Missional Leadership through the University of Chester / Regents Theological College, and currently she is pursuing a PhD in Intercultural Studies through Evangel University / Assemblies of God Theological Seminary. Ileana's passion is to see the Kingdom of God extended throughout nations as young believers are committing their lives to take the gospel where it is least preached. She grew up in a lovely Christian family, enjoying the mentorship of her parents, the fellowship of her two brothers and six sisters, while her home church offered her a solid spiritual formation! Friends and family call her INA.

Gheorghe Rițișan is one of the founding members of the Romanian Pentecostal Agency for Foreign Mission and he is currently the president of this organization since 2008. He was ordained in 1992 after graduating from ITP [Pentecostal Theological Institute] and served 17 years in Dobrogea as a pastor. He also served in regional church planting projects. He was the president of the Pentecostal Regional Community in Constanța for the period 2004-2008. He is the founder and the president of the Romanian Center of Cross-Cultural Studies from Agigea (Constanța). From 2015 to date, he is the vice-president of PEM (Pentecostal European Mission) and a member of Pentecostal World Mission Committees (WAGFMC/WPF-MC). He is married to Irina, and they have two married daughters, Irisa-Iulia, and Lea-Priscila, and five grandchildren. Currently, they live in Cluj-Napoca and are involved in Filadelfia Pentecostal Church.

presented the missiological issue of "Majority World Mission," the two students that were mainly invited to make their voices heard and bring their contribution to the class discussion were the one from Venezuela and the one from Romania. The guest speaker for that session, Dr. DeLonn Rance, an Assemblies of God World Missionary who served in El Salvador for twenty years, was addressing his American missionary colleagues through those words: "Most of us would be aghast if someone declared that only citizens of the United States are qualified and responsible for the missionary mandate. Yet often our actions or the lack thereof, speak louder than our words. The responsibility of reaching the world applies to every believer."[1] Based on his data analysis, Jason Mandryk praises the fact that Western missionaries' actions have contributed to the current change, as he writes that "years and generations of prayer and faithful service to the un-evangelized world by both missionaries and indigenous Christians have not been in vain."[2]

Romania's association to the Majority World

Something has happened, and according to contemporary missiologists, the last decade of the 1900s has carried the historical movement of making Christianity "predominantly a non-Western religion."[3]

Before proceeding to study the facts that contributed to Romania's role in the contemporary history of missions, it is important to briefly explain the concept of 'Majority World' and why Romania is associated with, when discussing the missiological issue of the new sending nations.

In the book *Missions from the Majority World: Progress, Challenges and Case Studies,* Enoch Wan introduces a list of several terms used in relating to 'Majority World', some of which are 'Third World'; 'Developing countries' or 'Under -developing countries'; and 'the South' and 'Global South'.[4] Wan considers that 'Majority World' is the most appropriate term for non-Western missions, as it describes and highlights the fact that countries in this category are populated by the greatest populations. The author calls for sensitivity in developing an approach void of negative connotations or judgmental evaluation for countries that are technologically and economically less advanced or are in geographic locations not generally involved in world missions.[5] According to Johnstone and Mandryk,[6] in year 1900 majority world Christians was made up 16.7% of all Christians, but in year 2000 it reached up to 59.4%. Philip Jenkins,[7]

however, dares to project demographic changes, indicating that if in the 1900s, 32% of the world's population was living in Europe, North America, and former Soviet Union, in 2050s, "Africa and Latin America will probably be home for 29% of the world's people."

Keyes and Pate[8] anticipated the missiological issue of the majority world by stating that,

Christian missionary movement is beginning to shift toward those missionary activities which originate from countries other than those in Europe and North America. Christian missions are beginning to emerge more from the many (so-called) non-Western nations and peoples in Asia, Oceania, Latin America, and Africa. These regions are where the majority of Christians live today and where missionary work is increasingly becoming a natural expression of vibrant Christianity.

As research shows that Christianity continues to move south and east, David Sills addresses several implications for the church such as (1) a theological contribution to understanding Christianity that does not come from the West, (2) a change in the dominant language(s) of faith, and (3) the fact that large groups of Christians will live in near-neighbor cultures and in close proximity to communities belonging to other religions. Therefore, "missionaries must prayerfully consider the missiological implications and what this might mean for ministry endeavors."[9]

In the missiological literature, the countries belonging to post-communist Europe, generally, are not included as being part of the 'majority world', and they are not known as being part of the 'western world'. However, during the last decade of the 1900s, a number of them are part of changing the face of missions.

Romania as a mission field and as 'sleeping giant'

Anne-Marie Kool[10] puts it this way: "Since the 'changes' - as the events of 1989 and 1991 are often referred to, emphasizing the process rather than the sudden shift…that occurred in Central and Eastern Europe - a massive 'invasion' of missionaries has taken place."

According to the statistics published by One Challenge International, in collaboration with Operation World, "over 300 foreign missionaries worked in Romania between 1990 and 2000."[11]

It is agreed by the Romanian mission leaders that during the first decade after the fall of communism, Romania qualified to be a mission-receiving nation, and at that important time in the growth of the Romanian church, the ministry of Western missionaries was essential in

transitioning this nation to its new role of becoming a major mission-sending country. Statistics record that in 1998 "Romania had over 500,000 evangelicals, making it the largest population of evangelicals in all Eastern Europe. In fact, Romania had more evangelicals than the rest of Eastern Europe combined."[12]

Until near the end of the 1900s, the Pentecostal Christian Church in Romania[13] (CCPR) did not manage to send and support a single long-term missionary abroad, and for that reason, in 1997, at the European Conference of Church of God in Kirchheim, Germany[14] when the Romanian delegation was presented, the moderator said, "The president of 'The Sleeping Giant' will greet the audience." The exponential growth of the Romanian Pentecostal Church, without understanding its mandate of being a witness for Christ among other nations, made Romania carry the nickname of 'the sleeping giant' for almost a decade. However, after year 2000, the giant woke up, and worked hard, and is determined to end the reason for its name "The Sleeping Giant".

This shift made a step forward in 2006 when a group of pastors having a cross-cultural vision decided to establish The Pentecostal Agency for Foreign Mission (*Agenția Penticostală de Misiune Externă* rendered now on as APME). It will be analyzed in this paper, as it is the only sending agency of the CCPR. Since that time until now APME proved to be one of the fastest growing mission organizations in the world and became a source of inspiration for new sending agencies.

Looking back at this short history of APME, their leaders and some of the most experienced long-term missionaries identified a few keys of this phenomenal grow[15].

Keys to Romania's growth in its missions vision and response

The religious context created by the Holy Spirit before and immediately after 1989, the year of regime change in Romania, facilitated a good ministry of cross-cultural mission.

a. The existence of a Pentecostal church in Romania, was created by the Spirit, despite the persecutions from the communist years. The huge potential for world mission was obvious after the first decade of democracy. In year 2006 there were 2,476 Pentecostal churches in Romania, 248 Pentecostal churches in the European Romanian diaspora[16] and over 300,000 believers. Romanian Pentecostal families generally had many children, and many of them, becoming teenagers and young people, started to show an interest for cross-cultural mission.

Pentecostals from Romania, whether persecuted or free, "have always felt that their influence has to do with recognizing the Holy Spirit's place in empowering life and ministry. They clearly believe that what God did in the New Testament, he can do today. They live in daily expectation of divine intervention in their life and in service. They are evangelistically oriented, and their churches are growing.[17]

b. The existence of a church planting and evangelization movement among the Turks from the southeast of Romania, resulted from receiving a vision of reaching out to other nations. A wave of young people left their comfortable homes and large churches from the west part of Romania, to move to the poor towns and villages from southeast of Romania, where Muslim population was between 40-90%. These Romanian evangelists aimed to plant churches among other ethnic groups, but they have often been facing difficulties in communicating the gospel in a way that Muslims would not be resistant. It was this church-planting movement that led the Romanian mission leaders to start in 2001 a program of training Romanians to reach out to Muslims.

c. The opportunity for young people from the entire country to gather together in national youth conferences (with thousands of participants in the 1990s) where foreign missionaries were guest speakers made it easier to pass on the vision of reaching out to lost world. Young people were thus motivated to think about missions, to pray, and get involved in missions in specific ways. Poor Romanians learned to give up a two-liter bottle of Coke per month and contribute to sending out the first Romanian missionaries. Also, the possibility of joining a short-term mission trip opened the eyes of many young people to see the harvest and be convicted that their time has come, too.

d. The ministry of several foreign missionaries was used by God to fertilize the soil of the Romanian Pentecostal church for foreign missions. The list cannot exclude the names of Cameron Wilson (USA), Richard Cunningham (USA), Arto Hämäläinen (Finland), Ingemar Martinson (Sweden), Filipus Army and Henrik Steen (Sweden) and others. Preparing the terrain for missions was Cameron Wilson, an American Assemblies of God missionary, who, shortly after the end of communism, he began teaching about sending missionaries. Cameron inspired many Romanian pastors and became known as 'Mister Missions' among the Pentecostal leaders during his time of service in Romania.

Richard Cunningham, another Assemblies of God World Missionary, who moved to Romania in 1994, was the leader with years of experience of being part of a world leading Pentecostal sending agency. He has assisted the founding Board of APME with guidance in starting the mission sending agency and he served as a secretary of international relationships for APME.

The birth of a team of Romanian Pentecostal pastors with vision and passion for foreign mission. This team initiated the process of creating and developing a mission-sending agency. It all began with the call of God on individual people, speaking at the same time to a group of leaders and to Romanian youth.

a. The Board of Directors included leaders that were not politically appointed by a certain organization but pastors which were brought together by the Holy Spirit and the vision to see the Romanian Church involved in mission[18]. They are recognized for their integrity and lifestyle that reflect biblical moral standards. The board of directors includes leaders that are available, perseverant, hardworking, and ready to sacrifice.

d. The board of directors are embracing and emphasizing APME's values, policies, APME's mission, work philosophy and are ministering together from the very beginning, making sure that decisions are implemented. They are also providing continuity to this organization. They prioritize discipleship, church planting, evangelism, long-term mission, partnerships with the national churches, the learning of the local language for their missionaries, and reaching the unreached ethnic groups, especially the ones from the Islamic world.

e. Another important aspect in the leadership of such an organization is the role of the president who should be enrolled full-time in serving the mission, and not taking other church or denomination leadership responsibility.

f. A reference committee completes the work of APME's Board of Directors. This committee is made up of Pentecostal leaders that represent every Pentecostal district in Romania, and every continental Romanian diaspora. It serves both as an accountability team for APME's ministry, and as a network of support for different needs and initiatives of APME.

It is important to cultivate partnerships with international missionary organizations. APME prioritized it even since its early phases, and it proved essential, as through the lenses of more experienced mission sending structures, APME could receive guidance and assistance in developing its functional structure and organizational features.

a. World Assemblies of God Fellowship Mission Commission (WAGF-MC) is one of the international partners of APME. Brad Walz, WAGF-MC's director visited APME in 2013 and provided opportunities for the Romanian missionaries and mission directors to be invited as speakers at different global events on missions. During October 17-20, 2018, the 5th World Missions Congress took place in Madrid, Spain. Among the speakers, APME's president, Gheorghe Rițișan, was invited to moderate the session on "Empowered to go raising up the new senders", and the executive director of the Romanian Center of Cross-Cultural Studies, Ileana Hrișcă, was invited to moderate the session on "Empowered to go: the next generation." Both, WAGF – MC and Pentecostal World Fellowship – Mission Commission (PWF – MC) provided opportunities for the Romanian speakers to contribute to motivating and assisting new sending countries in developing their own mission sending structure and mission training program.

b. Pentecostal European Mission (PEM) has invited APME to be part of PEM and to attend PEM's Consultations. In 2013 APME hosted PEM's Consultation in Cluj, Romania. In 2020, as the pandemic started, APME's president and PEM's vice-president initiated a prayer movement within PEM, and every second and fourth Wednesday of the month, PEM mission directors, missionaries and administrative staff gather online for prayer. Even if 'keep the distance' was the general slogan of the pandemic, PEM's leaders and PEM's mission sending agencies managed to stay in close communication and to offer mutual spiritual support better than at other times in its history.

c. APME has been continually developing national and international partnerships that will facilitate the training, the sending, the integration, and the support of the Romanian missionaries. As "the word 'together' is mentioned four hundred times in Scripture and expresses the theme of unity,"[19] APME's mission leaders identified "opportunities for cooperation during times (planned and spontaneous) of conversation, during times of conflict, when [they] encounter humanitarian crisis, and through the convergence of ministries and ministry personnel.[20] APME developed a sensitive heart to the financial needs of workers from other organization. Also, during the pandemic, APME chose to extend financial support to some missionaries from Latin America, serving in Central Asia, who suffered the unavoidable economic consequences of the pandemic.

The written strategy of APME produced by its Board of Directors made it possible to create some departments that are functional, essential, and needed for the existence and the growth of a new mission organization.

a. A healthy administrative department with a good, correct, and transparent way of handling money. Financial reports are presented for accountability to the Reference Committee, to the Church's Council of the Pentecostal Union from Romania, and to some of the donors. Also, missionaries are submitting their monthly financial reports to APME. It was in September 2004 when the first faith pledge for missions was implemented in Romania. As APME was not yet born, the mission funds were initially handled by the Pentecostal Regional District from Constanța. Romanians wanted to do more for missions and proved to be faithful in honoring their pledges. APME is using the faith pledges in the Romanian churches as an effective tool in raising a missionary's budget and makes it possible to send more missionaries. As the number of missionaries is growing, the administrative team is also expanding.

b. Appropriate training of the missionaries should be emphasized. The Romanian Center of Cross-Cultural Studies (CRST) is the school that exists solely for the purpose of training career missionaries. Ten years prior to forming APME as an agency, God already gave pastor Gheorghe Rițișan the vision to train young Romanians to reach the Muslims. Since 2001, the hope was that as youth is trained to go as missionaries. God, who called them, will also somehow provide the means to be sent out from Romania in an organized way. APME was founded in 2006, and from the school's perspective, it is seen as the direct answer of God to the prayers for a platform of wisely transferring CRST's graduates from the mission school to the mission field. During 2006 – 2018, there was good collaboration between APME and CRST. Since 2018, CRST has been integrated into APME.

There is a three-dimensions approach in training CRST's students. First, there is the academic part. Subjects as Islam, Buddhism, Animism, Hinduism, Cross-cultural Communication, Bi-vocationalism, Church Planting, Spiritual Warfare, Contextualization, Teamwork, Mission Strategies or Anthropology, are all part of CRST's training program for the second-year students. Also, Bible classes and an introduction to missions are also provided during the first year of studies. The lecturers that are teaching at CRST are mainly missionaries with many years of experience and high academic degrees that qualify them to teach from experience, not from books only.

Secondly, there is an emphasis on practical exposure to ministry. Students are sent out to do weekend ministry in different villages from South-East of Romania, learning to preach, to do children's ministry, and street evangelism while working 'in land' both with Romanians, but mainly with Turks, Tatars or other ethnic groups currently living in Romania. During the first year of their training, CRST's students, as a class, go on a short-term mission trip visiting a culture very different than in Romania. Most of these trips have been organized in Turkey, in the Balkans (Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia) or in Greece (serving the refugees from Iran and Afghanistan). During the second year of their studies, the students are required to undertake a two-month internship in the country of their call, or a very similar culture. Those ministry opportunities are paving the way of CRST's students in making final decisions related to the nations where to serve as long-term missionaries.

Thirdly, the school's goal is not to offer students information and exposure to what is taking place in the world, but its heart's desire is to provide the students with the opportunity of a spiritual transformation and a divine understanding of what is taking place within the Kingdom of God in current times. Therefore, CRST starts each day with one hour of prayer, each week includes a day of fasting, and each semester a week of prayer & fasting. All this is part of a vision that defines CRST as a unique training program in the country. Also, the training is designed for day classes, where students are living on campus. This gives the possibility of getting to know the students before sending them out, but also, it gives the student the possibility to experience what it means to live by faith.

c. A good and continuous mobilization for mission of the Romanian churches. The department of mobilization has been established well, even from the very beginning. In Romania, every year there is a national mission conference called RoMisCon. Beginning in 2011, this conference addresses mainly the Pentecostal pastors and it has been one of the most effective tools in implementing the DNA of missions in local churches. However, things were not like this from the beginning. Reverend Cameron Wilson, states that "in 1996 I found a way to encourage and affirm several young people who professed a calling to overseas missionary work. I called the conference 'Romanian Missionary Convocation' and coined the acronym 'RoMisCon.' It was a three-day event; and it was painfully obvious that world missions were still a deep dark mystery to most Romanian Christians."[21] The first mission camp took place in Romania in the summer of 2006. Out of the small group of the participants, one went to Ethiopia,

one to Afghanistan, and one became the director of CRST in 2007. Those camps facilitate the recruitment of new missionary candidates, most of them going first through CRST's training. Mobilization is done for every age group in the Romanian Pentecostal churches. Recently, Sunday School lessons for children between 4-12 were produced. Churches implemented the Mission Sunday. The Kairos Course is offered to youth groups of many churches. The *Noi Frontiere* (New Frontiers) mission magazine is in its 19th year of publication and has around 1000 of subscribers. Translating and producing missiological literature has been another avenue of opening the window through which Romanians could look towards the lost world. Creating TV and radio programs is something new for Romania, but it grows. Another area where APME's Board of Directors is investing time and energy is in facilitating the Romanian pastors to join at least one short-term mission trip. The pastors that have been on a trip to India, Egypt, Ethiopia, or Madagascar are becoming the leaders of the most significant churches acknowledged for sending out new missionaries and for offering financial support for missionaries.

d. The Romanian church values a serious movement of intercession and prayer for missionaries. Every missionary is required to have a group of committed prayer warriors (at least 10-20). The prayer calendar is distributed in the Pentecostal churches. There are also several social media platforms that allowed APME to create prayer groups where urgent prayer requests are shared.

e. A good coordination of the missionaries on the mission field through area directors who are extending pastoral care and ministry & spiritual direction, including field visits and online meetings. Besides this, APME organizes every year a retreat where missionaries are coming together finding the opportunity to share their victories, to expose their hurts, to acknowledge their limitations, and to receive emotional, relational, and spiritual support. It makes them rejoice in knowing that they belong to a family, to something greater than their own dream.

Political and economic factors

a. The integration of our nation in the European Union (EU) in 2007 makes it possible for the Romanian missionaries to enter, as European citizens, many countries that previously have been closed for the Romanians. Reflecting on the change this integration brought, it is obvious

that one of the most important reasons for Romania not doing mission work until the year 2000, was the political factor, as the communist system, for half a century, isolated the CCPR from other Pentecostal churches in the world, and from global missionary involvement. "The fact that Romania was isolated and unable to do foreign mission created a severe deficiency in the church's theology – the mandate of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20) did not exist in the CCPR requirements.[22] Romania became a very closed space, a huge concentration camp behind the Iron Curtain, and for most of its citizens it was practically impossible to go beyond the borders. Even after the fall of the communist regime, it was very difficult for Romanians to travel abroad and obtain visas for certain nations, until 2007 when it became a member of the European Union.

b. The economic growth and the financial stability experienced by Romanians in the last years allowed the Romanian believers to be more interested to financially support the Romanian missionaries. Romania experienced its economic crisis (the inflation rate reached over 100% in certain years) and this situation fueled the development of the mentality that Romanians are too poor to do foreign mission and to support cross-cultural workers.

However, since year 2010, for all the missionaries sent out today from Romania, almost the entire financial support comes from Romanian believers who are living both in land and in the Romanian diaspora.

Conclusion

Examining these keys that facilitated for Romania a growth of understanding its vision and its responsibility for world mission, is both humbling and encouraging. It is encouraging to look to the reports of APME, which in less than 20 years has been sending out more than 80 cross-cultural workers to over 25 different nations. Since Romania started from zero missionaries in the early 2000s, it becomes easy to measure its success. However, APME's vision was that by the end of this decade it will send out 200 missionaries. And this is still a dream to come true soon.

George Verwer, the founder of Operation Mobilization, is encouraging leaders to never underestimate or overestimate their work, as he states, „I am sure that God is already using many of you more than you realize. Be aware of the subtleties of putting yourself down in an unbiblical way, just as I am sure you would beware of allowing yourself to be puffed up. Be aware that God

is doing great things in the world today. He is working through older churches, newer churches, older agencies, and newer agencies in an exciting way.[23]

On the 10th of September 2022, the Romanian Pentecostal Church celebrated its first centennial since it was founded. The leaders of APME are expressing a genuine thanksgiving to the Lord of the Harvest who, in His goodness and timing, allowed the Romanian nation to write a brief page into the history of World Missions.

The missiological issue on Majority World discussed during the class on „Special Studies: Contemporary Issues in Missiology" has been a great source of inspiration and encouragement both for the student from Venezuela, and for the one from Romania. The appreciation extended by the lecturers and the colleagues belonging to nations with hundreds of years of history in sending out missionaries, has been overwhelming and it communicates to the new sending countries that their first steps in sending out missionaries are not despised in the eyes of those who are considered as older brothers, as they are not despised in the eyes of the Lord.

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Lessons Learned from an Experiment in African National Church Missions

Jeffery Nelson[*]

Abstract

In 2009, I submitted a paper to Pan Africa School of Theology entitled, "Suggesting a New Paradigm for the Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG) and East Africa School of Theology (EAST)," for a PhD course. The paper proposed starting a school of missions for the development and retention of national missionaries. The paper was precipitated by a serious attrition level of KAG missionaries averaging less than one 4-year term. The proposal sought to lower attrition through ongoing education and encouragement of new and existing missionaries. This paper will provide lessons learned from the experiment in African national church missions through the KAG school of missions between 2009 and 2016.

The school began in 2010 and continued for six years, during which time the attrition rate for missionaries was reduced drastically. The encouragement and best practice goals brought positive results. The fund-raising plan saw initial success, but ultimately failed to be realized. The various elements of the program are evaluated in this paper to provide other national churches items to consider in their own missions program development.

The Structure of the Paper

This paper begins with the lessons learned from an experiment in African national church missions and then contains the original paper that launched the school of missions for the Kenya Assemblies of God.

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[*] Jeffery and Janelle Nelson are missionaries to Africa, and Jeff is currently serving as coordinator of Africa Library Services and Distribution Centers based in Springfield, Missouri. The Nelsons have served as pastors for 16 years and in missions since 2000. Jeff led KAG EAST University in Nairobi, Kenya for eight years. The Nelsons have a passion for unreached people groups, church planting, mobilizing missionaries, and higher Christian education. The Nelsons have four grown children and seven grandchildren. Jeff and Janelle Nelson have a burden to "prepare God's people for works of service".

History

The original proposal included the approval of the KAGDOM (Kenya Assemblies of God Department of Missions) committee on August 6, 2009, to launch the school of missions. The school was launched in 2010. In the early years the KAG missionaries came to EAST twice a year for the school. In the later years the school met once a year.

Reaching UPGs

Through the efforts of the School of Missions students, East Africa School of Theology missions teams, and cooperation with KAGM and the Meru District of the Kenya Assemblies of God, and others, the Rendille tribe was moved off the Joshua Project UPG list. This was a phenomenal realization of the prayers and work of the KAG.

The changing of personnel

Significant changes in personnel took place in a few years from 2014-2018. Key players in the KAG and in the missions leadership changed. The 36-year KAG General Superintendent Peter Njiri, passed away while in office. General Treasurer, Peter Nuthu, resigned from his position on the KAGM. Missionaries Kevin Smith and this author left their positions with the Kenya AG mission and were no longer able to serve on the missions committee or oversee the school of missions and EAST. The absence of these leaders effected the trajectory of this program. The new leadership under General Superintendent has stated that they, "Prioritize theological training and preparation for evangelism to those of other religions."[1]

Fund raising

The fund-raising concept presented in the paper was a faith-promise system. Missionaries were required to visit churches during the school of missions weekends to solicit pledges for monthly support of their mission work that was channeled through the national church missions office and then to them on the field.

This plan did produce some limited positive results. Some churches began to give in the months immediately after the visit. However, because this was a new and unfamiliar system to

the pastors, churches, and missionaries, the funds soon dried up. Additionally, the personnel changes did not help, as those who encouraged the system, were no longer there to promote it. In the end, the missions program reverted to the system it was familiar with. Missions continued to be support through the voluntary taxation of the churches to give what they saw fit to support the missions system.

Best Practice

One of the issues addressed in the school of missions was the tension for missionaries to Muslim tribes in Kenya. When they went to a town center such as Wajir, they intend to work with the unreached people group that is there. But when down country (immigrant) workers from Christian backgrounds learn they are there, they ask them to be there pastor and begin churches for them. The pull to be a pastor includes being valued and the promise of a salary. While the intention to reach the unreached often includes ridicule, persecution and suffering financially.

Through many discussions on best practice at the school of missions a solution emerged for Wajir. The two Kenyan missionary couples decided that one couple would continue to work with the Muslim tribe to reach them with the Good News. The other couple concentrated on a missions-focused church in the town. This allowed for the first couple to devote all their attention to reaching the tribe while the other couple pastored the church and helped the immigrant professionals of the town catch a vision for reaching their neighbors.

Encouragement element

The element of encouragement may have been the greatest factor in reversing the high rate of attrition among missionaries of the KAG. Prior to the formation of the school of missions few missionaries lasted more than 1 four-year term. During the seven years of the school only one missionary couple left the field and that was due to health concerns and the decision was made by the missions leadership. The couple wanted to continue.

On the opening day of each session of the school of missions the only agenda was to share the success and struggles of the previous time on the field and to pray with one another. This was a healing time for the missionaries. The missionaries shared their struggles and then

found that others had similar issues. They were ministered to by sympathetic and empathetic teammates.

Over the next days of the session the issues brought up in the struggles session were discussed in the best practice sessions and solutions were discovered through interaction among the group and outside facilitators. By the end of the school the missionaries were encouraged and ready to head back to the field with new concepts and a fresh touch of the Holy Spirit on their lives. The next time they returned they often shared victories where the previous times they shared struggles. Of all the elements of the school of missions proposal, the retention that happened because of the encouragement was perhaps the greatest result.

Conclusion of lessons learned

The KAG School of Missions experiment from 2010 to 2016 was a great boost to the Kenya Assemblies of God missions program. Not all items proposed worked well, such as the fund-raising proposal. The significant changes in the leadership personnel effectively shut down the program for a time.

But the overall impact of the school was very positive. The missionary retention was drastically improved, missionaries were encouraged, best practice was discovered through interaction and outside input, and one unreached people group was reached in Kenya.

It is hoped that these lessons learned in addition to the original paper that follows will assist other national church mission's programs consider avenues to develop more effective missions programs.

SUGGESTING A NEW MISSIONS PARADIGM FOR THE KENYA ASSEMBLIES

OF GOD AND EAST AFRICA SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Introduction

The challenge before the church in Kenya seems vast. How will the church be able to reach the twenty-five least reached peoples of Kenya?[2] Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG) is among the churches leading in outreach to the least reached tribes. But at times the task seems insurmountable. Considering the current strength, growing birth rate, and militant nature of Islam

in Kenya, one could easily become discouraged. Paul was also a missionary to unreached people groups. There is no reason to be discouraged in this century with the advance of Islam or any other challenge when we consider what the early apostles faced.

Look at the small band gathering in the Jerusalem behind locked doors. They had zero percent of the world's population converted. Every part of the world was unreached. They had no institutions, no finances, no defined strategy, and no national church to support the work. But they had a commission from their master. He had told them to wait for a promise. When they promise came, they had the power to accomplish that mission. Within a century they had taken the gospel to all known parts of the Roman world including three continents: Cyrene (present day Libya) (Acts 11:20) and Ethiopia (Acts 18:27) in North Africa, India in Asia[3], and Philippi (Acts 16:12), Rome (Acts 28:14), Illyricum (present day Albania and Yugoslavia) (Rom. 15:19) and likely Spain (Acts 15:23-24) in Europe.

Paul's third missionary journey was centered in Ephesus (present day Turkey). In a period of about two years from his base there his missionary team and new converts evangelized an entire Roman province stretching from Pergamum and Thyatira in the northwest to Colosse and Laodicea in the southwest, approximately 200 miles (or more than 300 kilometers). The missionary church planting movement was so successful that it was recorded, "This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia hear the word of the Lord…And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia" (Acts 19:10, 26). If the early band of apostles were undaunted by the task before them to reach the world, the church of Kenya can look with hope on the task before it.

The Missions Paradigms in the Kenya Assemblies of God

Over the four-decade history of the Assemblies of God in Kenya there have been philosophical and developmental shifts in the missions paradigms. The overarching paradigm is the indigenous church principles: self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. Within this paradigm there were developmental phases, which included paternalistic, classical indigenous church transitional period, partnership period and the present emerging period which could be called the gift placement period.

History of the Formation of the KAG

Dale Brown, an independent Pentecostal missionary, arrived in Kenya in the late 1960s[4] and began a work called the Kenyan Assemblies of God. He asked the Assemblies of God (A/G) mission (USA) to take up the work. In the 1972 the first missionaries of the A/G arrived in Kenya from Tanzania. They included Delmar Kingsriter, Jimmy Beggs, Jerry Spain, and others. The first KAG General Council was held in Kisumu in 1973 under a tent with about thirty in attendance.[5] "The Kenya Assemblies of God was registered on 16th October 1973."[6]

National churches often accuse missionaries of not instilling missions into the churches they planted. "It should be noted that the foreign missionaries did not inculcate a mission sending and support consciousness in the African Christian."[7] While the validity of this sentiment may be challenged generally, it is without any merit in the KAG. "During our third general Council in 1975, a call to Kenyan Missionaries was made and Rev. G.W. Njiri, Rev Joshua Songa and the late Simeon Agosa went to Maralal, Mombasa, Isiolo respectively with a mission offering of Kenya Shillings 7500/= raised at this council, given to them."[8] Evidently the founding Western missionaries did seek to "inculcate a mission sending and support consciousness" in the Kenya Assemblies of God through this early impetus on missions.

The Embryonic and Paternalist Paradigm (1969-1982)

The period from 1969 to 1972 may be called an embryonic period or evangelistic period prior to the coming of the organized mission from the USA. Beginning in 1972 until the hand over to the first full time indigenous general superintendent in 1982 can be called the paternalist period. The term paternalistic should not be misconstrued as a negative or derogatory term in this case, but literally the "father" period. During this period of the young church, the missionary by necessity acts as a father to bring the church to maturity. The missionaries served as general superintendents, at times pastors of local churches, Bible school directors and teachers, women's ministries directors, and nearly every position in the church. During this era the trajectory of the church was established. Churches were planted that were balanced with both the spiritual and held to true doctrine. Traditional missionary based churches (such as other denominations in Kenya) held to biblical doctrine but lacked the spiritual that many Kenyans desired. The African

Independent Churches (AIC) were deeply spiritual but lacked orthodox biblical doctrine. The KAG, like other Pentecostal churches in Kenya, were able to balance the pendulum.
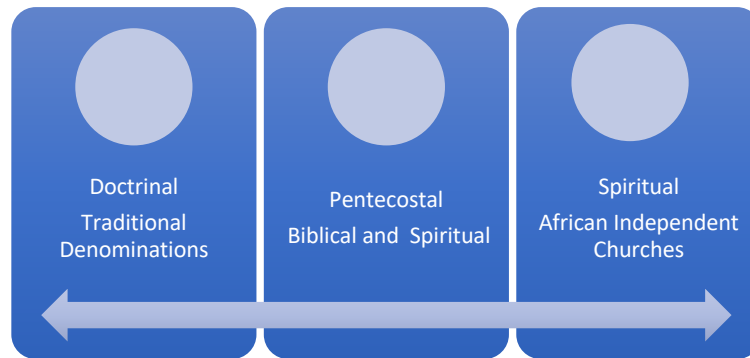

Figure A

The establishing of Bible schools during the first decade set the foundation for the next three decades. The Kisumu Pastoral Training Center and East Africa School of Theology (EAST) were established by 1979. These schools and the extension centers that came later have been the impetus for the theological strength and rapid growth of the KAG. Today the call for Bible school training continues as strong as ever. "Our training program is so important as we work toward our goal of four thousand churches…We call on our leaders to encourage the untrained pastors to join any of our fifteen (15) Bible School Centers."[9]

The Indigenous Church Paradigm (1982-2000)

A period roughly from 1982 until 2000 could be titled the classical indigenous church paradigm. This period begins with the election of the first Kenyan General Superintendent, Rev. Peter G. W. Njiri. The end of this period is marked by the mission handing EAST over to the national church. A long line of mission strategists developed what today we call the indigenous church principles. They include Henry Venn who coined the three self's: self-government, self-propagation, and self-support (1796-1873)[10], Rufus Anderson (1796-1880)[11], Anthony Norris Groves in Iran and India (1795-1853)[12], John Livingstone Nevius to China (1829-1893)[13], and Hudson Taylor (1832-1905)[14]. Roland Allen espoused and made famous the principles of indigenous church planting in 1912.[15] Alice Luce (1873-1955) may have been the first A/G missionary to write on the principles in a series of articles in the Pentecostal Evangel in 1921.[16] Melvin Hodges formalized the three-self principles for Pentecostal mission methods in 1953 with his book *The Indigenous Church*.[17] The catch phrases; self-government, self-propagation, and self-support, became the mantra of not only Assemblies of God mission but that of many other

Pentecostal as well as non-Pentecostal mission organizations. This was the paradigm in use during this period of the KAG. Bosch coined a fourth self, self-theologizing, in 1991,[18] which was after this period.

The Partnership Paradigm

The next stage in the KAG mission/national church relationship could be labeled the partnership paradigm. Morris Williams saw this as the next progression after the indigenous church principles were implemented successfully.[19] During the patriarchal phase the missionary is as a father and the national church is as an infant child. During the indigenous phase the missionary is as a wise guiding counselor and the national church is as a developing young adult with sovereignty but requiring and requesting assistance often. During the partnership phase, the national church has come of age and is capable of sustenance without the mission. The association with the mission continues due to mutual respect and the positive relationship and benefit that result.

For the KAG this phase is roughly from 2000 when EAST becoming a KAG institution until the KAG asked EAST to be led by a missionary vice chancellor in 2008. During the partnership phase the national church took the lead role in matters of church governance, finance, and educational direction. Although missionaries continued to serve on boards and other bodies, the lead positions were in the hands of the nationals. The national church requested that the head pastor of the international church, International Christian Center, be led by a missionary. This continued until 2006 when the church was turned over to a national for the first time.

The partnership included a heavy emphasis on the mission bringing funds for church plots and roofs for the rapid expansion of the KAG. This period also included a phasing back on missionary personnel and an intentional reduction in regular support at EAST. Originally all of the faculty members at EAST were missionaries without drawing salaries from the school. By the end of this period, only three of the sixteen full-time faculty members were missionaries, while salaries for thirteen faculty members and an additional thirty employees were the responsibility of the school through the national church.

The Gifting Paradigm

A new phase is emerging since 2008, which may be called the gifting paradigm. The paradigm did not emerge without philosophical struggle. A definition is in order. The gifting paradigm in mission/national church relations is a posture whereby the national church surveys all of the human resources available to it (both national and missionary) and selects the person best suited for the ministry or task. The people God has given to the church of Kenya are all seen as gifts from God to the KAG. The national leadership then selects the appropriate person for the appropriate task whether national or missionary.

This has been executed recently in the naming of a missionary to head the Kenya Assemblies of God Department of Mission (KAGDOM) committee and the appointment of a missionary to be the executive head (vice chancellor) of EAST. When these decisions were being enacted, some people, both missionaries and nationals, voiced concern that we were returning to the paternalistic paradigm. "Why are we placing missionaries back in these positions? Are there no nationals that can do the job? Are the missionaries taking authority once again?" The difference between the paternalistic model and the gifting paradigm is in the authority. The paternalistic paradigm places the missionary in authority. He runs the committee because another missionary has designated him to run the committee. He runs the Bible school because another missionary has designated him to run the Bible school. However, the gifting paradigm places the national in authority. A missionary may oversee a committee, but it is because the national church has designated him to run the committee. A missionary may be the vice chancellor of the Bible school, but it is because the national church has designated him to be the head. The selection ideally will be based on the gifts available to the national church, not based on whether someone is a missionary or a national.

Although very young in this phase and the results of how this phase will play out are unknown, it may have promise as a mission paradigm for multiple missions organizations working with a national church. The national church leadership, working with sister organizations from various countries, could utilize personnel according to their gifts to best facilitate the advancement of the kingdom of God in their jurisdiction.

Elements of the Missionary Pioneers

The second General Council of the Assemblies of God (USA) held in September 1914 "passed a resolution dedicating themselves and the movement to the greatest evangelism in the history of the church."[20] During this Council $10,000 was sent to the missionaries of the new movement.[21] The KAG had equal resolve and generosity sixty-one years later at the third General Council in Kisumu, Kenya when they three missionaries were sent out and 7500 Kenya Shillings was raised for their support.[22]

Organizations have verbalized goals for beginning church planting movements among least reached peoples. "Pioneers mobilizes teams to glorify God among unreached peoples by initiating church-planting movements in partnership with local churches."[23] "Our passion is to glorify God by planting churches that lead to movements among all Muslim peoples through apostolic teams in partnership with others who share this vision."[24] The elements of the early pioneers of the Kenya Assemblies of God marked them and are the foundation upon which the church is built today.

Spiritual Elements

Among the spiritual elements that marked the early missionaries to Kenya from the Assemblies of God were prayer, persistence, Pentecost, and progress. The early missionaries were people of prayer who led the young churches to pray. They were persistent as well. Against hardship in Africa, adversity to Pentecostalism, and antagonism during post-colonialism independence, the missionaries persisted and excelled in planting a church that would come to be the fastest growing denomination in the 1990s at thirty-eight percent annual growth.[25] Sixty years after the founding of the Assemblies of God (USA) the fires of Pentecost were still burning bright in her missionaries who instilled Pentecostal doctrine firmly in the KAG. This was critical to the growth of the church in Kenya. This brought together the spiritual desired by the Kenyan population as demonstrated by the appeal of the spiritual African Independent Churches while avoiding syncretism through solid Biblical doctrine. Progress was seen through the early vision of the missionaries to establish structures including the organization of a national church, districts, sections, and Bible schools for the training of ministers. From the first two schools in Kisumu and Nairobi, there have been added twelve other sites across the country.[26]

A Weakness in Missions: Fix the Sombo Problem

The KAG mission program has been enthusiastic and visionary, yet it has also met with numerous difficulties. The first three missionaries sent out in 1975 established works, which are contributing to this day to the growth of the KAG and are affecting reaching the least reached tribes of Kenya. The Isiolo/Maralal mission among the Samburu tribe now boasts a district with thirty-two churches in four sections.[27] The missionary to Mombasa, Rev. Joshua Songa, is now the district superintendent of forty-nine churches in seven sections[28] that is seeking to reach many among the Muslim tribes of the Coast Province.

The first foreign missionaries sent out from the KAG were Rev. John and Elizabeth Karanja who served in Malawi for several years with the Bible school in Lilongwe. An official department of the KAG was formed in 2000 call KAGDOM to facilitate missions. Missionaries were sent to Sudan and to locations in Kenya including Sombo and Hola.

One of the great challenges of recent is the funding of the Sombo project. The Sombo project was birthed out of prayer and concern for an unreached people group, the Watta. The project included an irrigation system, a primary school, a dispensary, and a police station. The funding to maintain this project had grown to where it consumed nearly all the annual income of the KAG mission giving. The executive committee of the KAG established an Ad Hoc committee to investigate the Sombo project with a directive to "fix or close" the project. This author has had the privilege of serving on the committee, which is actively pursuing solutions to not only make Sombo viable, but also increase the mission giving, sending, and focus in the KAG.

One of the results of this committee is a national church initiative to encourage all KAG adherents to give five Kenya shillings per month to missions. Another directive is to establish a school of mission for the training and sending of missionaries to the least reached tribes of Kenya and beyond. (This will be discussed in more detail below.)

Non-negotiable Characteristics

There have been several non-negotiable characteristics of the KAG. These could be identified as the core values of the church. They include doctrinal integrity, Pentecostal vitality, structural soundness, political neutrality, and a commitment to training. The KAG has insisted

that its ministers have sound doctrine. The church and its training institutions remain Pentecostal both in teaching and practice. The KAG has a working constitution, which guides its operations. The church leaders have taken a stand that ministers who run for political office must give up their ministerial credentials. In Kenya church leaders have often taken sides politically, which has provided beneficial until the party changes. The KAG has been identified as a church, which has remained neutral in political matters. This has marked it in a positive way. The KAG has placed a high priority and importance on the education of its ministers. This is verified through the fact that ministers cannot be licensed without a certain level of theological education, and the investment of the KAG toward the educational programs of the church.

A Biblical Paradigm?

Every program of the church must be evaluated in light of the Bible. Is the KAG following a Biblical paradigm? More specifically, is the KAG mission program following a Biblical paradigm? While those specializing in certain areas could consider specific aspects of the KAG structure, it is the opinion of this author that the KAG is following a Biblical paradigm.

Where was it non-Biblical?

Although not specifically addressed in scripture, there is one area of the KAG missions program that could be improved. The system of missions giving is primarily based on what could be called a "tax" system. (This will be discussed below in detail.)

Suggesting a New Paradigm for KAG Missions

Our Goal

A suggested goal statement for the Kenya Assemblies of God is: Launch viable indigenous church-planting movements in the twenty-five least reached people groups of Kenya. Definition of the statement is in order. Launch implies that there is presently no KAG indigenous church in the tribes listed. At least two of the tribes on the list (Samburu and Rendille) have a significant work already begun by the KAG. The remaining tribes the term launch is applicable. Even where a KAG church or two may exist within the bounds of the tribe, an indigenous church

planting movement is not present, the term launch is *apropos*. Viable refers to the ability to survive and thrive on its own. The future envisioned for these church-planting movements is that they will grow into KAG districts. The districts would have ongoing relationship with the national office as all present districts do. Viability means that the churches will be able to be self-supporting and produce indigenous ministers from among themselves that will be able to pastor the churches produced.

Indigenous church-planting movements means that although Kenyan missionaries may be used to evangelize the first converts, it will be a movement that is led by pastor's from within the people group. The pastors who lead the churches in the new districts may be trained as other KAG pastors are trained through the Kenya Assemblies of God Extension (KAGE) diploma program or through East Africa School of Theology (EAST). The goal is that the churches will be led not by those from other tribes, but ultimately by indigenous people.

The twenty-five least reached people groups of Kenya have been identified by Finish the Task. These tribes are identified because they have less than two percent Christian and "who without outside missionary assistance will not be evangelized as a tribe or people."[29] This is not to exclude other people groups that need greater gospel work. It is intended however to give focus to one aspect of the mission work of the KAG – least reach people groups within Kenya. Other valid needs exist for the KAG which are much broader than this focus including foreign missions, church planting within existing districts, urban missions, humanitarian ministries, university ministries, etc. The purpose of this goal is to give one specific focus with a measurable parameter for developing church planting movements among the least reached people groups.

Our Challenge

Our challenge is finding God's strategies, preparing God's laborers, and harnessing God's finances to accomplish God's desire. What is God's strategy for the KAG mission department, especially in reaching the least reached tribes of Kenya? How then does the KAG prepare laborers for fulfilling that strategy? A critical element is finding how to harness God's finances to accomplish the vision. Perhaps the reason some of the former KAG mission ventures have been recalled or closed is due to lack of finances. Finally, if these three challenges can be addressed properly, we can accomplish God's desire.

God's Desire

What is God's desire? The desire of the master (Abraham) was for his servant to go get a bride for his son, Isaac (Gen 24). The desire of the master (God) is for us to go get a bride for his son, Jesus, from every tribe, tongue, people and nation (Matt. 28:19, Eph. 5:27, Rev. 5:9, and 19:7). Within Kenya God's desire includes getting a bride from among the twenty-five least reached people groups. They are Arabs, Ariaal Rendille, Bajun, Boni, Borana, Chamus, Daasanach, Deaf, Digo, Dorobo, Gabbra, Garreh-Ajuran, Malakote, Munyoyaya, Nubi, Orma, Rendille, Sakuye, Samburu, Sanye, Shirazi, Somali, Swahili, South Asian, Wardei. There are many others who need to hear both inside and outside Kenya. A primary focus of KAGDOM is these people groups. North Africa and beyond seem to be the leaning after these Kenyan tribes.

The Approach

The model being proposed will be a Pentecostal, team, and flexible training approach as described below.

Pentecostal

If the phenomenal success of missions over the past 100 years has been through Pentecostal missions, how should missions be done in the next 100 years? The research of Synan has demonstrated that Pentecostal mission far exceeds similar evangelical mission work when it comes to churches planted and converts (see Figure B).[30] Many reasons could be given for this, but the reality is the consistent variable is Pentecost. The missionaries prepared by the KAG must be thoroughly Pentecostal.
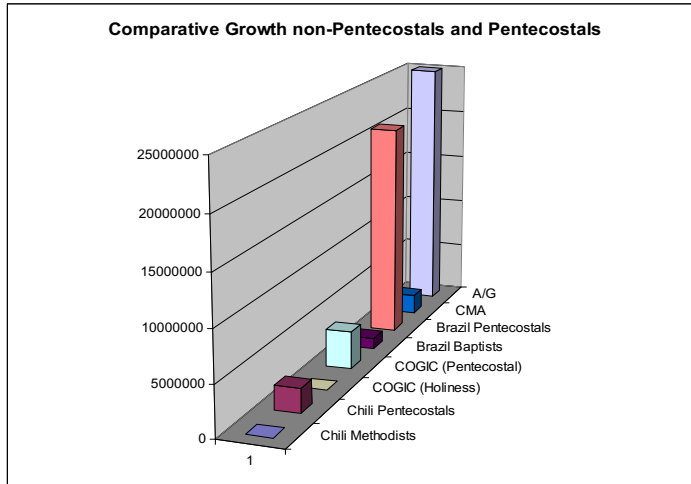
Figure B

Team

If Paul and the apostles did missionary church planting with teams, how should we plant churches? The teams could be made up of four to six members. Each member should demonstrate a desire to be a missionary. The team members can come from various educational levels, various skill sets, and have various gifts, but they must be team players and committed to the doctrine of the KAG. The team leader should have an apostolic[31] gift to develop church leaders, be able to lead a team, and have courage and wisdom.

Flexible

If every people group is unique, should we not use flexible approaches? Within the twenty-five people groups in focus there are various religions and cultural variables. Some would require a strict Muslim approach, while others a folk Muslim approach. Others will demand learning an animist approach, an urban approach, or various Eastern religious approaches including Hindu or Singh. A humanitarian model or a preaching model or a mission as business model may work better in one area and not in another. Finding the approach or model that works best within a particular people group or village is critical to the success of indigenous church planting within the tribe in this school of mission.

Training

How will we test the effectiveness of our training unless it is by the church planting movements begun? A key difference between this model and a traditional training model is that traditional training is front-loaded, while this model is ongoing. Typically, a student is training for four years in missions and then sent out for a four-year term. The missionary might return for a one-month time of refreshing, re-entry, or retraining. The value of the traditional method is to provide a heavy theoretical, theological, biblically trained person for mission work. A second value is the reduced cost as the missionary travels back to the base less often.

The ongoing training model is lighter on the front-end education, but provides much greater encouragement, development of best practice methodology, and provides greater opportunity for contact with supporters and fund-raising occasions. The cost of transportation is increased, but if the school of mission is closer to the field (such as in-country training) it may be sustainable. The model also gives greater opportunity for regular visits to supporting churches during ongoing training. Over the three years of the school of mission there are seven training sessions and six field sessions. The first training session is longer (approximately eight weeks) while the remaining sessions are one month each.

Four Elements of Training

Short-term training is followed by short-term field ministry then training again. Teams are brought back together frequently to 1) train, 2) encourage, 3) discover best practice and 4) raise funds and missions awareness in churches.

Formal and Informal Training

Ongoing formal, non-formal, and informal training will take place in seven sessions over a three-year period. Formal (organized, planned, budgeted, staffed, and deliberate teaching and learning[32]) education will take place through the structured classroom at the school of mission. Non-formal (deliberate education…functional knowledge needed for…life…rarely linked to the credentialing system[33]) education will be provided through relevant seminars provided to the missionaries. Informal training (a natural process of learning from surroundings, people, and

experiences[34]) will take place as the missionaries from the different teams interact in the classroom, but more importantly in the dining room, campus grounds, and dormitories.

Encourage

A primary purpose for ongoing interaction is to encourage the missionary church planters so that they will continue to victory. It is the intent of this school of mission that as missionary teams go to the field and return often to the school that they will sharpen each other through interaction. The failures of one team can be helped through the attempts and successes of another. The discouragement of one team can be turned around by the prayer commitment and encouragement of the other teams.

Best Practice

The discovery of best practice methods of evangelism and church planting of each team can be useful models or inspiration to the other teams. Discovering what works best in founding a church planting movement in a least reached people group will come through reflection, discussion, informal interaction, and prayer. Best practice may determine the team should enter through holistic means, school, medical, business, community health, water project, or life centers. Other tribes may receive the gospel best through open-air meetings, door-to-door, revival meetings, power encounter, or the Jesus film. Finding best practice for developing indigenous church planting movements are discovered in an atmosphere of safe dialog and growth within this school of mission.

The KAGDOM committee is committed to make indigenous church planting movements a priority. If there could be 60,000 converts among Buddhists in Cambodia;[35] if there could 100,000 converts among Hindus in India in eighteen years;[36] and if there could be 90,000 converts among Muslims of South Asia,[37] all lead by indigenous church planting movements, why not here and why not now? (See Appendix A).

Fund Raising and Missions Awareness

A sustainable supply of funds and laborers are key to the success of any national church mission's program.

Fund Raising Models Compared

The present system of missions giving is primarily based on what could be called a voluntary "tax" system. Every church is asked to give a certain portion of its income to the national mission program. This is a limiting system. A better system may be the faith promise system defined as individuals pledging periodically to give to missions through their local church mission program to missionaries through their national mission organization.

An example is a comparison between the Southern Baptist (a tax system) and Assemblies of God (a faith promise system) in the USA. There are 3100 Southern Baptist church members in the USA for every missionary on the field and there are 605 Assembly of God members in the USA for every missionary on the field.[38] While there may be other factors in these numbers, they serve to illustrate that in this case the faith promise system tends to give people greater opportunity to give to missions. In the faith promise system, every individual is challenged to give directly toward missions as God prompts them. A reward of the system is that it places missionaries in front of the congregation frequently to share missions.

An example of the de-motivation of the voluntary tax systems is as follows: A church member wants to give to a missionary. She puts 1000 Kenya shillings in the offering. The church gives 10% to the National Missions Department or 100 shillings. There are 10 missionaries who each get 10 shillings. She is discouraged from giving to missions because only 1% of what she gave goes to the missionary she wanted to support. On the contrary, the faith promise system provides motivation as follows: A church member wants to give to a missionary. She puts 1000 Kenya shillings in the offering. The church sends the 1000 to the National Missions Department. The National Missions Department takes out 5% for administrative costs. The missionary gets 950 shillings. She is encouraged to give to missions because 95% of what she gave goes to the missionary she wanted to support, and she knows her money is advancing the kingdom of God.

Support of Professionals

A department could be established to assist professionals (medical, educational, agricultural personnel, etc.) with securing support from organizations such as grant writing, NGO relations, etc.

The Formation of the School

      This author presented the concept of the school of mission at the KAGDOM meeting August 6, 2009. The committee recommended a that a school of mission should begin. The following minute was passed: "Training: The training is to begin in February 2010. Jeff and Miriam have been assigned to develop the curriculum for the first session and the future sessions." The scope and sequence were presented at this meeting (See Appendix B). On October 14, 2009, the following minute was entered: "Presentation: Jeff gave a PowerPoint presentation on the School of Missions. The Way Forward: Kevin, Miriam, and Jeff will work on curriculum. The committee will work on recruitment." The proposed curriculum and course descriptions are under development (See Appendix C). The curriculum will go through a committee process including missionaries and national church members.

      It is the intention of KAGDOM that the school of mission will begin February 2010 with three teams of about five members each. Four couples (eight people) have already been identified and recruitment of the other members is to be undertaken in the next few months.

APPENDIX A

Three examples of indigenous church planting movements:

60,000 Converts Among Buddhists in Cambodia:

In Cambodia another missionary church planting movement has seen success. R. Bruce Carlton narrates his journey as Baptist missionary in Cambodia.[39] He believed strongly that the missionary should not pastor a church, so he invested in training those church planters God would send to him. "If you must plant every church yourself, in a good year you may be able to plant three or four churches. However, if in that one year you multiply yourself in the lives of three or four men, they may be able to start three or four times more churches in one year."[40] He personally mentored eleven people who were trained to plant churches and train others. The first church was planted in 1992 and by 2002 they grew to 260 congregations.[41] "The Protestant church in Cambodia had seen one of the fastest church growths in modern history. The turning point for Christianity in the country began in the 1990's. By 1999, the number of Protestant believers had risen from 600 to more than 60,000."[42]

100,000 Converts Among Hindus in India:

In a period of eighteen years (1985-2003) the Bible school through non-formal training developed 502 missionaries who planted 2345 churches with a total membership of 108,379.[43]

90,000 Converts Among Muslims of South Asia:

The C.A.M.E.L. method and the surrounding story have documented a very successful indigenous church planting movement in a South Asia country.[44] The movement was the result of a boy named Abdul who had a hunger for God. His family, the imams, and his village shunned him. Through his hunger for God and a chance meeting with a missionary Abdul became a Christian. His family beat him and wanted to kill him. His mother helped him to escape. In the capital city he studied and received his undergraduate and master's degree. He studied the Bible and the Qur'an.[45]

When he returned to the village his mother was dead and his family still rejected him. A schoolmate named Bilal welcomed him. He is seen as a "person of peace" as described in Luke 10:6. Bilal became his first convert and became an active discipler of the new converts.[46] By 1996 Abdul's group was claiming 20,000 converts from Islam when Missionary Kevin Greeson first met him.[47] Greeson observed the church planting and evangelism methods of Abdul's group. He began a similar movement, which grew to 8000 converts from Islam in about four and a half years.[48] By 2002 a study found at least 90,000 baptized Muslim background believers between the two groups.[49]

APPENDIX B

<div align="center">Scope and Sequence for School of Mission</div>

The following may be used as a guide for the sessions and topics in the scope and sequence of the training:[50]

Sessions and Topics (Session 1, Year 1 – Pre-Field, 3 Month Session)
1. Introduction to the Program
2. The Call
3. Research on the target people group
4. Survival skills
5. Team dynamics
6. Goals defined
7. Introduction to Islam
8. Fund raising techniques and strategies
9. Language acquisition
10. Preparation for culture shock
11. The Pentecostal Missionary in the Twenty-first Century
12. Finding a person of peace

Goals and Assignments (Field Assignment 1, Year 1 – 3 Month Session)
1. Identify a person of peace in the community
2. Complete a cultural study
3. Identify ways of bridging into the community
4. Reflect on how a church community might uplift the community
5. Receive an invitation to come back to the community
6. Language acquisition (may not connect with other linguistic and cultural groups)

Sessions and Topics (Session 2, Year 1, 1 Month Session)
1. Write a report of the mission (include cultural analysis, ministry recommendation, understanding of social structure, decision making process, religious beliefs, social needs, and economic conditions a detailed map of the village, village activities and social groups)
2. Presentation of reports orally to other groups and facilitators (feedback is to be given that will allow for the groups to encourage, learn from each other, and bring collaborative learning for all groups)
3. Evaluation of team dynamics, gifts, and needs of community (realignment of teams as necessary)
4. Mission case studies (questions of syncretism, the question of the missionary as church planter verses the missionary as facilitator of a church planting movement)
5. Strategies for developing a church plant

Goals and Assignments (Field Assignment 2, Year 1 – 3 Month Session)
1. The ultimate goal is "evangelism and making disciples to develop a church-planting movement among the least reached population"[51]
2. Use the strategies developed by which they identified ways of bridging into the community to conduct evangelism
3. Continue language acquisition and cultural assimilation

    4.   Continue building relationships with the people of the community

Sessions and Topics (Session 3, Year 1, 1 Month Session)

1. Write a report of the most resent mission (include items above and goals for this mission)
2. Presentation of reports orally to other groups and facilitators (feedback is to be given as in previous session)
3. Advanced concepts in cross-cultural communication
4. Develop contextual church planting strategy for the first church
5. Develop mentorship training strategies
   Holiday (End of Year 1, 1 Month Holiday Leave)

Goals and Assignments (Field Assignment 3, Year 2 – 5 Month Session)

1. Continue teaching on evangelism and making disciples
2. Begin mentorship
3. Continue using bridge strategies, or adjust strategies as appropriate
4. Continue language acquisition and cultural assimilation
5. Discuss strategies of contextual church planting with disciples and get their feedback
6. The goal of this session is for local believers to plant a local contextual community of God

Sessions and Topics (Session 4, Year 2, 1 Month Session)

1. Write a report of the most resent mission (include items above and goals for this mission)
2. Presentation of reports orally to other groups and facilitators (feedback is to be given as in previous sessions)
3. Advanced concepts in cultural social structure
4. Develop a strategy for a church planting of the next group of churches

Goals and Assignments (Field Assignment 4, Year 2 – 4 Month Session)

1. Continue mentorship
2. Encourage local leaders to teach on evangelism and making disciples
3. Continue using bridge strategies, or adjust strategies as appropriate
4. Continue language acquisition and cultural assimilation
5. Discuss strategies of contextual church planting movement with disciples getting their feedback
6. The goal of this session is for local believers to form a network of contextual churches

Sessions and Topics (Session 5, Year 2, 1 Month Session)

1. Write a report of the most resent mission (include items above and goals for this mission)
2. Presentation of reports orally to other groups and facilitators (feedback is to be given as in previous sessions)
3. Advanced concepts in contextualization
4. Discuss the progress on the strategy for a church planting movement and what adjustments are needed
5. Develop a strategy for the development of contextual church government and leadership selection and structure for the church planting movement
   Holiday (End of Year 2, 1 Month Holiday Leave)

Goals and Assignments (Field Assignment 5, Year 3 – 5 Month Session)
1. Continue mentorship
2. Encourage local leaders to teach on evangelism and making disciples
3. Continue using bridge strategies, or adjust strategies as appropriate
4. Continue language acquisition and cultural assimilation
5. Discuss the progress on the strategy for a church planting movement and what adjustments are needed
6. The goal of this session is to develop a strategy for the development of contextual church government and leadership selection and structure for the church planting movement

Sessions and Topics (Session 6, Year 3, 1 Month Session)
1. Write a report of the most resent mission (include items above and goals for this mission)
2. Presentation of reports orally to other groups and facilitators (feedback is to be given as in previous sessions)
3. Advanced concepts in indigenous church principles
4. Develop a strategy for the indigenization of the work

Goals and Assignments (Field Assignment 6, Year 3 – 4 Month Session)
5. Continue mentorship
6. Encourage local leaders to teach on evangelism and making disciples
7. Continue using bridge strategies, or adjust strategies as appropriate
8. Continue language acquisition and cultural assimilation
9. Discuss strategies of indigenous church principles with disciples and get their feedback
10. The goal of this session is for local believers to align leadership and governance with solid indigenous church principles

Sessions and Topics (Session 7, Year 3, 1 Month Session)
1. Write a final report on the three-year mission. This report will be combined with the reports of the other groups to form a book. Each team will collaborate to write their section of the book. The chapters will include 1) a description of the people group with statistics, maps, culture, stories of origin, beliefs, rites of passage, etc. 2) a description of the social, economic, and spiritual condition found by the team upon entry, 3) the bridges found and utilized within the culture and their effectiveness in evangelism, 4) the church planting strategy and how it evolved through the three years of the interaction, 5) the present state of the church in the people group, 6) lessons learned from the interaction and recommendations for other missionaries, and 7) the recommendations of the team future of the church planting movement in the people group.
2. Presentation of reports orally to other groups, facilitators, denominational leaders and the public
3. An evaluation of the program as a whole with recommendations for adjustments to be made for the future of the program
4. Graduation Ceremony

Holiday (End of Year 3, 1 Month Holiday Leave)

APPENDIX C

Curriculum

The following are the proposed courses and course descriptions for the school of missions:

Introduction to School of Mission: This course will introduce the school of mission including philosophy of the program, discussion on "the call", and practical matters such as schedule, methods of operation, student expectations, etc. The goals of the program and individual teams will be defined. Included in the philosophy will be discussion on the role of a missionary indigenous church-planting mentor as opposed to becoming a pastor. The concept of the church as an element of uplifting a community will also be studied.

Research: This course is designed to provide guidelines on how to conduct research among a target people group and how to record the research in an acceptable format. Cultural anthropology methods will be studied. The outcome of the research is intended for publication to contribute to the body of knowledge available for the people group especially for purposes of prayer, evangelization, and church planting. The concept of "bridging" into the community (What elements of the culture might bridge individuals to the gospel?) will be studied.

Survival Skills: This course is specifically designed to prepare the missionary to thrive in the region he/she will be living. Proficiency for survival in the areas of village life, cooking, mechanics, carpentry, agricultural, and medicine will be the expected outcome.

Team Dynamics: This course will explore team dynamics as they relate to mission teams in indigenous church planting among unreached people groups. Leaders and followers relations will be examined. Conflict resolution will be studied. Team goals and realization of vision will be evaluated. The course will implement theory as well as field dependent activities.

Introduction to Islam:[52] This course is an introductory study of Islam, including its beliefs, practices, and present status as a world religion. The history of Islam is summarized, and key terms are defined. In the final unit, the author contrasts key beliefs of Islam with Christianity and offers practical guidelines for effective Christian witness to Muslims.

Fund Raising Techniques and Strategies: This course will explore various methods of missions fund raising such as the tax model, the external donor model and the faith promise model. The course will have a very practical element through assigning the missionaries to schedule services, prepare and rehearse presentations, and begin raising funds for the mission. The expected outcome is that the missionary will raise funds to go to the field and maintain the intended ministry.

Language Acquisition: This course will examine current theories on language acquisition within a new language community. Missionaries will be challenged to make language acquisition a priority as a way to understand culture and develop positive relationships with the people.

Preparation for Culture Shock: This course is intended to prepare the student for culture shock on the mission field. Elements of cross-cultural communication will be presented. Coping strategies and emotional possibilities will be discussed.

The Pentecostal Missionary in the Twenty-first Century: This course will survey the importance of Pentecostal doctrine and practice in missions. The course will look at how

Pentecostalism has affected missions, evangelism, and church growth in history. A unit on current literature on Pentecostal doctrine and defense will be presented. The focus will be on how encouraging new converts and establishing churches to be Pentecostal will bring the best results in any people group.

Finding a Person of Peace: This course will explore recent literature on the concept of finding a person of people within a community as an avenue through which evangelism can take place.

Research Writing Projects: This course will require students to formalize field research into written research. This report will include cultural analysis, ministry recommendations, understanding of social structure, decision-making process, religious beliefs, social needs, economic conditions, village activities, and social groups. A detailed map of the village will also be required. This course and project will be ongoing over the three-year program. Included in the course will be presentation of oral reports before classmates and facilitators. Feedback will be given that will allow for the groups to encourage, learn from each other, and bring collaborative learning to all groups.

Team Dynamics Follow-up: This course is designed to evaluate the team dynamics on the field. The gifts of individual team members and how they relate to the team will be discussed. The needs of the communities will be discussed in light of the teams. Realignment of the teams will be made as deemed best for the fulfillment of the program goals. This course will be ongoing over the three-year program.

Spiritual Warfare in Animistic-Based Cultures: This course will explore Biblical spiritual warfare and how it relates to animistic cultures. The perception of the interaction of the spiritual world in the physical world will be studied. Special attention will be given to how Pentecostal doctrine and practice is effective in animistic-based cultures. Signs and wonders as a God given gift for reaching the unreached in the New Testament will be studied.

Strategies of Church Planting: This course is designed to examine the best practice models for church planting among least reached people groups. Special emphasis will be given to developing indigenous church-planting movements. Mission case studies will be employed which will look at questions of syncretism, missionary as church-planter verses the missionary as facilitator of a church planting movement. Evangelism techniques will be discussed with a goal of finding methods that work in the communities targeted.

Advanced Concepts in Cross-Cultural Communication: This course is designed to help the student master advanced concepts in Cross-Cultural Communications including absolutism and relativism, syncretism and assimilation, positive, negative, and neutral cultural aspects in light of the Bible.

Contextual Church Planting Strategies: This course will explore various current theories on contextual church planting strategies and evaluate which strategies are most appropriate within the context of the target people group. Careful evaluation will be made to determine that the contextualization is both biblical and appropriate to the people group.

Mentorship Training Strategies: This course will focus on training the missionary to mentor leaders and church planters to mentor others. The principles of 2 Timothy 2:2 will be explored, implemented, and applied to the student's context. Emphasis will be placed on the missionary being a servant leader and role model from whom the indigenous church planter can learn.

Advanced Concepts in Cultural Social Structure: This course will build on the earlier courses in research, culture shock and cross-cultural interpretation focusing on group structures within the society. The student will analyze why people act and react the way they do within the group. How different groups relate such as leaders and followers, husbands and wives, chiefs and elders, teachers, and children, will be considered. Special observation will be made as to how these structures and interactions effect evangelism and church planting will be considered.

Developing a Church Network: This course begins to explore the leap from planting a single church, to developing a church network (a district). The course will look at ecclesiastical structure, church network models, leadership relations, conflict management on a multi-church level, and relationship to a larger organization (national church).

Advanced Concepts in Contextualization: This course will discuss the difficult questions of contextualization such as what elements of culture are positive, negative, and neutral. Major attention will be given to the question, "How does a missionary encourage an indigenous group of new believers determine for themselves what the Bible says about their cultural elements?" Tools and guidelines for answering this question will be discussed.

Advanced Concepts in Indigenous Church Principles: This course goes beyond indigenous church principles. How does the missionary and mission planted church relate to each other after the three self's are in place? Is the church's understanding of self-propagating limited to evangelism within their people group, or does it envision missions to other least reached tribes? Does the fourth self, "self-theologizing" have a place in missions today?

Strategies of Indigenization of Church Network: This course seeks to synthesize the principles of the indigenous church, contextualization, and networking to developing the structure and leadership for a district of churches. The desire is that a network of churches will mature to the level that they can be a self-sustaining district interacting with the national church as a full contributing member. The district could develop a vision of seeing their people group a "Christian" people group.

Final Project Research and Writing: This course is designed to give practical guidelines to concluding the writing of the three-year mission project. The written project will be a publishable document providing new and valuable insight into the people group encountered.

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[1] Philip Kitoto, Transforming a Denomination to Change a Nation, Nairobi: Kenya Assemblies of God, 2019, p. 43.

[2] Finish the Task; an interdenominational movement in Kenya has identified twenty-five Least Reach Peoples in Kenya. *The Unfinished Task: Profiles of Kenya's Least Reached Peoples*, Nairobi: ACM FTT Africserve (Africa Center for Missions Finnish the Task), 2004. Another group identify tribal groupings differently. Joshua Project (JP) identifies thirty-five least reached people groups. The primary difference is that JP subdivides some of the groups of the FTT listing such as Swahili. FTT lists Swahili as one group. JP lists Swahili-Bajuni, Swahili-Zanzibari, and Swahili-Coastal. Joshua Project, Colorado Springs, CO: US Center for World Missions, Kenya Statistics, http://www.joshuaproject.net/countries.php (accessed 10 June 2009).

[3] "Eusebius states…that the [India] church was established in the first century by the apostle *Thomas*." J. Herbert Kane, *A Global View of Christian Missions: From Pentecost to the Present*, Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), 12.

[4] Different dates exist for Dale Brown's starting the church in Kenya. An article titled, *Christianity and Churches in Africa*, http://pds95.cafe.daum.net/attach/15/cafe/2008/09/18/12/14/48d1c7b24e9d1 (accessed 21 July 2009), places the entry date in 1967. Afe Adogame, "Africa, East," *Encyclopecia of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, Stanley M. Burgess, ed. New York: Routledge, 2006, 3, states, "The Kenyan (sic) Assemblies of God was founded in 1969 by Dale Brown, an independent Pentecostal missionary." These dates may be reconciled as the first date is his arrival and the second date being the establishing of the church organization.

[5] KAG website, www.kag.or.ke (accessed 20 July 2009).

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[23]Pioneers, 2004, "Mission and Purpose," http://www.pioneers.org (accessed February 14, 2004), quoted in Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2005, 263.

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[27]*Decade of the Holy Spirit: Kenya Harvest 2009* (Nairobi: Kenya Assemblies of God, 2009), 34.

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[29] *The Unfinished Task: Profiles of Kenya's Least Reached Peoples*, Nairobi, Kenya: ACM FTT Africserve (Africa Center for Missions Finnish the Task), 2004, vi.

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[31]The term apostolic has a wide range of meaning today. For purposes of this paper the explanation of Johnson will be accepted. "Apostolic function as missionary identity takes on paradigmatic status because it acts as a master rubric for all that we do. It covers why we do mission (for the sake of His name), where we do it (where Christ is not known), what we do (proclaim Christ and plant churches that live under God's rule), and how we do it (by the leading and power of the Spirit, with signs and wonders confirming the Word)." Alan Johnson, *Apostolic Function: The Paradigm of Missionary Identity: J. Philip Hogan World Missions Series Monograph Vol 1* (Springfield, MO: Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, n.d.), 27-28.

[32]Michael J. Anthony, *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 121.

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[35]R. Bruce Carlton, *Amazing Grace: Lessons on Church-Planting Movements from Cambodia*, second edition, (No City Given): Radical Obedience Publishing, 2004.

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[39]R. Bruce Carlton, *Amazing Grace: Lessons on Church-Planting Movements from Cambodia*, second edition, (No City Given): Radical Obedience Publishing, 2004.

[40]Ibid., 146.

[41]Ibid., 130.

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[43]Paul Gupta and Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Breaking Tradition to Accomplish Vision: Training Leaders for a Church-Planting Movement*, Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2006, 39.

[44]Kevin Greeson, *The Camel: How Muslims are Coming to Faith in Christ*, Arkadelphia, AR: WIGTake Resources.

[45]Ibid., 23-26.

[46]Ibid., 26-30.

[47]Ibid., 33.

[48]Ibid., 42.

[49]Ibid., 43.

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Towards a Missiological Approach to Carceral Ministry

Jonathan Cantarero[*]

Abstract

The United States criminal justice system impacts millions of people every day. There are over two million people incarcerated, over four million people in community supervision programs such as parole and probation, over one million victims of crime annually and millions more employed in law enforcement, court operations, corrections, legal services, and reentry programs.[1] Although Christians have long recognized the need to minister to these individuals, there has been little focus on developing what we might call a theology of carceral ministry.[2] In this paper, I discuss the potential for a missiological approach to carceral ministry grounded in the indigenous church principle. First, I overview the criminal justice system and current ministries within that system. Next, I outline the basic elements of the indigenous church principle. I then discuss the benefits of applying the indigenous church principle to carceral contexts. Finally, I conclude by noting some practical limitations of such a proposal.

Introduction

I am a former criminal prosecutor. I am also a Christian. Over the years I have reflected deeply on how the church should operate within the carceral context to build up those who have oftentimes been forgotten (prisoners), neglected (victims), and/or misunderstood (correctional staff) by society—indeed, even by the church. This paper represents, in part, the

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[*] The author is the Co-Founder and Director of the Legal Navigator Program at La Cosecha Community Center in Hempstead, New York, a faith-based ministry that provides legal resources to the immigrant community on Long Island. The author also serves on the Board of Directors of the Central American Refugee Center, a non-profit providing direct legal services to immigrants on Long Island. The author previously served as a criminal prosecutor with the Manhattan District Attorney's Office and is current a MATS student at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary.

fruits of that reflection, and places a particular emphasis on practical steps that the church can take to bring about Christ-centered change within the criminal justice system.

The Criminal Justice System

In the United States, the criminal justice system operates at the federal, state, and local levels. At each level, the government is tasked with supervising individuals serving sentences for criminal offenses. The government exercises this role in two contexts: facilities (prison and jail) and communities (parole and probation).[3] In this paper, I use the term "carceral ministry" to encompass all actors within the carceral community—not only those who are inmates and under community supervision, but also other actors in the criminal justice system, such as victims, correctional staff, and community partners.[4]

Carceral Ministry to Defendants

Defendants who are inmates in facilities have access to chaplains and support staff for spiritual formation and growth. While chaplains should be commended for their work, several practical limitations exist which hinder their effectiveness. First, chaplains are employees of the government, not the church. Indeed, chaplains are hired as part of the prison staff and are thus trained, first and foremost, as correctional workers.[5] As such, chaplains naturally serve in competing roles as prison employees against being prisoner advocates. For example, while a chaplain may offer counseling to defendants under the privacy of clergy-penitent privilege, the chaplain may also feel compelled to disclose certain aspects of those conversations as employees of the prison, especially when a prisoner conveys the presence of an imminent risk of harm to themselves or others. Similarly, while chaplains may seek to develop trust and rapport with inmates, that confidence is often undercut by institutional policies, such as the requirement in some facilities for chaplains to carry pepper spray.[6]

Second, chaplains generally do not reflect the communities they serve. According to the most recent available data, the overwhelming majority of state prison chaplains are male (85%), white (70%), middle-aged (82%, 50 or older), and graduate degree holders (62%). Most inmates, in contrast, lack a college education (87.3%), are under 45 years old (68%),

and are only nominally majority white (57.9%).[7] From the defendant's perspective, such stark demographic disparity engenders additional suspicion and reservation towards chaplains, further impeding any progress that defendants could make. From the chaplain's perspective, the question arises whether that person can meaningfully relate to the prison populations served.

Distinct from defendants in facilities, defendants in community programs enjoy relatively greater access to religious support than their counterparts in prison. Individuals on parole and probation are not limited to the chaplain staff who are employed by correctional institutions and are thus at liberty to attend churches, serve under pastors, and fellowship with communities of their choosing, all more easily. As one might suspect, those in community programs naturally gravitate towards churches in communities that reflect their own backgrounds. This does not mean that defendants in such programs are without obstacles or barriers to (re)establishing their faith; rather, it simply means that their accessibility to appropriately tailored religious support is greater than it is for inmates confined to prisons.

In addition to these traditional religious resources—chaplains on the inside and churches on the outside—a third group exists which perhaps provides the greatest source of spiritual support to both groups of defendants: volunteer faith-based organizations. In the age of mass incarceration where states have reduced or eliminated funding for job training and educational programs, volunteer faith-based prison ministries have grown exponentially throughout the country.[8] Educational institutions such as the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, which has over twenty extension sites, offer college degrees in prison as well as a myriad of programs specialized in spiritual formation.[9] Likewise, non-profit organizations such as Prison Fellowship, Kairos Prison Ministry, and Horizon Prison Initiative support not only prisoners but also their families, the correctional staff, and the victims of crime through ministry, counseling, education, job training, and re-entry services.[10] As discussed further below, these programs are integral towards developing a holistic vision for carceral ministry.

Limitations on Religious Exercise

Notwithstanding the availability of religious support in and outside of prison, defendants seeking to exercise their faith within the criminal justice system must operate in a structure of controlled freedom. For inmates in facilities, federal and state laws generally prohibit government infringement on the exercise of religion. In 2005, for example, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that federal law prohibited an Ohio prison from imposing a "substantial burden on prisoners' religious exercise," unless the burden furthered a "compelling government interest."[11] In 2015, the Supreme Court applied that precedent in determining that an Arkansas prison could not enforce a "grooming policy" that would prohibit a Muslim inmate from growing a one-half inch beard for religious reasons.[12] Yet, despite these protections, inmates still face severe restrictions in practicing their faith. For example, inmates must generally request and obtain approval to meet with a chaplain, secure religious books, wear religious clothing, and partake in a religious diet. Within the state jail system, a survey for over 700 chaplains reported that requests for religious texts are denied up to 17% of the time and requests to meet with faith leaders are denied up to 29% of the time.[13] My purpose here is not to question the policy rationale behind these limitations but simply to shed light on the practical limitations inmates face to practicing their faith within the criminal justice system.

Defendants under community supervision face a distinct set of barriers in exercising their faith. Probation curfews are commonplace and can significantly limit one's ability to attend church services, vigils, conferences, and retreats. Violent offenders in many states have limited access to the Internet, possessing an email address, and even cell phones, which may hinder their communication with a local church as well as their spiritual growth. Beyond those points, repeat offenders are frequently granted supervised release on the condition that they move away from the hometown that led them to a life of crime. This stipulation is particularly common in drug cases. While the purpose of this last requirement is to insulate defendants from the cycle of recidivism, it also runs the risk of closing them off from faith-based support that might be familiar to them. Consider the following standard parole condition in New York:

> A releasee will not be in the company of or fraternize with any person he knows to have a criminal record or whom he knows to have been adjudicated a youthful offender except for accidental encounters in public places, work, school or in any other instance with the permission of his parole officer.[14]

Under this requirement, defendants who return to their hometown following a period of incarceration can have their parole revoked merely by contacting a childhood friend who also happens to have a criminal record. Worse yet, defendants might unwittingly violate parole by attending a church filled with other ex-offenders. Such stringent requirements effectively require parolees to relocate to avoid reincarceration and attended churches with no members of similar backgrounds. Again, the point here is not to question these regulations but simply to recognize the circumstances that defendants face because of their involvement with the criminal justice system.

Ministry to Other Actors

Up to this point we have focused exclusively on one actor within the criminal justice system: defendants. Indeed, access to chaplaincy services in prison is generally limited to defendants serving sentences. What this point means, however, is that analogous services are not commonly available to victims of crime, correctional staff, and community partners.[15] This defendant-exclusive approach to chaplaincy within prison is problematic for several reasons. First, the approach closes off opportunities to incorporate faith-based restorative justice practices anchored in the biblical principles of forgiveness, redemption, and restoration, because such programs require the participation of other individuals in addition to the defendant. Second, the degree to which faith-based groups outside of prison are prepared and capable of dealing with the stress and trauma associated is with one's involvement in the criminal justice system, particularly for victims of crime, remains an open question. Thus, victims of crime have much to gain from engaging in restorative justice programs that bring them in direct contact with those who have been accused, convicted, and sentenced for crimes. While this is certainly a challenging proposal, it is precisely for this reason that the church, guided by the Holy Spirit, must maintain a strong presence in the carceral context. As I will argue below, a missiological approach to carceral ministry

grounded in the indigenous church principle may serve as a launching point to address these concerns.

The Indigenous Church Principle

A missiological approach to carceral ministry makes sense given the strong connections between carceral ministry and traditional missions. In the traditional sense, both forms require the church to move from one place to another. Both require learning new customs, cultures, and traditions. Both have inherent risks and limitations. Both require contextualizing the gospel to meet the needs of the people being served. And both must be open to serving not merely one group but the entire community as well. In the same way that missionaries to the Middle East minister to both men and women, rich and poor, so too should carceral missionaries include defendants as well as other actors within the criminal justice system. And, just as missionaries to Latin America convey themes of hope and liberty in expressing the gospel, so too should carceral missionaries express the Gospel through similar themes of empowerment. The question remains, however, what missionary model best fits within this vision. While several models have significant merit, I argue that the indigenous church principle allows for a holistic approach to carceral ministry that fosters a space for authentic self-empowerment at the individual level as well as a collective harmony at the community level.

The indigenous church principle can be summarized by the three-self formula which calls on missionaries to establish churches that are self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting. This formula arose in the nineteenth century largely in reaction to the growing paternalism of Western missionaries existing and serving within non-Western or "indigenous" churches. During this period, Western missionaries largely mimicked the authoritative approaches of Western politics towards non-Western countries. For example, all too often Western missionaries would establish churches in non-Western countries only to install their own leaders, impose their own Western customs and practices, control all funding, and direct all administrative activities. Unsurprisingly, and as a direct result of this paternalism, newly established churches frequently fell into a cycle of dependence on

Westerners for leadership, direction, and money in ways that mirrored the political and economic dependence of foreign nations on Western superpowers.

In response to this Western paternalism, missionary pioneers such as Rufus Anderson, Henry Venn, and John Livingston Nevius called for a new missionary model that empowered rather than subjugated indigenous churches in the mission field. Anderson, for example, recognized that churches in the New Testament had their own leaders even in the early stages of the church-planting process.[16] Viewing this New Testament paradigm as normative for the contemporary church, Anderson grew concerned with paternalistic leadership models in the mission field and sought to ensure that Western missionaries did not merely establish churches but also trained and installed indigenous leaders as well. Venn, in turn, focused largely on the importance of financial self-support.[17] In that regard, he counseled Western missionaries to promote a spirit of self-responsibility and self-support in newly-established churches so that they too could become fully and confidently autonomous.[18] Nevius developed the views of Anderson and Venn with what is commonly known as the "Nevius Plan."[19] For example, Nevius rejected the traditional model of using foreign funds at the beginning stages of a missionary endeavor, and instead stressed the importance of financial independence and self-reliance at the onset of each missionary project.[20]

While the indigenous church principle, as embodied by the three-selfs formula, grew primarily out of the Western missionary movement, it was eventually promoted and embraced everywhere from China and South Korea to Africa and Latin America.[21] The indigenous church principle also crossed denominational lines, perhaps finding its strongest expression within the Pentecostal movement of the twentieth century. In 1921, Alice Luce, an Anglican-turned-Pentecostal missionary from Britain, wrote a three-part series for *Pentecostal Evangel* that explained the three self-formula through the lens of Paul's missionary journeys.[22] That same year, the General Counsel for the Assemblies of God—the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world—issued a missionary statement declaring that it would actively seek "to establish self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing native churches."[23] Several decades later, Melvin Hodges, a Methodist-turned-Pentecostal from the United States, authored a series of influential books discussing the indigenous

church principle from a more robust theological perspective.[24] Unsurprisingly, with the tradition's shared emphasis on missions, Pentecostalism in general, alongside the Assemblies of God in particular, remain two of the fastest growing religious movements in the world today.[25]

Hodges provides a useful rubric for understanding the three selfs-formula as well as the indigenous church principle. For Hodges, the element of self-government is the most important because it serves as the organizing principle for all three selfs.[26] In this regard, Hodges argues that local churches do not need foreign missionaries as pastors because locals should be fully capable of governing their congregations, spreading the gospel message, and controlling their financing. For Hodges, however, self-government extends beyond merely appointing officials, as it also means agreeing on fundamental beliefs, developing policies and procedures, and developing adequate plans for the departure of Western missionaries.[27] Next in importance is the concept of self-propagation. As Hodges explains in no uncertain terms, "[a] church that does not propagate itself will soon die."[28] Here, the indigenous church is seen as the best medium for evangelism. This is because Hodges sees missionaries as essentially evangelists who bring the gospel to a new area. If the indigenous believers are truly regenerated, then they will not only have a passionate desire to share their faith, but also their neighbors will be more receptive to hearing the gospel from them as opposed to foreign missionaries. Ideally, this process will repeat itself until an entire region is evangelized. Finally, Hodges sees the third concept, self-supporting, as the means of accomplishing the prior two objectives.[29] In that regard, Hodges views self-supporting churches as a concept that is firmly rooted in Scripture. The New Testament paints a picture of all believers tithing, with none being too poor to participate. Examples abound, from the generosity of the Church in Philippi (2 Cor. 8:2–3) to the flexible standard of the Church in Antioch, where everyone gave according to their means (Acts 11:31). In short, an authentically indigenous church should be able to support itself financially, without the aid of an outside missionary enterprise.

Discussion

Modern approaches to prison ministry—a concept that is narrower in scope than carceral ministry—primarily address chaplain ministry towards the prison population. Within these parameters, prison ministry generally operates within two frameworks. First, some view prison ministry as essentially an application of liberation theology.[30] As prison chaplain Dennis W. Pierce explains,

> Liberation theologies offer liberation from the dependence system that was established during the centuries of Spanish rule and North American economic dominance. The dependence system is considered by liberation theology to be economically, politically, and culturally repressive. [Liberation theology] is designed to move the poor and oppressed out of their dependency model.[31]

Pierce extends this liberative theology in his own work with the prison population through five basic themes: (1) God liberates, (2) God loves, (3) God does justice, (4) God makes a covenant, and (5) Christ is our neighbor.[32] Each of these themes support the overarching goal of liberating the prisoner from the oppressive nature of the criminal justice system. Notably, when Pierce speaks of "justice," he is referring to justice primarily for the prisoner.[33]

A second view sees prison ministry through the lens of restorative justice. Howard Zehr, the father of the modern restorative justice movement in the United States, argues that the biblical picture of justice focuses not on retribution as historically understood, but on restoration through the concept of *shalom*. For Zehr, the question of whether the Bible promotes restoration or retribution is not a small issue but goes to the very heart of the nature of God.[34] As prison minister Joanna Hemingway explains, basic to the principle of *shalom* is the concept of "making things right for all involved," which, in her view, offers the best hope for addressing sin and transforming the criminal justice system.[35] Hemenway builds on Zehr's work and frames her theology of prison ministry as holistic ministry grounded in the principles of restorative justice.

> Restorative justice considers the needs of the crime victims, it considers the accountability of the offender, the harm he or she has inflicted as well as the harm he or she may have suffered as a result of his or her own past victimization; and it considers the impact the offense has had on the community as well as the social,

economic, and political aspects within the community that may have contributed to the offense.[36]

Against this background, Hemenway offers three restorative models of prison ministry: (1) churches partnering with prison education programs, which seek to spiritually nourish and empower the prison population (2) alternatives to violence programs, which seek to reduce violence within prisons, and (3) advocacy, which then gives the voice back to the prison population outside of the prison walls.[37] Yet, notably absent from Hemenway's approach is any direct ministry to the victims of crime or other actors within the criminal justice system.

While both models of prison ministry are commendable, they each fall short of fully empowering all the actors within the criminal justice system. For example, the liberative model addresses the needs of only the prisoner, while the restorative justice model operates only within the prison system. A broader model, which I call carceral ministry, should not only meet the needs of all actors within the criminal justice system—defendants, victims, government actors, and community program providers—but also meet them at different stages within the criminal justice process—pre-trial, corrections, and post-release. Viewing carceral ministry from this perspective allows the church to reach more people at different stages of their points of contact with the criminal justice system. In the process, carceral ministry becomes a practice that is preventative, restorative, and holistic in nature.

Pre-Trial Carceral Ministry

A missiological approach to carceral ministry must be holistic in the sense of meeting people at different stages of the criminal justice process. The mission statement of Kairos Prison Ministry summarizes this goal well, in that it seeks, "to bring Christ's love and forgiveness to all incarcerated individuals, their families, and those who work with them, and to assist in the transition to becoming a productive citizen."[38]

Examples of carceral ministry at the pre-trial stage include faith-based restorative justice services that function as alternatives to incarceration.[39] Over the past 30 years, there has been an explosion of restorative justice programs operating at the pre-trial stages of criminal cases.[40] In one model, often called "victim-offender mediation," the defendant and

victim meet with a therapist. Here, the victim and defendant can express themselves in a safe space: the defendant can learn about the impact of the crime, such as physical injuries and psychological trauma, and the victim can learn about societal factors, such as poverty and addiction, that may have led to the criminal activity. In another model, organizations provide mentoring services for at-risk youth. BronxConnect, for example, has Christian mentors from over 25 Bronx churches serving over 150 youth each year.[41] Groups like BronxConnect are oftentimes the only faith-based alternative-to-incarceration programs serving their communities.[42] That being the case, these types of pre-trial programs provide powerful and unique opportunities for the church to witness to at-risk communities in new and creative ways.

A missiological approach to pre-trial carceral ministry must also apply the indigenous church principles of self-government, self-propagation, and self-support. In terms of self-government, these programs should be operated and staffed with believing ex-offenders who can provide both spiritual and vocational counseling to help others address the circumstances that led them to interact with the criminal justice system. This approach mirrors the method of substance abuse programs, such as the faith-based program Teen Challenge, wherein former drug users serve as counselors for those seeking to break the cycle of addiction. For self-propagation, these programs must evangelize not only by communicating the gospel message to those sent to their programs, but also these programs establish new locations, reaching out to new at-risk populations and developing new relationships with stakeholders. Not only does this approach allow the church to share the gospel in areas of particularly high need, but it also enables the church to build up future ministers and staff members from the same communities being served. The self-sustaining principle is perhaps the most difficult of the three selfs to apply at this stage. Generally, pre-trial programs do not charge fees to the populations they serve since doing so would undercut the mission of the program. As an alternative, these programs should function as extensions of the churches they are affiliated with, and, in that sense, become self-sustaining. In that regard, carceral pre-trial ministry should not seek funding from the government or other outside sources since doing so may lead to complicated relationships with funders that oftentimes undercut the gospel-centered vision of these faith-based programs.

Carceral Ministry within Prison

For defendants who are not reached at the pre-trial stage, a missiological approach to carceral ministry calls for a robust and systemic approach within prison. While most forms of carceral ministry take place within prison, the prison setting nonetheless provides the largest terrain for improvement. For example, whereas prosecutorial offices and law enforcement agencies may be reluctant to partner with faith-based organizations at the pre-trial stage—given the separation of church and state—there is already a well-established history of partnership between prison facilities and faith-based organizations in the United States. These faith-based prison partnerships have only grown over the years with the decrease in government funding for traditional prison programs.[43] Therefore, governments are looking to the church to fill more practical needs that open doors to filling spiritual nourishment within the lives of defendants inside prison walls.

With respect to self-government within prison, carceral ministry means empowering actors within the criminal justice system in permanent and meaningful ways. For prisoners this intention means not merely enabling them to receive a theology degree while incarcerated but also allowing them to become ministers, chaplains, and even missionaries. At the Louisiana State Penitentiary, also known as "Angola," there are presently around 30 inmates serving as missionaries to other Louisiana prisons.[44] Allowing prisoners to serve as missionaries and chaplains enables them to govern themselves as a truly indigenous church. Such missionary operations depend wholly on government officials granting authority and privileges to the missionaries. At the same time, we as the church should not see this pursuit as too distinct from modern cross-cultural missionary movements, in which missionaries oftentimes depend on government support to carry out programs and projects. In addition to these elevated roles for prisoners, correctional staff should also form part of the prison church to foster an atmosphere of authentic community. In a similar way, faith-based restorative justice programs within prison—in which defendants meet with their victims and other community partners—can be a mutually beneficial process, which may later serve as a foundation for early parole. In other words, a holistic approach would encourage all actors in the criminal justice system to participate in the prison church community to encourage in providing a more authentic spiritual experience.

With respect to self-propagation within prison, carceral ministry places an emphasis on evangelism that begins and ends with the prison population. Thus, all religious programming, whether theological education, restorative justice counseling, or traditional worship, must be anchored in the larger mission of sharing the gospel. With respect to self-sustenance, carceral ministry advocates for prison wages that go beyond the meager cents-on-the-dollar approach we also see today. Significantly, while carceral ministries have historically relied on outside support, that dependence has been largely attributed due to how prisoners do not presently earn a sufficient income to support those programs independently, and because other actors, such as correctional staff and community partners, have not been viewed as part of the prison church community. At the same time, we must be mindful of the biblical examples of church members simply giving according to their means (e.g., Acts 11:31). Thus, perhaps a true form of carceral ministry requires us to reexamine whether we can reduce the cost of current faith-based programs in prison to foster a self-sustaining atmosphere. Moreover, perhaps this point of analysis requires a reexamination of whether the prison church should move beyond the prison walls to include family members and friends outside of prison. In that regard, we would do well to consider Kairos' goal of bringing "Christ's love and forgiveness to all incarcerated individuals, their families, and those who work with them."[45]

Post-Release Carceral Ministry

A missiological approach to carceral ministry at the post-release stage must empower all actors within the criminal justice system in holistic ways. Although the term "post-release" applies mainly to prisoners released from prison, there thus remains opportunities for authentic collaboration with other actors. For example, correctional staff and community partners should be actively involved in faith-based re-entry programs that begin in prison. Once the prison church model is embraced as a collaboration of all actors within the criminal justice system, this type of involvement by non-defendants should occur organically. Indeed, correctional workers should feel invested in the empowerment and success of defendants, viewing them not merely as prisons but as their brothers and sisters in Christ. Outside of prison, defendants, victims of crime, correctional workers, community partners, and faith-

based organizations should encourage the establishment of "prison churches" where they can serve in positions of leadership and unapologetically embrace the carceral community as part of the body of Christ. Such church communities should then position themselves at the forefront of faith-based re-entry efforts, which would then be staffed with employees that truly reflect the communities they serve. This model creates a system in which believers both on the inside and outside of the prison walls work together for the mutual building up of the Church.

Conclusion

It is not difficult to anticipate objections to the missiological approach to carceral ministry. First, some might argue that the view of defendants, correctional staff, and victims working together is idealistic and unrealistic for the church. However, there are already analogous collaborative approaches operating in the secular context. Inside Criminal Justice, for example, is a program that involves defendants from Queensboro Correctional Facility and prosecutors from the Manhattan District Attorney's Office.[46] The seminar encourages in-depth and respectful conversations about the criminal justice system and collaboration through the presentation of jointly authored policy proposals. In short, if defendants can work together with those who prosecuted their cases in a wholly secular context, how much more can defendants, victims, and other actors of the criminal justice system develop a sense of spiritual community when they share the same faith in Jesus Christ?

A second possible objection might be that the self-sustaining aspect of carceral ministry is untenable. It is true that the prison church generally depends on outsiders for financial support. However, meeting that need should only encourage us to push for advocacy measures that enable and empower defendants to become ministers and missionaries within prison, receive better wages for their labor, and obtain greater access to religious resources. In short, the church is already present in and outside of prison. A missiological approach to carceral ministry simply seeks to expand that vision to include all actors within the criminal justice system at all stages of the criminal justice process. By doing so we can embrace a truly holistic approach to carceral ministry that empowers the entire church community.

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Have we Missed the Main Point? The Purpose for Jesus' Encounter with the Canaanite Woman (Matthew 15:21-28)

Doug Lowenberg[*]

Abstract:

Much ink has been spilled writing articles regarding "the notoriously difficult passage"[1] which recounts Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman from Syrophoenician. Many of these studies propose principles such as: 1) those who hold onto their faith when facing God-ordained tests and adversity will see their prayers answered, 2) Jesus' missional ministry prior to the resurrection focused almost exclusively on the people of Israel, and 3) the disciples of Jesus were taught lessons about themselves, Jesus, and His mission through this encounter.

Oscillating between this pericope and Matthew's entire gospel raises questions about the validity of the wide array of lessons generated from the story when one considers the purpose for which the author included as his account of the gospel.[2] It could be that these preconceived ideas have so affected the interpretations of the text that Matthew's intentionality has been skewed resulting in misunderstandings of why Jesus traveled to the region of Tyre and Sidon and encountered the Canaanite woman. The proposed motives for Jesus' words and actions with her could be quite misleading from what Matthew intended to communicate about the person, mission, and ministry methods of Jesus. A fresh examination of Matthew's account of Jesus' meeting of the Canaanite woman is merited to reconsider what the inspired author may have been saying to his first century audience.[3]

This study will examine each verse in the pericope commenting on issues that shape the overall meaning of the passage, consider the literary context of the story, discuss the importance of the historical and cultural settings, and reflect on the possible location and composition of Matthew's audience. Attention will be given to Jesus' ministry strategy based on this text and the

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[*] Doug Lowenberg, Ph.D. and his wife, Corrine, have served as missionaries in Africa with the Assemblies of God for over 25 years primarily in Bible school training. Currently they are based in Nairobi, Kenya. Doug holds a PhD in Theology from Regent University and DMin from Bethel Theological Seminary. Doug's passion is doing missional hermeneutics in the African context. The Lowenbergs have two adult daughters, Julia and Ruthie, who serve as career missionaries in Africa.

contribution that this episode makes to Matthew's gospel. Lessons learned by Matthew and his fellow disciples from this experience will be proposed and evaluated.[4]

Verse 21 and the Literary Context

There seems to be a continuity of thought as Matthew moves his narrative forward from the preceding discussion on ritual cleanness (15:1-20) to the story of the Canaanite woman using the conjunction "and" (καὶ).[5] Matthew is known for arranging his biography[6] around theological themes.[7] Another indicator of a continuation of the theme of "cleanness" for these two pericopes is Matthew's reference to geographical locations. The previous discussion took place in Gennesaret (14:34). Now in 15:1, he reports that Jesus departed from there (ἐξελθὼν ἐκεῖθεν) and withdrew to the regions of Tyre and Sidon (τὰ μέρη Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος).[8] Some scholars note that Jesus had a pattern of withdrawing from one location to another more secluded when controversies arose with the Pharisees and teachers of the law (12:15; 14:13). To avoid conflict with the opposition, as well as to find rest for himself and his disciples from the demands of public ministry, and to secure time for private discourse with the twelve, he retreated to remote places.[9] However, in Matthew's story there is no mention of Jesus' motivation for withdrawing nor explanation for his going an extreme distance to a foreign location. Extending the same theme, it appears that Jesus intentionally traveled to a ritually unclean region inhabited by impure, "pagan" people.[10]

Several observations from the preceding pericope help inform one's understanding of Matthew's intention for the inclusion of the Canaanite woman's story. In the preceding account, the Pharisees criticized Jesus for condoning His disciples' neglect of observing traditional, ritual washings before eating, thus disqualifying them from approaching God for worship and intercession and excluding them from table fellowship with those determined to be "clean."[11] Jesus responded to the Pharisees' challenge by criticizing their misleading emphasis on "the traditions of the elders" to the neglect of the "command of God" and "the word of God" (15:2-6 NIV).

Jesus, calling the crowd, drew attention to their hypocrisy (15:20) and explained what it was that brought about moral and spiritual defilement, which was far more important to God than ritual, external impurity.[12] The former brought God's disapproval and disqualified people from receiving his blessings and answers to prayer. Jesus stated, "What comes *out of the mouth*, that is

what makes him 'unclean'" (15:11). He repeated this same phrase a few moments later: "The things that come *out of the mouth* come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean'" (15:18). While explaining that the heart was the source for many spiritually contaminating thoughts and actions, he twice mentioned the close association between the heart and what flowed out of the mouth referring to one's words. In his list of sins that originate in the heart, he specifically itemized two aspects of speech: false testimony and slander (15:29). Jesus' instruction about the matters that defile one in the presence of God called attention not only to inner motivations, but also to the outer expressions of the heart measured by one's conduct as well as one's words. One's speech was a clear indicator of the state of the heart.

What seems to be overlooked by interpreters is the disciples' reaction to Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees' teaching. Upon Jesus' exposing the hypocrisy of the Pharisees in the way they honored human tradition to the nullifying of God's law, and erroneously emphasized external cleansing while ignoring the state of the heart, the Twelve responded: "Do you not know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?" (15:12). While it was Jesus' disciples who triggered the critical judgment of the Pharisees, it was these same Twelve who sided with the Pharisees in their theology and practice in terms of ritual cleansing.[13] They criticized Jesus for His negative assessment of their religious leaders and defended the position of the Pharisees against Jesus' revelatory perspective. At this juncture in their spiritual development as future apostles of Jesus, they were more conformed to and in agreement with the beliefs and practices of the Pharisees than those of Jesus.

With a one sentence parable, Jesus asserted that what the Pharisees taught, which these teachings did not originate from His heavenly Father, would one day be destroyed (15:13). This parable could refer to his earlier, more extended one about the enemy who planted weeds among the wheat (13:24-30, 36-43). The final judgment in both stories was the same.

Based on the discussion between Jesus and His disciples, it appears that the Twelve were deeply influenced by Pharisaic teachings and had adopted their worldview.[14] To correct His followers' perspective, which included the Pharisees' views on ritual cleanness, qualifications for table fellowship, the identity and purpose of the Messiah, and requirements for entrance into God's kingdom, along with other beliefs, Jesus commanded His disciples, "Leave them" (ἄφετε αὐτούς) (15:14). Mirror reading would indicate that His disciples had not yet abandoned the beliefs and practices of this religious sect. Jesus continued His warning: "They are blind guides;

and if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (Matt. 15:14 KJV). In the immediate historical context of this statement, Jesus indicated that not only were the Pharisees blind, but also His own disciples were blind failing to grasp the truth about His kingdom. And if they continued following these religious leaders, they too would stumble and fall in their pursuit of God's will and kingdom. They struggled to grasp the new perspective that Jesus was introducing. Their confusion is emphasized in Jesus' address to Peter who expressed his bewilderment over the parable. Jesus said, "Are you still so dull?" (15:16).

Later in Matthew's travel narrative, as Jesus was attempting to reshape the faith, values, and practices of His followers, the topic of the Pharisees arose again. He said, "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (16:6). Slowly the disciples were recognizing the deeply rooted influence that the Pharisees had on their thinking. Matthew comments, "Then they understood that he was…telling them to guard against…the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (16:12).

If one considers the audience to whom Matthew wrote, this passage could serve as a strong warning to the New Testament Church in the latter half of the first century to be on guard and distance themselves from the persistent, misleading influence of Pharisaism, whether it came from Pharisaic Jews or Pharisaic Christians (see Acts 15:5). The conflicting worldview propagated by a Pharisaic perspective promoted adherence to the Mosaic law, circumcision, Sabbath Day observances, ritual cleansing, and a restrictive diet—practices that impeded the inclusion of Gentiles into God's kingdom, destroyed the unity of the church, and subverted salvation through faith in Jesus alone.

Returning to the issue of geographic location, Matthew reported that Jesus went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. No details are given as to the precise location that he visited, but it is noteworthy to recognize the distance from Gennesaret to Tyre and Sidon and to identify the people living in that region. Gennesaret was located on the northwest shore of Lake Galilee, approximately 4 kilometers west of Capernaum. To travel from there to Tyre, the route required one to journey east approximately 8 kilometers to the Jordan River Valley, north 15 kilometers to Lake Huleh, then follow a circuitous northwestwardly route 50 to 55 kilometers through the North Galilee highlands to Tyre. The trip would have covered almost 80 kilometers. Based on Mark's account of this same incident, after Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman, Jesus went further north to Sidon, an additional 40 kilometers (Mark 7:31). The overall expedition

would have covered over 120 kilometers one way. Did Jesus travel this extreme distance simply to avoid the Pharisees and the crowds? Journeying to this region, Jesus left behind the province of Galilee and entered a foreign land dominated by Gentiles. Could it be that this journey was intended to introduce His disciples to the global mission of God being fulfilled in His Son, the Messiah?[15]

Verse 22

To emphasize the non-Jewish nature of the vicinity, Matthew recorded his surprise when Jesus was approached by a Canaanite woman (literally, "and behold a woman, a Canaanite"; καὶ ἰδοὺ γυνὴ Χαναναία). While Mark refers to her as "a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia" (Mark 7:26 NIV), Matthew described her with an old, anachronistic term that had fallen out of use in the first century— "Canaanite."[16] The Canaanites were an ancient, resistant enemy of Israel opposed to Israelite occupancy of the land. They led the people of God into idolatrous and immoral behavior which brought God's judgment on Israel. This woman came seeking help from Jesus for her demon-possessed daughter. According to traditional Jewish and Pharisaic sensibilities, this woman represented the epitome of uncleanness and defilement: a woman, a Canaanite, the mother of a daughter as opposed to a son and having a child who was demonized (the demonization could have resulted from the idolatrous practices of the family and tribe).

From one perspective, she is the one who instigated the encounter; she approached Jesus. This is the view taken by those who hold the opinion that Jesus did not actively engage Gentiles during His earthly ministry.[17] And only on rare occasions did He accept the advance of a Gentile. Keener comments, "The Gentile mission was at most peripheral to Jesus' earthly ministry: he did not actively seek out Gentiles for ministry, and both occasions on which he heals Gentiles he does so from a distance (8:13; 15:28)."[18] On the other hand, Jesus approached her; He traveled over 80 kilometers to place Himself in her proximity. And unlike Mark, Matthew made no reference to Jesus seeking anonymity by entering a house (Mark 7:24).[19] Jesus seemed to be moving into a public space where He was accessible.

Her appeal is surprising and yet filled with familiar words: "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession" (κύριε υἱὸς Δαυίδ· ἡ θυγάτηρ μου κακῶς δαιμονίζεται). What would she have known of Jesus that would cause her to employ such honorific titles? What did she believe about Jesus that emboldened her to approach

him for help? From Jesus' earliest days of public ministry, news about Him had spread throughout the provinces of Israel and beyond, as far as Syria, the region north of Syrophoenicia (Matt. 4:24-25). Crowds with every type of sickness and spiritual condition came to Him and were healed. As Jesus and His companions traveled north from Gennesaret, the report of their movements would have been noticed and circulated. She heard of His coming, believed, and came to Him with her request.

The NIV places this woman's honorific titles before her request. However, the Greek text begins with her request for mercy, followed by the titles, and concludes with the explanation of her need (Ἐλέησόν με, κύριε υἱὸς Δαυίδ· ἡ θυγάτηρ μου κακῶς δαιμονίζεται).[20] Following this order, the woman would have first expressed her lowly, dependent status as she approached Jesus. She came to Jesus asking for help that she did not deserve. Then she declared His exalted state: Lord and Son of David. The term "Lord" (κύριε) could be understood as a statement of respect equivalent to "sir." But coupled with the next epithet, "Son of David," a messianic title, the first expression should more aptly be interpreted as an expression of lordship and worship. Following her declaration of His identity, she appealed for mercy on herself (Ἐλέησόν με). The explanation for her need was the description of her daughter's condition. The needs of her daughter had become her own.

In a pagan culture, the normal response of the local people to demonization would have been to consult sorcerers to determine the cause and solution for the demonic assault then pay the price exacted by the spiritual practitioner hoping for some degree of relief. One might assume this mother had exhausted her resources attempting to find a cure but experienced no deliverance. Having heard the reports of people who "brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them" (Matt. 4:24), her knowledge that he had journeyed all the way to her region, her faith in Jesus' power,[21] and her confidence in his compassion inspired her to come out from her home and ignore the cultural norms to request his intervention. "Matthew views compassion as a primary motivation in Jesus' acts of healing."[22] "Clearly the woman has prior knowledge of Jesus and of his compassion for all, be they Jews or Gentiles, male or female."[23]

The terms she used are found on the lips of others approaching Jesus for help. "Lord" was the title used by the leper seeking healing (Matt. 8:2) and the Gentile centurion interceding

for his servant (Matt. 8:6). A father with a demonized son cried, "Lord, have mercy on my son" (Matt 17:15). Two blind men desiring healing called out to Jesus, "Have mercy on us, Son of David" (Matt. 9:27). Two other blind men requesting healing from Jesus used the same, exact expression, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" (Matt. 20:31). In all these cases, Jesus was moved with compassion and was willing to heal. This Canaanite came to Jesus with expectations of supernatural intervention. While some scholars report that she was being manipulative, there is no indication in the text of any attitude other than desperation, humility, and hope. Thus, Jesus' response to her seems shocking and inconsistent with His usual response to those coming to Him with desperate needs and with words of honor and faith.

Verse 23

"But He [Jesus] did not answer her a word" (ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῇ λόγον). Why the silence? At this juncture in the narrative, scholars provide a host of explanations for Jesus' silence including: He was indifferent or reluctant to help her because she was a Gentile;[24] helping her ran contrary to His mission to the Jews; He was aghast at her sinful uncleanness; He was shocked by the aggressive attitude of a despised Canaanite; He was perplexed and did not know what to do; and He was testing her to see her level of faith and determination.[25] Matthew, however, reports that out of the deafening silence, the first voices heard were those of the disciples. It is not until this moment in the narrative that Matthew mentions the presence of the disciples. They persistently urged Jesus to send her away. The reason for their dismissal, "She is crying out after us" (καὶ προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἠρώτουν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· Ἀπόλυσον αὐτήν, ὅτι κράζει ὄπισθεν ἡμῶν). Jesus' "indifference…was no doubt seen by the disciples as acting in an entirely appropriate manner."[26] Is it possible that Matthew was providing a concrete example of Jesus' instructions in the previous pericope: "The things that come *out of the mouth* come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean'" (15:18)? When touring a foreign region and facing an unclean Canaanite woman with a demonized daughter, did their request reveal the state of their hearts, their assessment of such people, and their readiness, or lack thereof, to minister to her need?[27]

"Send her away" (Ἀπόλυσον αὐτήν). Scholars provide two different interpretations of the disciples' request. Some view this request as one of utter rejection showing the contempt of Jewish men towards a Gentile woman.[28] Possibly they felt cultural discomfort because a foreign,

pagan woman had publicly approached them which in their culture was completely inappropriate. This Gentile woman was obviously unclean; any contact with her would defile them and their esteemed rabbi.[29] Others propose that the disciples were asking Jesus to honor her request, heal her child, so she would leave them alone.[30] This second perspective is dubious in light of the disciples' previous request for Jesus to send the crowds away (ἀπόλυσον τοὺς ὄχλους) when faced with the impossible situation of providing food in a remote area for such a vast multitude (Matt. 14:15). In the pericope immediately following the encounter with the Canaanite, which quite likely took place among Gentiles in the Decapolis (Matt. 15:29-39; Mark 7:31), to preempt the disciples once again requesting Jesus to send the crowds away for similar reasons, Jesus said, "I have compassion for these people…I do not want to send them away hungry (Σπλαγχνίζομαι ἐπὶ τὸν ὄχλον…ἀπολῦσαι αὐτοὺς νήστεις οὐ θέλω), or they may collapse on the way" (Matt. 15:32). When faced with impossible situations or "unclean" people, it seems the tendency of the disciples was to dismiss the needy without a solution for their physical or spiritual predicament. Concerning the Canaanite woman, it is more probable that they simply wanted Jesus to dismiss her.

Their request also revealed something about their self-centered perspective. While her pleas for help were aimed solely at Jesus, they reported she was crying after "us" (ὄπισθεν ἡμῶν). When did the woman mention the disciples? Their self-centered outlook and words collectively were an attempt to preempt Jesus from responding to the woman and showed their callousness towards her dire predicament.

Verse 24

Since it was the disciples who proposed the request to send her away, it seems that Jesus' response was to their petition: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Οὐκ ἀπεστάλην εἰ μὴ εἰς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ). Most scholars view this assertion as Jesus' affirmation of His earthly mission—to the lost sheep of the house of Israel—only and exclusively.[31] They reinforce this statement with Jesus' previous restriction given to the Twelve: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθητε καὶ εἰς πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν μὴ εἰσέλθητε· πορεύεσθε δὲ μᾶλλον πρὸς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ, Matt. 10:5-6).[32] Was Jesus declaring the rationale for which the woman should be sent away—he had not come for Gentiles,

at least not at this time in His earthly ministry? Given the context, one might assume the disciples were in hardy agreement with this statement. Bailey rightly notes, "Jesus here gives concrete expression to the theology of his narrow-minded disciples."[33]

With this assertion, what did Matthew intend to convey about Jesus, His ministry focus, and His attitude towards this marginalized woman with her desperate need?[34] By these words was Jesus delineating His ministry priority which then dictated how He should respond to the woman's request? Or was He verbalizing the views that the disciples had for His messianic ministry, much like Peter would do later when he told Jesus that the way of the cross was not acceptable (Matt. 16:22)? Do these words accurately represent Jesus' primary ministry, or did they encapsulate the perspective formulated in the hearts of the Twelve for the ministry of the Messiah: He came to save the people of Israel and their nation? Bailey's insights are instructive: Jesus was "irritated by the disciples' attitude regarding women and Gentiles…He decide[d] to use the occasion to help her and challenge the deeply rooted prejudices in the hearts of his disciples…Jesus' approach to the education of his disciples [was] subtle and powerful."[35]

One should consider the consistency of this statement in comparison with the entire gospel of Matthew. Does his gospel confirm an exclusive focus of Jesus' messianic, compassionate, and saving ministry for the people of Israel?[36] Matthew began his gospel portraying Jesus, the Messiah, as the son of David and the son of Abraham (Matt. 1:1). The reference to David reminded His readers of the promise God made to David, and later the prophets, that He would establish the house and kingdom of one of David's offspring forever and this kingdom would extend to the ends of the earth (2 Sam. 7:13-16, 29; Psalms 2:8; Isaiah 9:6-8; 42:1-6; 49:6). As the son of Abraham, Jesus the Christ came to fulfill God's promise to Abraham that one of his seed would bring blessings to Abraham's descendants and bless all the peoples of the earth (Gen. 12:1-3; 26:4; 28:14).

Unlike Luke's gospel and unique from most Jewish authors who recorded genealogies to legitimize one's lineage and legal authority, Matthew included four women—this step alone is a unique characteristic for a genealogical listing. In addition, the common characteristic of these four women is that they are non-Jews, or they were married to a Gentile (Matt. 1:3-6); Tamar, a Canaanite (Gen. 38:18); Rahab, a Canaanite from Jericho (Josh. 2:1); Ruth, a Moabitess (Ruth 1:3); and an unnamed woman who was the wife of Uriah, a Hittite (2 Sam. 11:3). It is possible that Matthew wanted to demonstrate that Jesus the Messiah was the legal heir of David, despite

His mixed lineage, whose throne would be established forever, and that Christ fulfilled God's promises to Abraham as the one who came to bless all humankind, including all nations and both genders.

Matthew recorded the coming of the Magi from the East as a group of foreigners who recognized the One born to be the "King of the Jews" (Matt. 2:1-11). Not only did they recognize His kingly sovereignty over the Jews, but they also identified a divine aspect to His nature and worshipped Him.[37] While King Herod, the priests, and the teachers of the law heard their testimony and identified the location where the child was to be born, only the Magi sought to find and worship Him.

When the rulers of His own people tried to murder Jesus, God provided a haven in the foreign country of Egypt for the infant Jesus and His parents (Matt. 2:13). After returning to the land of Israel, His parents chose to relocate from Nazareth (Matt. 2:22) to Capernaum to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy: "Galilee of the Gentiles—the people living in darkness have seen a great light" (Matt. 4:15-16). The good news of Jesus' words and deeds circulated far beyond Israel's borders (Matt. 4:24). The crowds that came to hear His message and receive healing included both Jews and Gentiles (Matt. 4:25).

At the conclusion of the first of the five teaching blocks recorded by Matthew (the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5-7), Jesus demonstrated His compassion and healing power for a diverse group of people—healing a Jewish leper,[38] a Gentile centurion, a Jewish mother,[39] those demonized, and the sick (Matt. 8:1-16). Some scholars propose that the healing interaction with the Gentile centurion was one of the few exceptions of when Jesus ministered to a non-Jew.[40] Further, they suggest that Jesus was willing to heal the man's servant because of his extraordinary faith; however, other scholars state that Jesus was not willing to go with the man and enter his defiled, Gentile residence. Other interpreters have turned Jesus' response into a question. The text reads, "Jesus said, 'I will go and heal him'" (Ἐγὼ ἐλθὼν θεραπεύσω αὐτόν (Matt. 8:7]). The assertion becomes a question: Should I go and heal him?[41] This transposition seems to be motivated by the preunderstanding that Jesus came only to reveal Himself and minister to the Jewish people. The Greek text could be read as an emphatic phrase: "I, having gone, will heal him," or "Having gone, I myself will heal him." Rather than Jesus questioning whether He should go or instead send someone else to bring the healing, Jesus wanted His audience to know that He was willing to go to the centurion's house and heal the household

servant.[42] The implications of Jesus' response to the centurion run countercultural to common Jewish and more extreme Pharisaic sensibilities, which were also held by his own disciples. Peter stated to a Gentile centurion: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him" (Acts 10:28).

Matthew recorded Jesus' reaction to the centurion's faith: "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith" (Matt. 8:10). He followed this commendation by describing the future messianic banquet when people from the East and the West would feast with the patriarchs while the "subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside" (Matt. 8:11-12).[43] This Matthean passage reveals that Jesus' messianic banquet in the eschaton would include people from every part of the Earth while some of those descended from the Jewish patriarchs would be excluded. The depiction of those excluded from the banquet resonates with John the Baptist's earlier warning to Jews who assumed their descendancy as guaranteed salvation: "Do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham" (Matt. 3:9). Race and nationality were no guarantee of entrance into God's kingdom.[44]

The deliverance of the two demoniacs in the region of Gadarene, which resulted in the drowning of a herd of pigs, was a record of the spiritual liberation possible for two Gentiles (Matt. 8:28-34). During Jesus' teaching and travel narratives, Matthew quoted from the Suffering Servant passages of Isaiah to describe the character and ministry focus of Jesus, God's Messiah, which testified how: "He will proclaim justice to the nations (Gentiles, κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπαγγελεῖ) …In his name the nations (Gentiles, ἔθνη) will put their hope" (Matt. 12:18-21; Isaiah 42:1-4). [45]

The Gentiles of Nineveh and Ethiopia set an example for the Jews based on faith, repentance, and worship, but the people of Israel refused to accept this time of divine visitation (Matt. 12:38-45). In explaining the parable of the weeds sown in the field by an enemy, Jesus explained that the sower of the wheat was the "Son of man;" the field was the world (*kosmos*; Matt. 13:37-38). Jesus' parable of the unfaithful tenants concluded with Jesus' eschatological announcement: "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit" (Matt. 21:23, 43). Before the eschaton would arrive, the gospel had to be preached in all parts of the inhabited world as a witness to every nation (ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ εἰς μαρτύριον πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν; Matt. 24:14). The Roman centurion supervising the crucifixion of

Jesus, at the moment of His death, declared, "Surely He was the Son of God!" (Matt. 27:54). The conclusion of Matthew's gospel, which recorded the Great Commission without referencing Christ's ascension, was intended to leave Jesus' command to disciple all the nations (μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) reverberating in the ears of His followers as well as those hearing Matthew's gospel being read (Matt. 28:18-20).

Rather than an exclusive focus on the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matthew described an intentional inclusiveness in Jesus' ministry and His offer of the Good News to the Gentiles as the prophetic fulfillment demonstrating that Jesus was the one prophesied to bring blessings to the descendants of Abraham and to all nations.[46] Surveying Matthew's introduction (1:1) and conclusion (28:19-20), one could identify a grand *inclusio* emphasizing the missional thrust of Jesus' Earthly ministry. Matthew's gospel biography narrates the story of the promised King and Savior who came to provide salvation for all people and inaugurated His kingdom accessible to any who would repent and believe. While the disciples initially held the position that Jesus came only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, they gradually learned from Jesus' teaching and example[47] that He offered salvation to the world.

Verse 25

The Canaanite woman had already identified Jesus as the Son of David, the promised Messiah who came to rule over an eternal kingdom that extended beyond the cultural and geographical borders of Israel to the ends of the earth. At Jesus' assertion about the purpose of His ministry, she seemed to grasp the irony of the statement. Following his words, the Canaanite thus drew nearer and worshipped Him (ἡ δὲ ἐλθοῦσα προσεκύνει αὐτῷ). She repeated the title "Lord" with an abbreviated plea: "Lord, help me!" (Κύριε, βοήθει μοι). The verb, προσκυνέω, appears 12 times in Matthew. On eight of these occasions, the word clearly means "worship." While the word can be translated "kneel down," it seems that worship best fits in this setting.[48] She acknowledged Jesus as both Lord and the Son of David. She was filled with faith in him. There was no hesitation on her part in approaching him for help. And there is no inference from the text that Jesus ignored or resisted her or was obstinate with her to test her faith.

Verse 26

Jesus' statement found in this verse, even if it was a well-known proverb, seems to be extremely inconsistent with the way He is presented throughout Matthew's Gospel. Where He is repeatedly moved with compassion, accessible to anyone who comes to Him, reaches out and touches the unclean, and eats with tax gatherers and sinners, His words here seem insulting and racist: "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs." Jeremias comments, "The term 'dog' is the supreme insult."[49] Dogs were viewed as unclean and dangerous scavengers who roamed the streets and alleys.[50] If employed as a guard dog, they brought fear with the possibility of a violent attack on a stranger. They did not move about one's home as pets. Making this comparison to a person would be humiliating and insulting. While some scholars suggest that the term dogs (κυναρίοις) is the diminutive of dogs and best translates "little dogs," making the slur less abrasive, it still was an extremely derogatory comparison to make with a human being.

Some explain that this disdainful speech was Jesus' way of testing the commitment, persistence, and resilience of the woman in terms of her faith in Christ.[51] But one must ask if there is any other example of Jesus testing and insulting sincere seekers who humbly came to him for help? He tested the unbelieving disciples and resistant Pharisees, but there is no evidence of such a methodology towards the sincere and desperate. Some propose that Jesus was using the terms "children" and "dogs" to refer to the Jews and Gentiles with the purpose that this Canaanite woman needed to acknowledge the historic distinction between the two groups and acknowledge that she was a "Gentile 'dog,'" unworthy of "Israel's covenanted mercies" and "divine election."[52]

Could there be another explanation for this language and clarification of what Matthew intended to convey to his readers? If one recalls the previous pericope and the stress on words that flowed out of one's mouth which revealed the state of the heart, and if the assertion of Jesus about His mission was actually intended to objectify the thoughts of the disciples, it would be consistent to view this statement as another step where Jesus exposed the prejudiced and racist attitudes of His Jewish disciples towards other people groups whom they viewed as unclean and unworthy of the Messiah's intervention.[53] Jesus' proverb was consistent with the general view of Jews, and especially Pharisees, towards Gentiles. Was Jesus articulating the inner thoughts of

His disciples towards this woman and themselves? In terms of those who deserved of the food, they likely saw themselves as the children, descendants of the privileged family, destined to receive Christ's provisions.

For those who view this statement as Jesus' way of challenging the woman's faith, to belittle and insult her seems cruel and inconsistent with the character of the divine Son of God. And if His comment accurately reflects the perspective He had towards her and all Gentiles during His earthly ministry, it would seem extremely difficult to suddenly pivot concerning a mission focused exclusively on the house of Israel to include all nations.[54] Not only would Jesus have to significantly change the content of His teaching about the kingdom during the 40 days between resurrection and ascension, it would be extremely difficult to present a new message which challenged the narrow, racist opinions of His disciples which He had condoned during the previous 3 ½ years of discipleship. When Jesus was born as a Jewish boy and grew up in a Jewish cultural milieu, was He so culturally and racially shaped by His society that He was no different than the Jewish people around Him? If He was inculcated by a traditional Jewish, male worldview, how could He prophetically speak throughout His lifetime against their prejudices and misunderstandings regarding religious traditions, the mission of the Messiah, God's love for all people, and the way of salvation?[55] One must remember, concerning the identity of Jesus, that He was not simply a Jewish boy shaped by Jewish culture and Jewish worldview. He is "Emmanuel, God with us"—the Lord of all creation and all people who came to dwell among humankind (Matt. 1:23).

Verse 27

The woman agreed with Jesus' proverb ("Yes, Lord"; Ναί, κύριε). One should not take bread given to children and toss it to dogs. Her answer is filled with wisdom, wit, and faith. She adds, "And even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table" (καὶ γὰρ τὰ κυνάρια ἐσθίει ἀπὸ τῶν ψιχίων τῶν πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τῶν κυρίων αὐτῶν).[56] Even despised and filthy dogs benefited from crumbs that involuntarily fell from the table where their masters were feasting. The implication was that there was an abundance of food on the table. Those at the table had plenty to eat. The generous portions resulted in crumbs involuntarily falling to the ground where they were consumed by the hungry dogs. Both the people at table and the dogs under the table were fed. The master of the table provided enough so that all were fed.

The woman replaced Jesus' word "children" with "masters." Whether she was honoring the disciples by referring to them as masters, perhaps Jewish masters, or using sarcasm to refer indirectly to their harsh, superior attitudes towards her, one can only speculate. But noting her consistent humility in coming to Jesus and agreeing with Jesus' proverb, it seems she was graciously giving the disciples honor as members of Jesus' discipleship team. She did not imply that they were the ones giving food to the dogs. She did not condone their condescending attitudes towards her and her people. Crumbs were falling to the ground involuntarily and being consumed by the dogs. While the masters—the disciples—enjoyed the bread, the dogs were nurtured as well because there was such an abundance. Both parties were supplied what they needed by the one supplying the bread, the master of the disciples.[57]

Her answer did not demand of Jesus an either/or mentality which would require Jesus to either minister to the disciples or to her, to the Jews or to the Gentiles. Her faith in Christ's abundant provision and mission to all enabled her to have a both/and mindset. She grasped that Jesus came for all, and there were no limits to His bounteous provisions. Jesus provided for both the children and those denied this privilege because of prejudice, racism, and gender bias. The Lord, the Son of David, had come to bless all and was true to His inclusive mission.

Some scholars hold to a different interpretation of the woman's response to Jesus' proverb. Their perspective is that Jesus demanded that she acknowledge that the disciples, and with them the people of Israel, deserved to be offered the gospel and blessings provided by the Messiah prior to any spiritual provisions coming to the Gentiles. Only after the woman accepted the "divinely ordained division between God's people and Gentiles" and the preferential ministry of Jesus to the people of Israel did He grant her request.[58] This view seems to be based on a literal understanding of Jesus' words as a truth assertion in verse 24, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

As has been shown in the discussion above, there does not seem to be evidence provided by Matthew himself that Jesus exclusively ministered to Israel. And one cannot find support in Matthew's Gospel for the view that Jesus expected non-Jewish believers to confess to their own racial-spiritual inferiority when compared to the Jews before they could receive help from the Messiah. It is possible that Matthew was arguing the very opposite for his readers who consisted of both Jews and Gentiles, and he was undermining the claim that either group had racial superiority.[59] Neither group had the right to assert spiritual or racial authority over the other;[60]

through the grace of Jesus, all people were saved by faith in Jesus alone (Acts 15:11). Both groups needed to recognize their spiritual defilement, repent, and come by faith to the Only One Messiah who could make them true sons of Abraham. He alone provided entrance into His Kingdom that included descendants of the patriarchs and those coming from the East and West.

Verse 28

Where Jesus had not addressed the woman when she first approached Him, He now spoke directly to her with an exclamation: "Oh woman, great is your faith! May it be to you as you desire"[61] (Ὦ γύναι, μεγάλη σου ἡ πίστις· γενηθήτω σοι ὡς θέλεις).[62]

Even without a word of deliverance, the Canaanite's demonized daughter was set free and made whole. Charette notes, "His exorcisms, effected as they are through the power of the Spirit of God, signify that the kingdom of God has come."[63] Christ's Kingdom had come to Gentiles in Syro-Phoenicia (Matt. 12:28; 4:16).

She demonstrated great faith in Him as a loving, powerful Messiah for all people. She approached Jesus with confidence that He would do something to help her tormented daughter. She was not distracted by the attitudes of Jesus' disciples. Throughout Jesus' indirect instructions aimed at His prejudiced disciples, she continued to focus on and worship Him.[64]

Jesus' words to her sound extremely different from His statement to His disciples about their faith. To them He said, "Oh you of little faith" (Matt. 14:31; 17:20). The Lord commended her before their onlooking eyes, "You have great faith." As with the centurion, Jesus' assessment of her faith must have shocked His Jewish audience (Matt. 8:10; 15:28). Matthew did not indicate how the disciples reacted to Jesus' words: "Your request is granted." They were ready to send her away. Jesus transformed her life and situation while using her presence and undistracted faith to expose the calloused, prejudiced hearts of His disciples. His acceptance of her and the healing of her daughter were steps in preparing them to eventually fulfill their roles as apostles delivering the salvation message to all nations.

The fact that "her daughter was healed from that very hour" (καὶ ἰάθη ἡ θυγάτηρ αὐτῆς ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης) must have been verified by ensuing reports that came to Jesus and the Twelve as they moved onward in their journey. Or perhaps, Otherwise, Jesus and the disciples would have then gone to the woman's home and testified of the girl's deliverance and healing. One might suspect that this entire experience had a profound impact on the disciples. While

harboring prejudice, exclusiveness, and a self-centered perspective, their Master exposed His disciples' collective heart condition by taking them to places home to people they had previously despised and avoided. He modelled love, acceptance, and inclusiveness and displayed His transforming power to change both the woman and them.

Matthew's Audience

It is possible that Matthew penned his Gospel for the believers in Antioch, a church consisting of Jews and Gentiles, neither exclusively Jewish nor Gentile (Acts 11:19-21; 15:1).[65] There was racial and religious tension among these Christians, which divided them and obscured their grasping of the true message of the gospel intended also for outsiders. The Syrian church was struggling with the ongoing influence of Pharisaism.[66] The apostle wrote to expose the struggle he and the other disciples had undergone to recognize their skewed understanding of Jesus and His mission and what was the true mission instead. It was not easy to transform their worldview and admit that that they should label no one unclean or defiled and that table fellowship must include all people groups. Their views of others had to be healed so they could fellowship at table together,[67] so that they could from now on demonstrate the acceptance and unity required for the body of Christ and moving forward continue to advance the discipling of the nations. With what Matthew had learned about being a true disciple of Jesus, the New Testament church he served now had to learn the same lessons.

Conclusion

If Jesus came not only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel but to offer salvation and healing to individuals from every tribe and nation, why did He limit His original commissioning of the disciples to the house of Israel (Matt. 10:5-6)? Jesus knew their racial and religious prejudices. If His emissaries brought the good news to Gentiles and Samaritans without love and compassion, let alone without the parameters of making relationships, the message of the gospel would be tainted in its delivery (see Luke 9:54-55; Acts 10:28; 11:2-3).[68] As a concession to their present, prejudiced state, His starting point for their evangelistic efforts was to order them not to go to the Gentile nations. He knew their attitudes would have to be significantly transformed before they could effectively make disciples among the nations. Jesus did not

condone their prejudices, but He recognized with time and with them learning through His own example, His disciples would arrive at the place where He would commission them to go and disciple every nation under Heaven. The uncleanness of the hearts and mouths expressed through prejudice, racial slurs, religious pride, and intolerance for others required forgiveness, as well as their own spiritual deliverance, training, and transformation provided by Christ alone.

To demonstrate the unilateral faithfulness of God to His covenant with Israel, Jesus came as a Jew to extend the offer of salvation to the people of Israel and the associated privilege of them knowing God as Savior and Lord. With this special relationship then came the responsibility of serving God as a kingdom of priests, a holy nation (Exodus 19:6), to mediate His grace to the nations of the world. While most members of the house of Israel struggled to accept their Messiah, particularly because He did not fulfill their expectations in the way He provided salvation and for whom He offered this gift, Jesus Christ continued with His saving plan of providing forgiveness, transformation, and a personal relationship for those who accepted Him. In word and deed throughout His life of ministry on earth, Jesus modeled the content and methodology of an all-inclusive nature of His gospel for the benefit of His disciples and His church.[69] The Canaanite woman provides an outstanding example of this truth, which needed to be understood by the disciples of Christ and by His New Testament church.

In a day of divisiveness, anger, and intolerance, followers of Christ then and still need to allow the Holy Spirit to examine their hearts and words when it comes to their thoughts and deeds towards others from different racial, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Acceptance, understanding, love, and unity must begin with His church and flow into one's immediate social context and beyond to the entire world, bringing healing, hope, and deliverance through the love, power, and holiness of the gospel.

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[1] C. Richard Wells, "New Testament Interpretation and Preaching," in *New Testament Criticism & Interpretation* (ed. David A. Black and David S. Dockery; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 575.

[2] Jeannine K. Brown advises, "During much of the exegetical process, the most important literary unit to attend to when reading a specific text is the entire book of the Bible in which it is found. For exegesis to stay true to what an author has communicated, the whole book must remain in view." Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021), 14.

[3] David Hill sums up the traditional perspective on Matthew's overall intentions: "Matthew's Gospel is written from a Jewish Christian standpoint in order to defend Christianity, to make acceptable to Jewish-Christian readers, and to prove that Jesus is the Messiah of the Jews." David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 40.

[4] Bailey observes, "The training of the disciples is a prominent feature in all four Gospels" and this certainly is the case with this story. He adds, "Jesus is not simply dealing with the woman, he is also interacting on a profound level with the disciples." Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 217, 219.

[5] Hill states, "The question of clean and unclean (verses 1-20) is closely related to the matter of Jewish attitudes towards Gentiles...It is therefore likely that this pericope was employed for the guidance of the Matthean church in its relations with Gentiles." Hill, *Gospel of Matthew*, 253.

[6] Keener identifies the Gospels as ancient biographies. For discussion, see Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (2nd ed.; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 37-38.

[7] Wright says that this story happens "in the wake of the dispute between Jesus and the Pharisees, and teachers of the law regarding clean and unclean food." He observes, "The clean-unclean distinction in Israel was fundamentally symbolic of the distinction between Israel and the nations. Accordingly, if Jesus abolished the distinction in relation to food (the symbol) then he simultaneously abolished the distinction in relation to Jews and Gentiles (the reality that the symbol pointed to). This point makes it all the more significant that both Matthew and Mark follow the dispute with two miracles for Gentiles (the woman of Tyre and the man in Decapolis) and probably a third (if the feeding of the four thousand took place on the Decapolis side of the lake)." Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 508-509. Also see Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 38, 155.

[8] Rather than considering Tyre and Sidon as remote villages, and while the people were followers of the fertility god, Eshmun, Sidon was renowned as a center of philosophical learning and both cities continued to have maritime and economic influence. See Bastiaan Van Elderen, "Sidon" (in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 5; ed. Merrill C. Tenney; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 428; D. J. Wiseman, "Sidon" and "Tyre" (in *New Bible Dictionary*; 3rd ed; ed. D.R.W. Wood; Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1996), 1099-1100, 1215-1216.

[9] Craig S. Keener comments that Jesus "needed a short vacation to rest with and teach his disciples." Craig S. Keener, *Matthew* (IVPNTCS; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 263. Myron S. Augsburger sees no reference to a respite but claims that Jesus traveled to the region of Tyre and Sidon "to provide opportunity for persons to hear and respond." Myron S. Augsburger, *Matthew* (CC; Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 195.

[10] D.A. Carson, *Matthew: Chapters 13 Through 28* (EBC; Grand Rapids: MI: Zondervan, 1995), 354. Jeremias holds the view that even in this distant region, Jesus moved among "the Jewish population." Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 35-36. Craig L. Blomberg believes that Jesus turned from those who rejected His message and ministry to those more receptive. "Jesus revealed himself as the Bread of life for Jews and Gentiles alike." Craig L. Blomberg, "Matthew" in *Holman Bible Handbook* (ed. David S. Dockery; Nashville, TN: Holman, 1992), 554.

[11] Moore explains that the Pharisees were committed to separation from anything, any person, situation, food, or conduct that compromised their separation unto God, His law, and His holiness. Their efforts were not to earn salvation but to keep them in the place where God's approval and blessings rested. George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (vol. 1; New York: Schocken, 1971), 59-62. Ablutions were intended to remove ceremonial defilement caused by contact with anything considered unclean. See Hill, T*he Gospel of Matthew*, 251.

[12] For further discussion on the significance of Jesus' comments related to ritual versus moral defilement, see Carson, *Matthew 13-28*, 352.

[13] Carson observes that their response shows that the disciples held the Pharisees in high regard. Carson, *Matthew 13-28*, 350.

[14] Regarding the Pharisees, Harlow purports that "a key element of their social program was to extend the priestly regulations of ritual purity mandated in Leviticus to all Jews in all spheres of life." Daniel C. Harlow, "Jewish Context of the NT" in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 375.

[15] Keener reports that Matthew believed that "a call to missions work demands that disciples first abandon ethnic and cultural prejudice." Yet Keener believes that this stage of Jesus' ministry "was for Israel alone." Keener, *Matthew,* 172, 263. Jeremias points out that Judaism considered itself a missional religion. But the premise of conversion of the Gentiles to faith in the one God, YHWH, was not dependent on the sending out of emissaries, but the presence of the Jewish Diaspora. Conversion required that Gentiles become religious and cultural Jews through the confession of one God, circumcision, observing the food laws, and keeping the Sabbath. Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, 12-17. In agreement with Jeremias' understanding of the missionary nature of Judaism, McKnight writes, "Jews were essentially uninvolved in such a thing as 'evangelism." Scot McKnight, *A Light*

among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991), 107. Also see J. Julius Scott, Jr., *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995), 343.

[16] Blomberg states that this label was intended to "conjure up horrors of Israel's enemies of old." Blomberg, "Matthew," 555.

[17] Jeremias reports, "The initiative is not taken by Jesus" who "limited his activity to Israel." Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, 31.

[18] Keener, *Matthew*, 171.

[19] Jeremias says that Jesus wished to remain in concealment. Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, 32.

[20] Ἐλέησόν is a second person singular aorist imperative indicating that her request for mercy was to Jesus alone.

[21] Much like the leper who boldly approached Jesus for healing assured that Jesus was able to heal his disease, his only question was if Jesus was willing (Matt. 8:2-3). The Canaanite woman seemed confident of both Christ's power and His willingness. She overstepped all normal cultural prohibitions to approach Him publicly driven by her faith in His ability and compassion.

[22] Keener, *Matthew*, 170.

[23] Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 220. Bailey further notes, "Thus far in his ministry Jesus' compassion for all was constantly on display and the disciples could not have missed it" (223).

[24] Jeremias says that Jesus' attitude towards her was "one of definite refusal"; He replied, "extremely harshly"; His response was a "last revulsion." Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, 26, 29, 32. France comments, "Jesus' initial reluctance to respond is overcome by the faith of the suppliant which refuses to be put off and which … draws Jesus' admiring comment." R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 309. Keener indicates that "Jesus simply snubs her. … It is possible that he is testing her … but he is certainly reluctant to grant her request and is providing an obstacle for her faith." Keener, *Matthew*, 263. Jusu comments that "for some unexplained reason, Jesus did not respond to her request immediately." John Jusu, *Africa Study Bible* (ed.; Chicago, IL: Oasis International, 2016), 1404.

[25] Bailey asserts, "Jesus chooses to give her a critical test." Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 220. Keener, referring to the centurion, the Canaanite woman, and the rich young ruler (chapters 8, 15, 19), claims that initial rejection like this was a common ploy for demanding greater commitment. Keener, *Matthew*, 173.

[26] Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 221.

[27] While Bailey does not note any connection between this pericope and the previous one, he does observe, "Jesus was voicing, and thereby exposing, deeply held prejudices buried in the minds of his disciples." Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 222.

[28] Hill asserts that this statement made by the quarrelsome, fault-finding disciples represents the Jewish Christian church who were opposed to the entry of Gentiles into the NT church. Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 254.

[29] As with the account of the leper, a Jewish teacher with a proper concern to maintain ritual purity would be expected to refuse to have anything to do with him. The same was assumed by the disciples for Jesus. See France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 307.

[30] For discussion on the nuances of the disciples' request, see Carson, *Matthew 13-28*, 354.

[31] Stein observes that Matthew recorded Jesus' journey outside the confines of Israel as he reached predominantly Gentile territories to demonstrate to His Gentile readers, so proving that "even during his lifetime Jesus was concerned for them. He came to bring the good news not just to the children of Abraham but to Gentiles as well." Robert H. Stein, *Jesus the Messiah: A Survey of the Life of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity 1996), 156. Wright reports, "The Gospels record that Jesus deliberately limited his itinerant ministry and that of his disciples for the most part to 'the lost sheep of Israel.' But they also show some significant engagements with Gentiles … it is simply false to say that Jesus had no interest in the world beyond his own Jewish people." Wright, *The Mission of God*, 507. Carson states that Jesus "recognized that his own mission was to Israel" and that His target audience was all Israel who were "regarded as lost sheep." Carson, Matthew 13-28, 355. Hill comments, "Jesus insisted that his call was to the children of Israel." Hill, T*he Gospel of Matthew*, 253. Also see Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (rev. ed.; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 29.

[32] In Luke's parallel account, Luke 9:1-6, there is no record of this restriction on the evangelistic commissioning of the Twelve. The absence of the prohibition in Luke serves to highlight the unique agenda of Matthew as he includes these limits on the early ministry of the disciples. And Matthew does note in these same instructions that there would be a time when the disciples would stand before the Gentiles to proclaim the gospel (Matt. 10:18). However, scholars like Jeremias interpret this statement meaning that "Jesus forbade his disciples during his lifetime to preach to non-Jews." Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, 19-25.

[33] Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 223.

[34] Mark's gospel account of this encounter does not include this saying (Mark 7:24-30). The reader must assume Matthew had a specific intent, distinct from the other gospel writers, for recording Jesus' response to the disciples' request.

[35] Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 222.

[36] Guthrie notes the universalistic, missional emphasis of Matthew's gospel, "unbounded by the restricted environment out of which it emerged." See Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 30.

[37] Jusu comments that Matthew "shows clearly this King came not only for Jews but for everyone." Jusu, *Africa Study Bible*, 1375.

[38] France observes, "By recounting Jesus' response to the most feared and ostracized medical condition of his day, Matthew has thus laid an impressive foundation for this collection of stories which demonstrate both Jesus' unique healing power and his willingness to challenge the taboos of society in the interests of human compassion" France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 306. Hill states, "To touch a leper was considered a violation of the ceremonial law of uncleanness (Lev. 5:3)." Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 156.

[39] Hill reports that Jesus' touching of the woman was an action banned by Jewish legalism. Hill, *Gospel of Matthew*, 160.

[40] Keener maintains this view. Yet he comments, "This narrative challenges prejudice in a number of ways…Jesus is not satisfied by our treating an enemy respectfully; he demands that we actually love that enemy." And Keener also asserts that this incident endorsed the Gentile mission in advance. Keener, *Matthew*, 172, 174.

[41] This perspective is held by Keener, *Matthew*, 173; Hill, *Gospel of Matthew*, 158; and France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 313. While France notes that the I (*egō*) makes Jesus' statement emphatic so that it could read, I myself will come and heal him, he interprets the statement as a question of surprise: QUOTED MATERIALS SEEM TO BE MISSING THE QUOTATIONS IN WHAT IS HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW. THE AUTHOR SHOULD BE CONTACTED FOR FIXING THIS PORTION OF THE SENTENCE. "You want *me* to come and heal him?" (Italics his).

[42] Wright comments that "a Gentile believed that the compassion and healing of Jesus could reach across the divide between Jew and Gentile." Wright, *The Mission of God*, 507. Taking a different tact, Keener explains that the centurion, in offering for Jesus to not come under his roof but rather heal his servant from afar, was the Gentile's concession to Jesus' mission to Israel. He recognized that for Jesus to come under his roof would contradict the Messiah's primary purpose for His Earthly ministry. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 65.

[43] Keener suggests that the reference to the West would be alluding to the great power of Rome; whereas the East was the region from which the Magi had come. These "pagans" would join the Messianic banquet with "the patriarchs—the messianic banquet Israel expected for itself." Keener, *Matthew*, 175.

[44] Keener indicates that there were Jewish people who expected salvation based on their descent from Abraham. Keener, *Matthew*, 174.

[45] See Georg Bertram, "ἔθνος, ἐθνικός" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (vol. 2; ed. by Gerhard Kittel; trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 364-369.

[46] Jeremias interprets the Great Commission as "the eschatological hour [that] has arrived. God no longer limits his saving grace to Israel, but turns in mercy to the whole Gentile world … the closing passage of the Matthaean gospel indirectly establish[es] the fact that the earthly ministry of Jesus has not yet embraced the Gentiles." Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, 39.

[47] Keener notes that the Early Church "naturally looked to accounts of Jesus' life for examples of ministry to the Gentiles," yet he holds the opinion that Jesus did not intentionally pursue ministry to Gentiles during His Earthly ministry. Keener's perspective seems to be contradictory when he claims that Jesus' ministry avoided Gentiles except on rare occasions, yet he believes that Jesus provided an example for Gentile ministry for the NT church. Keener, *Matthew*, 171.

[48] The verb form is imperfect emphasizing the continuous action of her adoration.

[49] Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, 29. Kapolyo proposes that this term of abuse was somehow conveyed to the women from Jesus with humor. Joe Kapolyo, "Matthew," in the *Africa Bible Commentary* (ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo; Nairobi, WordAlive, 2006), 1142.

[50] Bailey reports that "dogs in the Middle Eastern traditional culture, Jewish and non-Jewish, are almost as despised as pigs…. Dogs are never pets." Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 224.

[51] Bailey claims that Jesus used this insulting term to test the woman's grace towards haughty Jews and to discover if her resolve to see her daughter healed and her faith in Jesus' compassion and power would enable her to "absorb the insult and press on." Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 224. This perspective that Jesus intentionally insulted her yet expected her to show grace towards his humiliating utterance and maintain confidence in His love, compassion, and power seems contradictory to the caring nature of Jesus and thus runs counter to the attitudes within the disciples that He was attempting to transform.

[52] Carson, *Matthew 13-28*, 355. Jeremias explains, "Jesus does not grant her request until she has recognized the divinely ordained division between God's people and the Gentiles." Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, 30.

[53] Hill reports that "dogs" was a Jewish way of referring to Gentiles. Hill, *Gospel of Matthew*, 254.

[54] Keener comments that "it is unlikely that Christians would lightly attribute to Jesus a view they no longer held" to defend his view that Jesus was resisting her request because of her Gentile ethnicity. However, if one recognizes the lesson Matthew is teaching about Jesus' inclusiveness in the face of the disciples' racial narrowness and

exclusiveness, Keener's comment could reflect the transformed perspective needed in the Early Church. Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 415.

[55] As E. P. Sanders notes, "The idea of a universal God of love is completely opposed to the views of Jesus' contemporaries." E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 213.

[56] For the argument that καὶ γὰρ should be translated as "and even" rather than with the adversative, "but even," (which is used in the NIV), see Carson, *Matthew 13-28*, 356 n 27.

[57] The idea of Jesus miraculously providing an abundance of food for all those present while encircled by incredulous disciples is found on both sides of this pericope: Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 men plus their families (Matt. 14:19-21); Jesus' feeding of the 4,000 (Matt. 15:36).

[58] This view is advocated by Hill, *Gospel of Matthew*, 254; and Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, 29-30. Keener adds, "He is surely summoning her to recognize Israel's priority in the divine plan." Keener, *Matthew*, 264.

[59] Manson advanced the idea that Jesus came to create a new community of faith rather than promulgate the religious ideals of Jews, a group of believers "set free from chauvinistic nationalism, from the ambition to impose Israelite ideals of faith and conduct on the rest of the world...men and women who learned in apprenticeship to Jesus how to accept the rule of God." T. W. Manson, *Jesus and the Non-Jews* (London: Athlone Press, 1955), 18. Similar concerns are found in Paul's epistle to the Roman church. Paul addresses Jewish arrogance in Romans 2:17-24 and Gentile superiority in Romans 11:18-20, 25-26; 12:3, 16. However, for a perspective that Matthew is certainly unPauline, see Benjamin L. White, "The Eschatological Conversion of 'All the Nations' in Matthew 28:19-20: (Mis)reading Matthew through Paul" *JSNT* 36 (2014): 353-382.

[60] While Paul affirms that God established His covenant with Abraham and the people of Israel, and that Jesus came to Israel as a Jewish person to be their Messiah and fulfill God's promises to the patriarchs and prophets—the promise that He would bless them with His unchanging love, His persistent offer of salvation, and His continuous plan to use them as instruments to bring salvation to all humankind—Christ came to be the Savior of all. There is no favoritism when it comes to His blessings and judgment (Romans 2:9, 11). Throughout Christ's life, He fulfilled his mission to be the Savior of the world (John 4:4, 42; consider the implications of Jesus' first public message; Luke 4:24-30). Matthew showed how difficult it was for Jesus' Jewish disciples and Jewish Christians in the Early Church to grasp the fact that their descendancy provided no guarantee of salvation. Anyone who came to Christ with faith in His Lordship and saving purposes, whether it was during His earthly ministry, after the resurrection, or following the Day of Pentecost, experienced His welcome into His Kingdom.

[61] My translation.

[62] Daniel B. Wallace comments, "Here the presence of the particle ὦ is used in contexts where deep emotion is to be found." Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 68.

[63] Blaine Charette, *Restoring Presence: The Spirit in Matthew's Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 67.

[64] Each of the three times that she addresses Jesus, it is as "Lord" (κύριε, the vocative of κύριος).

[65] Regarding the original recipients of Matthew's Gospel and the makeup of the church, Keener proposes, "The best (though far from certain) and most common case for provenance fits some urban center in Syro-Palestine (often thought to be Antioch) where Greek was spoken, which included a sizable Jewish community residentially segregated from Gentiles—Jews who perhaps remained bitter about the recent massacres of 66-70 and remained in contact with theological issues in Judea." Keener, *Matthew*, 33. Also see Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 42-44. Guthrie views the original audience as a "mixed group" most likely in Antioch. Guthrie, *New Testament*

Introduction, 38-39. France expresses doubts about the original audience being Antioch. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 15.

[66] Keener believes that Matthew was "engaged in polemic against Jewish authorities...the successors of Pharisaism, probably the founders of what became the rabbinic movement at Jamnia and those Jewish leaders throughout Syro-Palestine who may have been aligned with them." Keener, *Matthew*, 34. Guthrie notes a "strongly anti-Pharisaic tone to the gospel." Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 33. Harlow claims that in the decades after 70 CE, the Pharisees attained true predominance in their influence over the Jewish society. Daniel C. Harlow, "Jewish Context of the NT," 375.

[67] Wright comments that for the early Christians, "The importance of eating together as a sign of unity in Christ was highly visible and very significant. Such table fellowship within the [E]arly [C]hurch cut right across both the Jew-Gentile and also the social divide of economic status." Wright, *The Mission of God*, 510.

[68] According to France, the social interaction of conservative, orthodox Jewish Christians with Gentiles of any faith persuasion, as demonstrated in Acts 10–11, shows "the repugnance felt by even a relatively open-minded Jew to such 'defilement'; for a Jewish teacher in the public eye, it would be an even more defiant breach of taboo than even Jesus' controversial mixing with 'tax-collectors and sinners' (Matt. 9:10–11)." France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 313. Yet Jesus set the example of breaking these restrictive taboos to bring the gospel to all people.

[69] Stein states, "They would learn both from him and of him. They were uniquely chosen to witness his actions and deeds and to master his teachings. Only by remaining with him would they be able to observe who Jesus was and master the gospel teachings Jesus would entrust to them." Stein, *Jesus the Messiah*, 119