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Presenting the Gospel Message in Alignment with the Asian Learning Mode and Style in the Context of Interpersonal Relationships

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INTRODUCTION

About two thousand years ago, Jesus gave His mandate to the first group of followers that they should spread the message of the good news or gospel of the Kingdom to all the peoples of the earth. The mandate, commonly called the Great Commission, is recorded in the four Gospels and the book of Acts. Christ's mandate did not prescribe a detailed procedure or process for spreading the gospel message. Instead, He gave His followers a broad directive: "While you are going in your everyday life, make learners, baptizing and teaching them what I have directed you..." (Matthew 29:19-20). Luke described Jesus' mandate in Acts 1:8, "Be witnesses unto me." The core of the mandate is to make students or learners. The verb form $\mu\alpha\nu\theta\alpha\nu\omega$ (manthano), meaning to learn, stems from the same ancient Proto-Indi-European root that gave us words like "mentor."¹ The focus of Christ's commission is to establish learners who continue studying, following, and discipling in the ways of Christ. In other words, people become learners through the acts of Christians being a witness, baptizing, and teaching. Christians are called to make learners or communities of learners, commonly called followers or disciples of Christ. Upon faith or belief, the learners—Christ's followers or disciples—are consequently brought into a relationship with Jesus Christ and His earthly communities comprising Christ's other learners—followers or disciples. Making learners is the "what" of the mandate of Christ.

In Christ's three years of mentoring the 12 disciples (Apostles), He broadly modeled what a mentor should look like in making learners. He provided them with

general guidance. He directed his mentoring efforts on forming the character qualities of a mentor who would be making learners—or followers of Christ—look like.

With the "what" of the mandate being indisputably clear, the "how" of the mandate is not prescribed but left to the appraisal and imagination of Christ's learners/followers or disciples. In other words, He

CONTENTS

- 1 Presenting the Gospel Message in Alignment with the Asian Learning Mode and Style in the Context of Interpersonal Relationships**
Chansamone Saiyasak
- 9 Reflection on Missionary Societies and Prospect for New Missionary Structures**
Steve K. Eom
- 19 One Person Media Ministry**
Minhye Kang
- 27 The Impact of Covid-19 on Transforming Missional Perspectives on Public Health**
Grace Kim
- 30 Missions in the Post-Pandemic Era: Challenges and Opportunities in the New Normal**
Esther Yang
- 33 National Report: Vietnam**
Tran The Thien Phuoc
- 37 Book Review**
Suraja Raman

1. Abarim Publications' Online Biblical Greek Dictionary, " $\mu\alpha\nu\theta\alpha\nu\omega$ (manthano)," accessed April 10, 2023, <https://www.abarim-publications.com/DictionaryG/m/m-a-n-th-a-n-om.html>

wanted them to figure out and determine the process, style, and approach suitable for making learners or communities of learners of Christ suited for their circumstances and contexts.

The "how" of making learners—or followers—of Christ for the twelve disciples was initially centered in Jerusalem, and the context of the eastern Mediterranean reflected the Jewish culture and learning. Peter's original audience or learning community was Jewish and Jewish diasporic peoples who gathered at the Day of Pentecost to hear His sermon² and also who gathered to listen to His gospel message at the event of the lame beggar's healing.³ He utilized the narrative style and approach to His gospel presentation, asking the audience to observe and reflect on the concrete experience and relationship between Christ and the founding of the Jewish people and nation through Abraham and David.

Both Peter and Stephen engaged their Jewish audience in alignment with the learning style of the Jewish people and culture—narratively observing, reflecting, and acknowledging the concrete, relational experience and connection between the forefathers and the previous knowledge and authorities of the Jewish people and nation.

In spreading the newfound faith and making learners—followers of Christ—out of the Jewish people, Stephen made use of the same narrative approach, observing and reflecting on the concrete connections among the ancestors of the Jewish nation, such as Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and David.⁴ Both Peter and Stephen engaged their Jewish audience in alignment with the learning style of the Jewish people and culture—narratively observing, reflecting, and acknowledging the concrete, relational experience and connection between the forefathers and the previous knowledge and authorities of the Jewish people and nation.

The Apostle Paul's gospel presentation took an opposite approach and style of learning to Peter and Stephen. His audience was primarily the Hellenistic gentiles, taking a concise and logical approach and style to learning, preferring ideas and concepts more important than people. Additionally, Paul's audience learned through problem-solving, applying concepts to new experiences, and being less concerned with

2. Acts 2:14-41 (ESV)

3. Acts 3:1-10 (ESV) 4 Acts 7:1-51 (EVS)

4. Acts 7:1-51 (EVS)

interpersonal relationships and activities. Much of Paul's approaches to the gospel propagation and writings reflected the (Western) Hellenistic peoples and cultures of Asia Minor and Rome characterized as Western, individualistic, self-authorizing, and abstract conceptualization.

Peter/Stephen and Paul differ in "how" they engaged their audience and contexts. Their styles and approaches in presenting the gospel message to make learners or followers of Christ reflected the circumstances and contexts in which their audience learned and processed the new ideas/concepts or concrete experiences of God and Christ. In these two examples, the "how" of Christ's mandate of the Great Commission was developed individually to respond to the learning style of the contexts of the mentors of the gospel—Peter/Stephen and Paul—to make "learners" of those to whom they were ministering.

Nevertheless, although their gospel message presentation to make learners or followers of Christ differs in the learning style suited uniquely to their context, they also found commonality relative to their context in how Christ's learners or followers were made. That commonality was interpersonal relationships, referred to as the *oikos* relationships.

Christians ought to give weight to the learning mode or style of the new knowledge of their audience. How do the people, community, or context process and integrate new information and concepts into their learning and growth? Understanding their learning mode or style and how they process and integrate new knowledge and ideas in their learning and growing process will inform Christians how to propagate the gospel effectively to them and make learners—followers—of Christ and how to grow them in Christ's learning and believing communities as Christ's learners or followers.

The presenter/author believes Asians predominately receive or learn the gospel message through their reflective observation and concrete experience in the context of interpersonal relationships. Because Asia's current practices of missionary gospel message presentation predominately pattern after abstract conceptualization that stresses the importance of understanding and accepting the gospel concepts over relationships and people, Asian missions and churches are experiencing a low outcome regarding Christian conversion. How should they shape their approach to evangelism in Asia contexts to be more effective in making learners or followers of Christ? How should they adapt their style of presenting the gospel that would align with the learning styles of Asian learners so that they will effectively achieve the mission or objective of making Asians Christ's learners or followers?

Dominant Evangelistic Approach in Asia

The current evangelistic approaches to making learners or followers of Christ being utilized by Asian missions and churches in Asian contexts

predominately focus on transferring an idea or concept of the gospel that the Asian hearers and learners are required to process through deductive rationalization. These approaches assume that Christian conversion has been achieved once a person conceptualizes the content of the gospel message. These gospel messengers theorize and put forth the proposition that if Asian nationals admit the notion of their sin and accept/believe Christ's death and resurrection for their sin, they are counted as learners or followers of Christ. Based upon how they became learners or followers of Christ—that is, concept/truth proposition or abstract conceptualization, they presume that is how Asians learn about Christ and engage the knowledge of Christ in the same way they have had.

Asian Audience's Responses to Asian Mission of Making Christ's Learners/Followers

While the small parts of Asia, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan, learn and accept information/new idea, especially the gospel message, through a logical thinking process (abstract conceptualization); the overwhelming majority of Asia still learn and process information, learn new ideas, and engagement through concrete experiences. When these Asians are presented with the gospel message to accept/believe as a concept, they are just observing and reflecting on which they have been proposed. They, in all probability, will not respond in favor of acceptance of the gospel message and become learners or followers of Christ because the gospel proposition will not align with how they learn, process, and engage in new information or ideas.

The current evangelistic approaches used in Asia, heavily focused on changing individualistic minds, are not suitable for Asian contexts, who are mostly collectivistic. An Associate Professor of Psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary, Jenny H. Pak, elaborated on the process of religious conversion for Asians who live under the collectivist mentality:

In many Asian communities, coming to faith is not simply the individualistic decision so common in the Western world. In more collectivistic communities, we often see families converting to Christianity as a unit rather than simply as individuals. Chinese folk religions and Daoism incorporate ancestral worship and the concept of passing on the family torch. Thus, when a person converts to Christianity, they may be extinguishing this family torch. Hence, in deeply relational cultures, one can be disowned for betraying the family by taking on new beliefs and practices as a Christian.⁵

The gospel message introduced to the Korean context exemplifies this approach. A well-known Asian missiologist Julie Ma, Professor of Mission

and Intercultural Studies at Oral Roberts University, described:

The Christianity that was introduced in Korea was a western and individualistic form of faith. Thus, the conservative and evangelical tendency among Korean Christians accentuated the individual dimension of faith. Such ran against the socio-cultural fabrics of Korean society, where communal interests precede personal concerns.⁶

The majority of Asians successfully responded to the gospel message from the presentation of the gospel in terms of concrete experiences relative to power dynamics. The gospel messengers stress the power of God, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit overcoming sufferings, sicknesses, disasters, and misfortunes and bringing prosperity has provided the concrete experiences to engage, learn, and be transformed. The Pentecostal/Charismatic evangelistic efforts account for the vast majority of Christian conversion throughout Asia due to the emphasis on the concrete experience of the power dynamics of the gospel, responding to the felt needs of everyday life. Julie Ma elaborated on this point:

It is within this social context that Pentecostal faith quickly spread among the socially marginalized [in Asia]. Pentecostal's lively worship, anticipation of God's immediate interference, theology of empowerment by the Spirit, and outward signs (e.g., speaking in tongues, healing) have stimulated the swiftest rising in Asia. Emphasis on an experiential dimension of religious life and the affecting aspect of human life has brought a powerful emotional and social release and introduced 'religious experience.'⁷

Much of the current evangelistic approaches practiced in Asia are embedded with Western thoughts and approaches that collide with Asian religious views and cultures and the way Asian learn and accept the gospel. These practices inherited from major Protestant traditions, such as the Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Baptists, heavily stress the conceptualized or creedal aspect of the Christian faith, faced tough challenges and rejection by Asian learners due to its approach to the presentation of the gospel message abstractly, rationalistically, dualistically, linearly, and in either/or terms. Those features of elements of the evangelistic practices, presenting the gospel message experientially, concretely, holistically, non-dualistically, and in circular or both/and terms, found alignments with Asia's religious and cultural societies and achieved sizeable adherents. Protestant's Pentecostals/Charismatics align more closely with this approach.

Asians have three core values that guide their behavior and conduct of religious change or conversion: harmony, relationality, and circularity.

5. Jenny H. Pak et al, "Selfies, Upward Mobility, Conversion, and the Gospel of Western Individualism," Fuller Studio, December 14, 2022, <https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/selfies-upwardmobilityconversion-and-the-gospel-of-western-individualism/>

6. Julie Ma, "Influence of Pentecostal Spirituality to Asian Christianity," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 23, no. 2 (August 2020): 118.

7. Julie Ma, 110.

The gospel presentation of the current evangelistic approach in the Asian contexts also encourages confrontation and conflict with the social values of most Asians whom the gospel messengers attempt to make learners or followers of Christ.⁸ Man Yee Ho, an Asian sociologist at the City University of Hong Kong, revealed this reality:

It is also evident that interpersonal harmony has been prominent in traditional East Asian cultural values. From the perspective of collectivistic cultures that emphasize group harmony and saving others' faces, forgiveness functions as a strategy for the maintenance of social relationships.⁹

Together with their collective mindset, social values play an essential role in developing their norms and thus become standards to guide how they learn and accept the gospel message being presented to them. As long as the presentation of the gospel message is aligned with the Asian core values and the learning style of the Asian receivers, they will be open to reflecting on the gospel as individuals and as a group.

Asians set core values as a condition and instrument for maintaining the group's coherence. They define the limits of the group's interpersonal relationships. A prominent British social psychologist, Michael A. Hogg, agrees: "Groups also provide the parameters for what we do on a day-to-day basis and with whom we are likely to spend time. The group, in turn, provides the context for developing interpersonal relationships."¹⁰ Hogg stressed the importance of norms to keep people in their groups or (ingroups) aligned and conformed to the goals and cohesion of the groups. Through the concept of normative influence, Hogg maintained that groups could direct the behavior of their members:

Groups can also influence members indirectly through the power of social norms that describe and

8. Chansamone Saiyasak, "The Development of Asian Christian Spirituality," (paper presentation, Asian Society of Missiology Forum 2022, Zoom Online Forum, November 24-26, 2022), 7.

9. Man Yee Ho, "Forgiving in East Asian Cultures: Theory and Empirical Research," in *Handbook of Forgiveness*, eds. Everett L. Worthington, Jr., and Nathaniel G. Wade, 234-41 (New York: Rout-

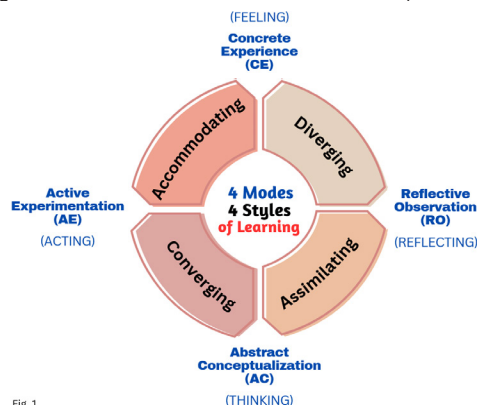


Fig. 1
Kolb Experiential Learning

ledge, 2020), 235.

10. Michael A. Hogg, "Social Identify and the Sovereignty of the Group," in *Individual Self, Relational Self, and Collective Self*, eds. Constantine Sedikides, Marilynn B. Brewer (New York: Routledge, 2016), chap. 8, kindle.

prescribe appropriate behavior for group members in that context. In the absence of direct social pressure, people conform to group norms.

Experiential Learning and Making Christ's Learners/Followers

One of the most relevant explanations for the little or non-response of Asians to the gospel propagation as it is currently being practiced may have to do with the concept of experiential learning by David Kolb, a premier educational scientist. Kolb's experiential learning proposes that people receive and learn new experiences or ideas, such as the gospel, through a learning cycle that consists of four learning modes (Fig. 1): the Concrete Experience/CE mode (feeling), the abstract conceptualization/AC mode (thinking), the reflective observation/RO mode (reflecting), and the active experimentation/AE (acting). This cycle is so natural and organic that people unconsciously engage in it.

In learning and growing, people are apt to apply two learning modes: one mode from the AC vs. CE dimension and the other from the AE vs. RO dimension. The combination of two learning modes—one from the AC vs. CE learning dimension and the other from the AE vs. RO dimension—results in four basic learning styles (Fig. 1): diverging, comprising the CE and RO modes; the converging, the AC and AE modes; assimilating, the AC and RO modes; and accommodating, the CE and AE modes. Four learning styles were conceived to be the way or channel people across all cultures receive new experiences or concepts, such as the gospel. Although people may possess a varying degree of all four learning styles, their preferred dominant style takes charge in processing information, concept, or experience being introduced to them—this includes the gospel message being communicated or presented to them by the gospel messenger.

In the CE (feeling), the Asian receiver is presented or encountered with the gospel in concrete forms or experiences or a reinterpretation of an existing experience in the light of new concepts. In the RO (reflecting), the Asian receiver reflects on the new concrete experience in the light of their existing knowledge. Any inconsistencies in the new experience will face early rejection. In the AC (thinking), the reflection will give rise to a new idea or concept or an adaptation/modification of an existing abstract conception or notion. In the AE (acting), the newly created or modified concepts involve experimentation so the receiver/learner can experience its outcome.

Yoshitaka Yamazaki of Bunkyo University, Japan; Michiko Toyama of Bunkyo University, Japan; and Thitiwat Attrapreyangkul of the Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, Thailand, through their recent research, describe the characteristics of the four learning styles:

People who have a diverging learning style tend to use

*feeling and reflecting, which are also good at forming good relationships with people, respecting others and their values, viewing issues from various perspectives, and being patient. In contrast, those with a converging learning style develop the ability to make quick decisions, evaluate pros and cons, devise practical solutions, and argue logically and pragmatically. Those with an assimilating learning style are able to make ideal plans, organize information, analyze issues logically and conceptually, and integrate information and ideas into a model. Finally, those with an accommodating learning style have strength in taking action and initiative, leading people, creating team spirit, and getting things done.*¹¹

Japanese and Thai adult learners were categorized as having a diverging learning style that uses the CE mode (feeling) more than the AC mode (thinking) and the RO mode (reflecting) more than the AE mode (acting). In contrast, the US learners were classified as having an assimilating style with a strong preference for the AC mode over the CE mode and a preference for the RO mode over the AE mode. The study results also found that the US adult learners at 71% either assimilating or converging, and the Japanese adult learners at least 80% either accommodating or diverging, followed by Thai behind the Japanese.

Due to their diverging style of learning, Japanese and Thai adult learners "like to listen with reflective observation and prefer to form interpersonal relationships."¹² They like to have things explained to them and their group members by authority figures with whom respect and have interpersonal relationships. They then integrate all group members' views into a conclusive decision. Whereas the US learners, characterized by their assimilating style, focus not on interpersonal connections but on logical and explicit arguments, each coming to their own final decision. The Japanese/Thai learners emphasize and celebrate unity and conformity, while the US learners, diversity and uniqueness.

A similar finding was found in the study of Japanese and American managers as indicated by Yamazaki in another study: "Japanese managers are more concrete and reflective, whereas American managers are more abstract and active. Their study shows that Japanese managers are linked with the diverging learning style and American managers lie in the converging learning style."¹³ According to a recent study on Thai learners, over 80% of learners are characterized by a diverging/accommodating style combination. The diverging/accommodation style combination (CE mode) stresses

people orientation, while the accommodating/converging combination (AC mode) emphasizes concept or idea orientation.¹⁴ While English-speaking nationals of Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan tend to function in AC mode (converging/assimilating styles), however, the majority of the population of these countries are oriented to CE learning mode, where interpersonal relationships serve as the context for learning.

The Connection Between Asians' Learning Modes/Styles and The Making of Learners or Followers of Christ

Concerning the Christian ideas or concepts of God, His Son Jesus, and the concepts of sins and salvation, or the gospel, which Christian missions have attempted to communicate to Asian learners in Asia for centuries, the gospel messengers almost always displayed the Christian message to Asian learners or recipients in the abstract conceptualization (AC) mode, either in the converging style or assimilating style, because that was how they learned or received the gospel and became Christ's learners or followers. The Christian faith was the compelling option after evaluating the pros and cons and making the arguments logically and pragmatically (converging learning style). After analyzing it logically and conceptually, Christ was the plausible choice (assimilating learning style).

The Asian learners or recipients, who functioned in the abstract conceptualization (AC) mode with either converging or assimilating as their dominant learning style, engaged the new gospel idea and concept, integrated it into their lives, and became believers.

The Asian learners or recipients, who functioned in the abstract conceptualization (AC) mode with either converging or assimilating as their dominant learning style, engaged the new gospel idea and concept, integrated it into their lives, and became believers. Others tried the concept of God for a while and abandoned it afterward. The rest changed their religious affiliation to Christianity for external reasons. Through them, the gospel is communicated to other Asians as an abstract concept to be grasped. However, the results are that the bulk of Asia remains far from Christ's learners or followers. Most Asians receive process or learn new information, including the gospel message, through a concrete experience

11. Yoshitaka Yamazaki et al, "Cross-Cultural Differences in Learning Style and Learning Skills: A Comparison of Japan, Thailand, and the USA," in Handbook of Research on Cross-Cultural Business Education, eds. Chandan Maheshkar and Vinod Sharma, 160-182 (Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2018), 165, <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-3776-2.ch008>.

12. Yoshitaka Yamazaki et al, 170.

13. Yoshitaka Yamazaki, "Learning Styles and Typologies of Cultural Differences: A Theoretical and Empirical Comparison," International Journal of Intercultural Relations 29, no. 5 (2005): 535, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.07.006>.

14. Khajornsak Buaraphan, "Grades 1-12 Thai Students' Learning Styles according to Kolb's Model," Asian Social Science 11, no. 10 (2015): 191.

(CE mode) in the diverging or accommodating learning style through interpersonal relationships. They must be able to feel or experience the gospel in the context of or in connection to those in their interpersonal relationship network—such as family, community, clan, etc. In other words, they learn and transform with those in their oikos. For Asian learners or recipients whose dominant learning mode is the CE (concrete experience) and whose learning style is either diverging or accommodating, the knowledge of God/Jesus, or the gospel, can only be related through concrete experiences, such as (1) God's healing from a sickness, (2) delivering from misfortune, disaster, evil spirits, poverty, hunger, suffering, death, etc., (3) miracles in one's life, (4) dreams and visions, (5) prosperity, (6) overwhelming presence of God that brings comfort and security, (7) a changed life by God of someone in close interpersonal relationships, and (8) the like. The gospel cannot be passed on logically or conceptually through knowledge transfer. The Asian learners or recipients must be guided (by people in their interpersonal relationships or the oikos) to experience salvation as Christ's learners or followers.

The Essentiality of Interpersonal Relationships or Oikos or The Asian Learners

As collectivist and socializing-minded Asian learners or followers of Christ, interpersonal relationships (oikos) are essential to learning and receiving the gospel experience or salvation experience. The interpersonal relationships or oikos are necessary context throughout their lifetime, including the period before the exploratory experience with the gospel and after embracing the gospel as Christ's learners or followers. Yamazaki underscored the importance of interpersonal relationships:

Interpersonal relationships are crucial in high-context culture [which is most of Asia]. This trait is also congruent with the concrete experience [CE –mode of learning] ...

*People orientation is an attribute of the concrete experience mode whose persons tend to prefer interpersonal and social issues to task issues.*¹⁵

Hazel Rose Markus, a well-renown social psychologist at Stanford University, USA, and Shinobu Kitayama, a respected social psychologist at Kyoto University, Japan, described the interdependence and interpersonal relationships of Asian learners as follows:

Experiencing interdependence entails seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one's behavior is determined, contingent on, and, to a large extent, organized by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationship... Within such a construal, the self becomes most meaningful and complete when it is cast in the appropriate

social relationship.... This view of the self and the relationship between the self and others features the person not as separate from the social context but as more connected and less differentiated from others. People are motivated to find a way to fit in with relevant others, to fulfill and create an obligation, and in general to become part of various interpersonal relationships.

Asians belong to social or interpersonal relationships (oikos) in which the gospel and the concept of God, Jesus Christ, and salvation can concretely be experienced through active experimentation and reflection. The oikos as an instrumentality for spreading the Christian faith during the ministry of Jesus and the early church was a typical pattern. The oikos type of "biblical pattern of evangelism which flowed so freely, fearlessly and forcefully through the early church across the Mediterranean world."¹⁶ Woft argued further:

*The apostolic church used the interlocking social systems of common kinship/community/interest as the backbone for communicating the gospel. The basic thrust of New Testament evangelism was not individual evangelism, it was not mass evangelism, and it was definitely not child evangelism. The normative pattern of evangelism in the early church was OIKOS EVANGELISM.*¹⁷

Peter B. Hammond, Professor of Anthropology at Indiana University, and David G. Mandelbaum, Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, pointed out basic social relationship units—the family/kinship, the local community, and the clan/common interest groups—upon which all other social relationships are based.¹⁸ These relationship units form the oikos of Asian learners of the concrete experience (CE) learning mode operating in either a diverging or accommodating learning style.

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Dane W. Fowlkes, Assistant Professor of Religion at East Texas Baptist University, USA, and P. Verster, Professor of Missiology at University of Free State, South Africa, found that utilizing oikos evangelism

¹⁶ Tom Woft, "Oikos Evangelism -- Biblical Pattern," Apostolic Information Service, accessed 10 April 2023, updated 8 February 2008, <https://www.apostolic.edu/oikos-evangelism-the-biblical-pattern/>

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁵ Yoshitaka Yamazaki, "Learning Styles and Typologies," 8.

prevents "removing believers from their familial systems and reducing their potential for spiritual influence." Holding to the position that the oikos is the natural New Testament means of propagating the gospel and making converts, Fowlkes and Verster concluded with these statements regarding the propagation of the gospel among the Asian Indians:

We see that Indians prefer to make decisions as a group or family, rendering the Western individualistic approach to "deciding for Christ" ineffective and counterproductive. As a result, the authors propose that the best way to facilitate a church planting movement among Hindus is to refrain from planting churches. In other words, the contextually appropriate approach to evangelizing forward caste Hindus is to allow converts to remain as vital parts of their familial systems and make disciples according to accepted Hindu patterns of spiritual guidance. In time, converts will influence other family members toward Christ and, together, become a 'house church' in the truest sense of the term. This non church planting method of facilitating a church planting movement among Hindu people groups may sound contradictory, but will actually liberate from the ineffective and counterproductive traditional missionary methods of the past in India and usher in the first church planting movements among forward caste Hindus in India.¹⁹

Michael Green, a British theologian, Anglican priest, and Christian apologist, stressed the centrality of the household in the propagation of the Christian faith. He elaborated:

The household proved the crucial medium for evangelism within natural groupings, whatever member of the family was first won to the faith. It was preferable, of course, if the father was converted first, for then he would bring over the whole family with him. This is what happened in the case of Cornelius, when he contemplated a change of superstitio. He gathered together his blood relatives, his slaves and his friends, and together they heard the preaching of Peter. When Cornelius professed faith his whole familia ... was baptized with him. Thyatira operating for the time being in Philippi. Her whole household... was baptized. So was that of the Philippian jailer when he professed faith. It was the natural thing.²⁰

The idea of household (*oikos*) evangelism was found throughout the Scriptures; however, it was the premier missiologist, Donald McGavran, who advanced the concept of "web movements" (*oikos*) from his initial missiological research. He articulated:

Some cultures know little or nothing of individualized decision-making processes, so common in the West. Important decisions are made only in groups.

19. D.W. Fowlkes and P. Vester, "Family (*oikos*) Evangelism for Reaching Forward Caste Hindu in India," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 27, no. 1 (January 2006): 335.

20. Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Guilford, Surrey: Eagle, 1995), 254.

However, even those who are called to evangelize more individualistic societies or traditionally Christian, but nominal, areas should pay close attention to people movement theory in general and to what I will later refer to as web movements in particular...understanding the dynamics of the web movement is a distinct advantage in leading a church to growth.²¹

Through interpersonal relationships in the context of Asia's natural groupings—the family/kinship, the local community, and the clan/common interest groups—the natural process of experiencing, learning, and integrating concepts of God, Jesus Christ, and the salvation into the worldview and everyday life of the Asian learners.

CONCLUSION

The social distancing policy and the mandatory isolation enforced in every country on the global level during the recent COVID-19 pandemic have revealed the necessity of personal contacts and social relationships. Human beings are created to reflect the image of the relational triune God to relate socially to other human beings through interpersonal relationships. More importantly, in light of the following bases and precedents, Asian missions should consider modifying their approach to the propagation of the gospel to Asians that could improve their outcome in fulfilling the Great Commission mandate of making Christ's learners, followers, or disciples of Asia's collectivist societies and communities:

- 1) Jesus' mandate to His followers is for them to make learners, who are followers or disciples of Him and His way — Matthew 28:19-20,
- 2) Jesus gave the "what" of the mandate but provided guidance for the "how" of the mandate to His followers and left them with the flexibility and adaptability to engage their contexts,
- 3) The New Testament and the early church present the gospel propagation patterns of engaging the learners and their contexts—through the *oikos* interpersonal relationships,
- 4) Missiological grounds for gospel propagation in the context of interpersonal relationships, and,
- 5) The anthropological, sociological, educational, and behavioral foundations for optimal engagement of the contexts—the learning modes and styles (CE mode, converging/ accommodating learning styles that would allow the gospel and the concepts of God, Jesus Christ, and salvation to be received, experienced, learned, and integrated into Asia's families/ kinship, local communities, and clan/interest groups.

21. Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 220-21.

The author calls upon the Asian missions community to approach the gospel propagation and reach out to Asian oikos and make them learners/followers/disciples of Christ through their learning mode (concrete experience) in alignment with their dominant learning style (diverging or accommodating) in the context of their interpersonal relationships (oikos) to fulfill the Great Commission mandate of Christ effectively. Christ commanded, "While you are going in your everyday life, make learners of me..." (Matthew 28:19).

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Reflection On Missionary Societies and Prospect for New Missionary Structures

Steve K. Eom

"New Wine into New Wineskins"-Matthew 9:17

Christianity has become a worldwide religion. More Christians live in non-Western regions such as Asia, Africa and South America than in Western regions, such as Europe or North America. A growing number of scholars say that the central axis of Christianity has moved from the northern hemisphere to the southern hemisphere. However, this does not mean that non-Western countries have become a Christendom like what the West did in the past. Many non-Western Christians still live in religious pluralism. Most Christians still exist as a minority in their society or country, struggling to survive in the shadow of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, or Communism. Also, the fact that the central axis of Christianity has moved to the southern hemisphere is only in terms of population because the dominant theologies and forms of Christianity as a whole are still very much Western. The Western Church still holds the leadership in the global Church.

The structure of missionary societies is not suitable for today's vision and circumstances. Missionary societies were born in a specific cultural context; they were created in the midst of the political, economic, and social circumstances of the West, and were deeply impacted by imperialism and the Enlightenment. Despite their contribution to the global mission movement, they are no longer relevant to the global Church, especially non-Western churches, in today's transformed environment.

The structure or model of missionary societies were born in the political, economic, social, and cultural environment of the Western church. Missionary societies have made significant contributions to the spread of the Gospel as a leading force in the world missionary movement over the past two and a half centuries. Just as Western churches still hold the leadership of the global Church, the structure of

missionary societies has existed as a leading structure not only in Western countries but also among non-Western countries. The question is whether this mission structure is still suitable for today's global environment and for non-Western churches. Wilbert Shenk describes the challenges mission societies face today:

"Structures cannot lead the way. They must be devised in response to a vision ... we will not find the way forward by concentrating on salvaging or reviving old structures. Indeed, we ought to be prepared to evaluate them honestly and take necessary decisions to terminate those that no longer serve a valid purpose. We should turn our energies to discerning what the shape of mission is to be in the changed world situation and find the wineskins that can hold the new wine of God's Spirit."(Shenk 1999:185)

Structures for mission have only a secondary or derivative importance. They emerge from theological vision and the global context (Stanley 2003: 39). Therefore, the Church has to boldly discard an existing structure and find a new structure that is appropriate to new vision and new circumstances. The structure of missionary societies is not suitable for today's vision and circumstances. Missionary societies were born in a specific cultural context; they were created in the midst of the political, economic, and social circumstances of the West, and were deeply impacted by imperialism and the Enlightenment. Despite their contribution to the global mission movement, they are no longer relevant to the global Church, especially non-Western churches, in today's transformed environment. Therefore, the global Church, especially non-Western churches, must find new structures appropriate to their environment. This article will summarize the historical background of missionary societies and then point out the problems and limitations that they have. In particular, the article discusses the strategies and options that Asian churches can utilize for the world missionary movement.

Rise and Development of Missionary Societies

According to Stephen B. Bevans and Rogers P. Schroeder, there are three events that ignited the Protestant missionary movement in the 19th century: 1) the Great Awakening that began in the Dutch Reformed Church and spread to North America between 1726 and 1760; 2) the birth of Methodism

through Wesley Brothers in 1735; and 3) the Evangelical Revival in England and the Second Great Awakening in America between 1787 and 1825. One of the most important developments of these dynamic revival movements is the creation of missionary societies (Bevans and Schroeder 2008:209-210).

David Bosch saw "Voluntarism" as the key word for missionary societies. Those people moved by the Great Awakening could not sit back and wait for organized churches to send them out. These individual Christians, often belonging to different churches, came together for world mission (Bosch 2003: 280). Therefore, these missionary societies are also called Voluntary Societies because they arose voluntarily by individual Christians outside of the churches. This model of missionary societies, according to Andrew Walls, is a "fortunate subversion" of the traditional structure (Walls 2007 :241), which became the leading model of Protestant missions from the 19th century to the present day. Missionary societies have had a tremendous impact on the transformation of Christianity, specifically Western Christianity.

Therefore, missionary societies have a pragmatic stance in their origins. Similar to what any business would do, mission societies set up committees, gather information, strategize, advertise, raise money, find, train and send out missionaries, and chart the results of their work.

According to Andrew Walls, the first missionary societies in the modern sense arose among in sober High Church congregations in London at the end of the 17th century (Walls 2007:242). However, many missiologists see the full-fledged start of modern missionary organizations around 1792, the year William Carey published a pamphlet titled 'An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to use as means for the Conversion of the Heathen' (Walls 2007:243; Pierson 2009:201). At that time, several churches, including the Baptist Church to which Carey belonged, were following radical Calvinism. These churches believed that God would deliver people by his own means, without the use of human means or structures. Therefore, Carey's 'obligations to use the means' came out as a refutation of these ideas at the time. The 'obligations to use the means' implies that we must use the means available and appropriate to fulfill the great commission God has given to Christians.

For Carey, the first of the "means" is united prayer. Prayer may be the only thing that Christians of all denominations can do together unconditionally. But

we must not leave out the use of means to obtain what we pray for (Walls 2007:245). As a result, 'use of means' meant 'establishing missionary societies' (Pierson 2009:201). Under Carey's influence, numerous missionary societies were organized, and by 1825, about 30 missionary societies were organized in England, Europe and America (Shenk 1999:62).

Carey wanted to learn the use of these means from trading companies. Carey's Baptist Society adopted a similar structure to these companies (Pierson 2009:201). Therefore, missionary societies have a pragmatic stance in their origins. Similar to what any business would do, mission societies set up committees, gather information, strategize, advertise, raise money, find, train and send out missionaries, and chart the results of their work.

On the other hand, it was the Enlightenment and the French Revolution that greatly influenced the formation of missionary societies. They brought about the social and political egalitarianism of democracy. Now mission moved beyond the monopoly of the institutional churches and clergies to the individual laity. Also, the Enlightenment's optimistic view of humanity supported the motivation to change the world at home and abroad (Bevans and Schroeder 2008:212). Thus, missionary societies opened the door for the participation of the laity, and over time the laity played important and meaningful roles. Professionals in medicine and other fields also took the positions of executives, which were previously thought to be the positions of pastors and theologians. After that, women also took up leadership positions (Walls 2007:250). Rufus Anderson described those involved in missionary societies as follows:

...what we see in Missionary, Bibles, Tract and other kindred societies, not restricted to ecclesiastics, nor to any one profession, but combining all classes, embracing the masses of the people; and all free, open, and responsible...It is the contributors of the funds, who the real association....the individuals, churches, congregations, who freely act together, through such agencies for an object of common interest...This protestant form of association-free, open, responsible, embracing all classes, both sexes, all ages, the masses of the people-is peculiar to modern times, and almost to our age. (Walls 2007:242)

As such, missionary organizations based their presence in the general public and developed ways to gain local involvement and support. The general public, people of ordinary status and income, became supporters for foreign ministries.

The founding of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 by Carey became the archetype and the standard missionary model for mission thereafter. To name a few, the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1795, the Scottish Missionary Society in 1796, the Netherland Missionary Society in 1797, the Church Missionary Society in 1799, the British and Foreign Missionary Society in 1804, American Board of Commissioners

for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in 1810, the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society in 1814, the Basel Mission in 1816, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in 1817-1818, the Danish Missionary Society in 1821, the Berlin Missionary Society in 1824, the Rhenish Missionary Society in 1828, the Swedish Missionary Society in 1835, and the North German Missionary Society in 1836, are examples of some of these missionary societies (Bevans and Schroeder 2008:212).

Bosch described the rise and development of missionary societies as follows.

Thus, by the end of the 18th century, missionary societies exploded in traditionally Protestant countries such as Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, and the United States. In the 1880s, with the advent of the heyday of imperialism, a second wave of new missionary societies clearly arose; once again involving the entire Protestant world evidence; once again the entire Protestant world was involved, but by now it was clear that the United States was edging its way ahead of others, not only in the numbers of missionaries sent abroad but also in the number of new societies formed. The end of World War II saw another wave of missions, with a total of 81 missionary societies established in North America before 1900. Over the next 40 years, 147 in the period 1900-1939; 83 in the period 1940-1949; 113 more in the period 1950-1959; 132 missions in the period 1960-1969; and during the next 10 year, 150 new mission agencies were established (Bosch 2003:327).

Meanwhile, a multitude of new missionary societies were established in the late 19th century. Many of them belonging to a new category called 'Faith Missions', and the pioneer and prototype of which was the China Inland Mission. These missions were not the start of a completely new form, but rather built upon existing voluntary missionary societies (Walls 2007:252). They continued the revolutionary effects of the missionary societies on the Church by assisting its de-clericalization, providing new scope for women's energies and gifts, and adding an international dimension which hardly any of the churches could achieve. (252-253). Therefore, the Church received continuous influence from missionary societies, and changed in its structure and contents in a different way than before.

In Korea alone, the number of missionary societies is increasing year by year. Currently, there are 43 denominational missionary societies and 185 non-denominational missionary societies as members of the Korea World Mission Council (Korea World Mission Council 2023a: Web). In 2022, there were 23,596 Korean missionaries in 169 countries. Among them, 22,204 long-term missionaries and 482 short-term missionaries belonging only to Korean missionary societies (cupnews: web).

At least in the beginning, missionary societies

were not denominationally exclusive or confessional. Even denominational societies like the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) were primarily seen as pragmatic instrument for evangelizing to other people. This outlook was shared with the founders of such interdenominational or non-denominational missionary societies as the London Missionary Society (LMS), the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), and the Basel Mission. These dynamics shaped the ecumenical movement within Protestantism (Bevans and Schroeder 2008:212). But today's missionary societies are diverse. Some are denominational, while some are inter-denominational. Some are non-denominational, and some are even anti-denominational. Regardless of the background and characteristics of missionary societies, their influence on the modern missionary movement has been great.

Missionary Societies and Imperialism

It is difficult to deny that the missionary movement of the Western Church grew along with the colonial expansion of Western Europe and America. It is extremely difficult to imagine that missionary activity in non-Western countries were carried out by evangelism itself, rejecting the political and economic power of the West itself. Although some missionaries tried to reject the benefits of colonialism, the overall trend was that the Western churches took advantage of colonialism in their missions. Because of the enormous political power and wealth of Europe and the United States, missionary activities in non-Western countries, except for some countries such as China, could be actively carried out.

But today's missionary societies are diverse. Some are denominational, while some are inter-denominational. Some are non-denominational, and some are even anti-denominational. Regardless of the background and characteristics of missionary societies, their influence on the modern missionary movement has been great.

Jonathan Bonk argues that the strategies and results of Western Christian missionary activities over the past 200 years are incomprehensible apart from the vast economic and material superiority missionaries enjoyed over the vast majority of people in these areas generally called as 'mission fields' (Bonk 2006:4). As a missionary who has worked in Ethiopia, the United States, and Thailand for the past 30 years, I have witnessed that the great economic power of Western

missionaries is still the biggest foundation for their missionary works.

For Ludwig Rutti, the entire modern missionary enterprise is so polluted by its origins in and close association with Western colonialism that it is irredeemable (Bosch 2003:518). The kiss between mission and imperialism may have been sweet for a moment, but it brought bitter results. With the fall of colonialism, Christianity was rejected in many places. In the case of China, when the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949, all foreign missionaries were expelled, because the Chinese Communist Party suspected that imperialism was behind the missionaries' activities. China still maintains a suspicious eye toward missionaries.

Criticism against missionaries also emerged from churches in the mission fields. In 1971, Kenyan leader, John Gatu criticized that the financial support of Western missionaries was preventing the self-reliance and self-government of local churches, insisting that the time had come for foreign missionaries to withdraw from the Third World, and that the churches in the Third World should be allowed to find their identity, and that continuing the current missionary movement was an obstacle to the identity of local churches (Gatu 1971:4). This missionary moratorium was extended from Kenya to other continents. Bosch records the argument made by Emerito Nacpil as follows:

Speaking at a consultation in Kuala Lumpur in February, 1971, Emerito Nacpil (1971:78) depicts mission as "a symbol of the universality of Western imperialism among the rising generations of the Third World". In the missionary, the people of Asia do not see the face of the suffering Christ but a benevolent monster. So, he concludes, "The present structure of modern mission is dead. And the first thing we ought to do is to eulogize it and then bury it". Mission appears to be the greatest enemy of the gospel. Indeed, "the most missionary service a missionary under the present system can do today to Asia is to go home!" (Bosch 2003: 518).

The missionary moratorium is being requested directly or indirectly from local church leaders to Korean missionaries as well. Philippine Presbyterian churches' pastors also requested that Korean missionaries leave. The head of one of the ethnic groups where Christianity was the most active in Myanmar once expressed to me personally that it may be better for Korean missionaries to leave for the Myanmar Church, and talked about some of the problems caused by Korean missionaries.

Even now, missionary societies and their missionaries from the West are engaged in missionary activities with abundant materials and advanced technology, and under the influence and protection of the Western governments. For example, I felt the strength of the US government and missionary societies based in the United States in responding to

the Ebola outbreak in Liberia. Ebola began to attract worldwide attention when two missionaries working at a mission hospital in Liberia were exposed to the disease. One of these two was a doctor belonging to the Samaritan's Purse (<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/article/samaritans-purse-responds-to-ebola-outbreaks-in-africa/#>), who was ministering at the hospital established by SIM, and the other was a SIM missionary. I became aware of this incident from an internal communication within the SIM community before it became widely known to the world. The two were evacuated by a private jet to the United States, where they were treated in a completely isolated hospital and freed from this dreaded disease. In the process of evacuating them, leaders from the SIM International office and the US office conducted close consultations with the US government. It is not known who paid for the cost of their transportation and treatment, but it is no secret that it must have been astronomical. While I paid homage to such a quick turnaround, I could not ignore the question that comes from a corner of my heart. Would this have been possible if these were Korean missionaries who did not belong to international mission societies? What if they were missionaries from the Philippines, or if they were missionaries from Ghana, or other countries in Africa? Could they have received this kind of help? Furthermore, what happened to the Christians in the local churches who contracted Ebola? The Ebola incident made me feel once again the magnitude of the power of Western-oriented mission societies. It is difficult for non-Western missionaries, let alone local church members, to expect such protection and help.

Missionary Societies and the Enlightenment

The Enlightenment has had a great influence on the Western church and missionary movements. Bosch asserts that the entire Western missionary movement of the past three centuries emerged from the matrix of the Enlightenment (Bosch 2003:344). It can hardly be denied that the spirit of enterprise and initiative spawned by the Enlightenment played an important role first in the genesis of the idea of missionary societies and then in their amazing proliferation (327-328). The Enlightenment values human reason and focuses on human abilities and achievements along with the development of science. The Enlightenment forced the Church to think and act pragmatically. Jehu Hanciles argues that the Enlightenment's use of human powers and human means led to the birth of missionary societies and characterized missionary work.

Among other things, of course, the emphasis in this orientation would lead to the birth of a plethora of voluntary societies and associations and provided a new framework for Christian mission. This emphasis on human initiative, on human ingenuity, on human skill – not to mention the full deployment of resources,

including the latest technologies for propagation of the gospel – remains a major hallmark of the western missionary enterprise to this day (Hanciles 2006:12)

The churches before William Carey were passive in mission. For them, mission was purely in the hands of God. However, the Enlightenment urged Christians to pay attention to human abilities and to use the means possible in mission. Therefore, the missionary societies that began in earnest with Carey sought to use many methods and techniques that were considered effective in spreading the Gospel. Missionary societies borrowed their strategies and methods from common corporations, not from the Bible or church history. Numbers, records and statistics are important. They do not hesitate to use the latest technology. They use marketing techniques and sophisticated publicity to arouse public interest. Bosch explains the missionary movement of the 19th century imbued with pragmatism by citing the writings of several scholars as follows.

A charter and battle plan for Christianity's final conquest of the world were called for. It was not to be achieved by means of miracles, but by means of "industry and zeal". The "principles of reason" and the "dictates of common sense" blended happily with the "directions of scripture" and the "obvious designs of providence". The building of the kingdom of God had become much a matter of technique and program as it was of conversion and religious piety. The gospel was viewed as an instrument for producing a vital transformation in the total human situation, a "weapon" that alleviated woes, a "divine medicament" and "antidote", a "remedy" and "appointed means of civilizing the heathen". The gospel was a "tool", along with all the many new tools and implements Western technology was beginning to invent: It joined the three great gods of the modern era- science, technology, and industrialization and was harnessed with them to serve the spread of the gospel and of Christian values. (Bosch 2003:335-336).

Missionary organizations are criticized for being pragmatic in their origin and enterprise. Efforts to spread the Gospel by all available means often reduce the nature of evangelism.

One way of achieving manageability is precisely to reduce reality to an understandable picture and then to protect missionary action as a response to a problem that has been described in quantitative form. Missionary action is reduced to a linear task that is translated into logical steps to be followed in a process of management by objectives, in the same way in which the evangelistic task is reduced to a process that can be carried on following marketing principles. (Escobar 2001:109).

Samuel Escobar criticizes pragmatism within missionary societies, which statistically analyze the results of missionaries' activities and presents them graphically and is the result of being influenced

by the concept of market economy and eventually surrendering to the spirit of this age. (Escobar 2001:109-110). In fact, much of missionary work cannot be reduced to statistics. They cannot be measured or reduced to numbers. In addition, success or failure revealed by statistics can have a completely different meaning in the dimension of deep spiritual warfare.

As missionary societies grew, they became more and more like a corporation, and efficiency and professionalism became important.

Such increases in scale and institutional commitment appeared to require increasing dependence on secular models of corporate organization. By the 1920s, the denominational missionary societies, especially in the USA, had become big business, relying explicitly on the methods of secular corporations to manage the whole complex enterprise. Business efficiency and specialist technical expertise became increasingly important, and as they did so the power of the home boards over field policy increased. (Stanly 2003:42).

In this way, efficiency and professionalism are also emphasized in the mission field, and local churches that have difficulty handling these things have no choice but to continue to be subordinate to a missionary society.

On the other hand, the purpose of missionary societies, both old and new, was essentially to spread the Gospel. Theoretically, once a church is established, the mission should go elsewhere. In practice, however, even as new churches emerged, the society remained, serving as a natural channel of communication, through which flowed aid, personnel, money, materials and technical expertise (Walls 2007:253). Even though the missionary society's unique role was fulfilled, it remained on the ground, making the local churches continue to depend on them. In the end, the relationship between the local church and the missionary society has changed to a relationship of giving and receiving finances. Instead of a relationship of giving and receiving mutual help, it has become a relationship in which one side leads the other. Missionaries' money came to exercise power, and local churches were influenced by missionaries not only financially, but also in all areas of the church.

Now, as missionary societies are institutionalized and the system is bloated, societies that are desperate to maintain themselves are emerging. When the economic power of countries sending missionaries becomes difficult and interest in missions decreases, missionary societies face financial difficulties. Also, in the structure of the current missionary society, it costs a lot to keep missionaries in the field and continue ministries through them. In poor non-Western countries, a missionary family is using the money that several local families can live on. As Hanciles puts it, "In the non-Western world, missionaries are "kings and queens". They can have "3-story houses with maids" (Hanciles 2006:14).

The great century of Protestant missions began with

William Carey and the rise of missionary societies. The contributions made by mission societies cannot be understated. One of the reasons why today's Christianity has spread worldwide is because of the dedication and sacrifice of countless missionaries and missionary societies. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the many harms caused by mission societies and missionaries just because we have seen many successes. We should quickly break away from the idol of enlightenment, which values human reason and technology, and the pragmatism derived from it.

Missionary Societies and Churches

Lesslie Newbigin writes, the New Testament knows only one missionary agency—that is the Church. But the Eighteenth Century saw the birth of missionary societies that could not claim to be churches (Newbigin 1960:10). Despite the existence of the church, there is a question, 'Is there a biblical basis for missionary societies to carry out world missions?' Ralph Winter used the words sodality and modality to support the existence of missionary societies, and Paul Pierson also supports Winter's position. On the other hand, Wilbert Shenk sees no direct acknowledgment or precedent for missionary societies in the Bible (Shenk 1999:179). Peter Cotterell is urging churches to put an end to the unbiblical practice of handing over missions to missionary societies and put churches in the forefront. He argues that if there is no ground in the New Testament for a concept of mission apart from the church, then a missionary society has no permanent validity. If and where the church becomes structured for mission, there the mission society as a non-church sodality becomes anomalous (Cotterell 1981:156).

I am convinced that the Church must be a missionary in itself and should be the subject of mission, but at the same time, I believe that if the Church neglects the mission given to it, God will create a movement on the outskirts of the Church or among the minority. Even under the circumstances when missionary societies began, those with the best theology and clergy were often enemies of the missionary movement. Some have argued that the Great Commission was fulfilled in the time of the apostles, since apostleship occurred once and the Lord's commandment "go into all the world" was given only to the apostles. Therefore, individual missionary work is presumptuous and carnal, and it is wrong to dare to take up the apostleship for oneself (Walls 2007:246). On the other hand, Carey saw the Lord's mandate as given to all Christians. He thought that the general structure of the Church at the time could not handle the Lord's mandate and organized a missionary society as 'use of means'.

While missionary societies arose when the Church was not interested in missions, the emergence of missionary societies brought about a dualism of church and missionary organizations in mission.

Mission is no longer the exclusive property of the Church. Furthermore, mission was not regarded as the essence of the Church. Mission societies became the main actors of the missions, and churches became satisfied with a passive role of supporting missions. Missions have come to be carried out as a specialized work of missionary societies regardless of the active participation of churches. Nevertheless, it is now time to bring this undesirable and unique situation back to normal.

It is no longer an era where missions can be the exclusive property of missionaries or mission societies. Now we need to return the word "missions" to the Church and the word "missionaries" to the general congregation. There was a time when going out as a missionary was considered a sacrifice of life, and there was a time when uniquely dedicated people had to go through special training. But now the world is so close and interconnected that it can be considered as one place. The world is increasingly becoming a political or economic bloc without borders. With the development of transportation, it is possible to go anywhere in the world within a day. Additionally, the number of overseas workers and immigrants along with international students is increasing remarkably. Therefore, now we must return the great commission of the Lord to make disciples of all nations to all believers and encourage them to live a missionary life in any way. Each Christian is essentially a missionary, and mission is the essence of the Church. Worldwide evangelization is still far away, even if the current number of missionaries will continue to work in the next few centuries. Only when all Christians around the world participate in this missionary movement will worldwide evangelization be possible in human history.

It is encouraging that churches today are increasingly engaging in independent missionary activities rather than through missionary societies. Nevertheless, it is still recommended that churches carry out missionary activities through missionary societies, concerned about the lack of missionary 'professionalism' of churches. Most of the professionalism here refers to the business management expertise within mission societies. It is questionable how much this expertise in business management has contributed to the missionary movement. This effort by the Church to lead missions is to shake off business management expertise in missions, and to create an era in which all members of the Church can fully participate in missions and do missions according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, not human wisdom and power.

The majority of church members feel that they have no direct relationship to mission. Even church leaders see mission simply as one part of the church's ministries. This is because so far, the Church has not led the missions, but the missionary societies have led the missions. I believe in giving missions back to the Church, missions must be thoroughly church-centered. The Church should go beyond

simply supporting missionaries and actively send out missionaries and actively participate in missionary work. This is the missionary pattern and model shown in the New Testament.

Missionary Societies and Churches on the Mission Fields

Mission in the Western Church has been identified with the expansion of their denomination. Independent mission societies have also established churches or denominations of the type they support, although not as seriously as denominational missionary societies. This denominationalism is one of the chronic problems of Korean missions. Presbyterian missionaries working in Africa have established Presbyterian seminaries to establish a Presbyterian denomination in Africa. Whenever I think about African culture, I am not sure if the Presbyterian government system is really suitable for Africa. If we set up a school named Reformed Seminary in Ethiopia, I cannot imagine what Ethiopian would accept that word as a reformation from something in their historical past. What is clear is that if anyone wants to start this school, he is going to transplant his Reformed theology to Ethiopia.

The Korean Church, without even realizing it, has been taking the local Christians as "Babylonian Captivity" (Bosch 2003:456). Local Christians are deprived of the right to read the Bible, judge, and act according to the light of the Holy Spirit. The Korean Church, which failed in self-theologizing, has hindered the efforts of the locals to establish their own theology. We must encourage the local churches themselves to recover the richness of their own cultural heritage (Ramachandra 1996:270) and to "make Christianity the most culturally translated, without compromising its essential characters", and therefore most truly global, to feel at home in all cultural contexts (Bediako 2004:32).

Problems were also revealed in the social work that missionaries do to improve the lives of local people. I have often found missionaries who do not trust the locals hired by the missionaries, and also regard their morals and work skills as low. Also, it is not uncommon for missionaries' business projects to turn out to be failures. This is because the missionaries thought and conducted business at the standard they were familiar with, without considering the economic and social environment of the mission field. As Merle Davis notes, the Western church has made the mistake of dressing the Eastern David in Saul's armor and putting Saul's sword in his hand (Bosch 2003:295). When I worked among Gumuz people in Ethiopia, I witnessed the relief activities of JAICA, Japan International Cooperation Association. JAICA provided state-of-the-art equipment to a local government office where Ethiopia's Gumuz lived. They installed a state-of-the-art computer system at a time where electricity ran on solar power. Gumuz

officials left these high-tech gadgets in the dust for years to come. At that time, few Gumuz people could count to more than ten. Even though the officials were better educated than the general public, they were also people who had no experience with computers, so they could not use computers at all. Missionaries, to varying degrees, often do such absurd things. They are running a business that goes beyond the economic self-sufficiency of the local people and ignores the social development process.

The churches on the mission fields were, of course, churches. However, in the eyes of the missionaries, they were churches of a lower status than Western churches. They need compassionate control and guidance, just like children who do not age. In the end, churches on the mission fields could not get out of the helplessness such that they could not move without the financial support of Western churches. In the end, the mission of the Western church was one-way. There was a country that sent missionaries and a country that received them. One side was the total giver, and the other side was the total receiver. As such, missionary societies have been relying on the political power and great wealth of the West for missionary work, so churches in politically weak and economically poor countries have no choice but to receive them unilaterally. Even though the church on the mission field grew and became experienced, it was still forced to be subordinated to the Western church economically.

The churches on the mission fields were, of course, churches. However, in the eyes of the missionaries, they were churches of a lower status than Western churches. They need compassionate control and guidance, just like children who do not age. In the end, churches on the mission fields could not get out of the helplessness such that they could not move without the financial support of Western churches.

The result of such unilateral mission based on material is negative. Bosch writes, "Many of the grand institutions erected by missionary societies, often at great cost and with tremendous dedication - hospitals, schools, colleges, printing houses and the like - have turned out to be impediments rather than assets to the life and growth of the younger churches." (Bosch 2003:365). Despite the movement to reflect on and correct these mistakes of missionaries, many Korean missionaries are still focusing on building

huge institutions unilaterally using materials as the main means of missionary work. Even if they have good intentions, they cannot escape responsibility for the negative influence they will have on churches on the mission field. The Church is indeed not only the recipient of God's merciful grace but sometimes also of His wrath. Indeed, in many parts of the world, including its traditional home base, the Christian mission appears to be the object not of God's grace and blessing, but of God's judgment (Bosch 2003:365). I believe Korean missionary societies should be able to expose the harm that Korean missionaries have done to the mission field. The future of Korean missions will be bright when we reflect on the failures of Korean missionaries and take them as lessons from history. Just as the Church must always be reformed, missions must always be reformed.

The Korean Church is no longer a church that only sends missionaries. Now it has become a church that must receive missionaries. The Korean Church has revealed its helplessness beyond its ability to evangelize within Korean society. The Korean Church now needs help from other non-Western churches. Non-Western churches must learn how to practice discipleship and engage in missions in the midst of poverty and persecution. When I was ministering in Ethiopia, I owed countless spiritual debts to my Ethiopian brothers. I learned aspects of faith that are difficult to find in Korean churches. The depth of faith tempered in their poverty and persecution was not something I could easily follow.

Looking at the short-term mission teams coming from Korea, I wondered what they could give to the Ethiopian church. Rather, I thought that the short-term mission teams of the Ethiopian Church should go to Korea. The only reason Korean short-term mission teams were able to come to Ethiopia was by no means because their spirituality was better than that of Ethiopian Christians. Just because Ethiopia is poorer than Korea, and they were able to afford the travel expenses, which was equivalent to a few years' salary of an ordinary Ethiopian Christian, they regarded Ethiopia as a mission field and came for short-term missions.

The pastor of the largest church by membership in London is from Nigeria. The pastor of the largest church in Europe is also Nigerian. The Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations Church in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, was started by Sunday Adelaja from Nigeria who came to study in the former Soviet Union. Within 10 years of its establishment, 23,000 members had gathered. Under the guidance of Pastor Adelaja, numerous sister churches were established in 35 countries including Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, USA, India and the United Arab Emirates. This church goes beyond simple evangelism and is carrying out various ministries such as Stephania Soup Kitchens for the homeless and poor and Love Rehabilitation Center for drug addicts (The Embassy of God 2015: Web). There may come a time

in the future when Korea needs an African pastor. There is no longer a separate region for sending and receiving missionaries. Now, everywhere is a missionary field.

Mission from Power and Mission from Weakness

The fatal flaw of missionary societies is that, in their origins and work, whether they are supported by money, materials, and or technology, they are fundamentally power-based. If the power is immediately removed from missionary societies, it is doubtful how long they will last. Missionary societies were secretly associated with imperialism and have always been influenced by the Enlightenment. Imperialism and the Enlightenment fundamentally worship human power. In it, human pragmatic thinking is sufficient, but in its existence and action, it lacks the confession of human weakness to fear God and rely entirely on God.

We should pay attention to the way Jesus brought God's reign to the earth.

Certainly the "powers of the kingdom" are manifest in him. He does mighty works, which to eyes of faith are signs of the presence of the reign of God (Luke 11:14-22). Yet, paradoxically, his calling is to the way of suffering, rejection, and death – to the way of the cross. He bears witness to the presence of the reign of God not by overpowering the forces of evil, but by taking their full weight upon himself. Yet it is in that seeming defeat that victory is won. (Newbigin 1995:34-35).

Jesus' missionary method was weakness. God's power is revealed in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Our weaknesses, not our strengths, should be our missionary method.

It is difficult to deny that Korean church missions have also been carried out by relying on Korea's diplomatic and economic strength. Korea is a country that belongs to the top of the diplomatic and economic power among non-Western countries. Also, the Korean Church showed unmatched growth in membership and finances. Korean missions have been doing missions like what Western missionaries did in the past based on the power of the Korean Church. Although it cannot be said that the Korean Church took advantage of imperialism or colonialism like the Western churches in the past, it followed the pattern of Western churches.

When I visit Asian countries, I hear voices of concern about Korean missionaries. Many Korean missionaries have been doing project-oriented missions based on finances so far, but there is a concern about how to continue missions if the growth of the Korean Church slows down and finances shrink.

Originally, the mission of the Korean Church was a mission out of weakness. The Korean Church has participated in the missionary movement from its beginning. In 1913, the Korean Presbyterian Church

sent three pastors as missionaries to Shandong Province in China. Missionaries went from a poor country to a rich country, from a weak country to a strong country, from an uncivilized country to a civilized country, and from a country with a young Christian history to a country with an old one.

The most important thing in the Korean church mission is the Shandong Province mission in China. Because this was the first mission only targeting the locals. In fact, this was the first mission to Asia by Asians to other Asians since apostolic times. Although Korea was an extremely poor and powerless country, the Korean church sent a message to the world that even the young, poor, and powerless non-Western churches could bear the heavy missionary responsibility (Park 2011:156-157).

Today's missionary environment has many similarities to that of the Jerusalem church when it began its missionary movement. Just as the early Christians who were weak politically, economically, and socially at the time they went out as missionaries to various regions of the mighty Roman Empire, Christians from poor countries in Asia, Africa, and South America go out with a missionary purpose to rich countries in Europe and North America. They are very weak compared to the people they target for preaching the Gospel. Essentially, since they are weak, they have no choice but to do missions out of weakness.

Pursuing New Mission Models

A mission structure or model must be deeply relevant "with us today." Any mission structure or model must be discarded if it does not fit our current conditions and the situation and field in which we find ourselves. I have a fundamental question about whether the structure of mission societies that began with William Carey is still applicable to us today. Wilbert Schenk says that groups and institutions are products of the specific historical and socio-political circumstances in which they were created (Schenk 1999:177). This suggests that mission societies were also created in the context of a particular era. Andrew Walls asserts that missionary societies arose in a particular period of Western social, political and economic development and were shaped by that period (Walls 2007: 253). Although it is acknowledged that mission societies have made great contributions to the world missionary movement within God's plan in the past 200 years or more, I do not think they will continue to be suitable for the world missionary movement in the future. Now is the time for churches, not only non-Western ones, but also Western churches, to start seriously thinking about finding structures other than the structure of missionary societies. The situation of churches today is completely different from the situation of churches in England or America in the past. The present world

is also distinctly different from the world where Western missionaries were active in the past. We must find missionary structures that suit the circumstances around us. As Bosch famously said, "Transforming mission means both that mission is to be understood as an activity that transforms reality and that there is a constant need for mission itself to be transformed." (Bosch 2003:511).

Western social, political and economic development and were shaped by that period (Walls 2007: 253). Although it is acknowledged that mission societies have made great contributions to the world missionary movement within God's plan in the past 200 years or more, I do not think they will continue to be suitable for the world missionary movement in the future. Now is the time for churches, not only non-Western ones, but also Western churches, to start seriously thinking about finding structures other than the structure of missionary societies. The situation of churches today is completely different from the situation of churches in England or America in the past.

If the missionary society structure has to be folded, what kind of structure can be used as an alternative? Can there really be a structure that can replace the missionary society model? I believe above all that the Holy Spirit will lead the missionary movement. Arthur Glasser said that the Holy Spirit will show us new structures suitable for a new political, economic, and social era.

The creativity of the Holy Spirit will continue to match the political, economic, and sociological changes taking place in the world. New mission structures and support patterns will emerge, but they will no longer be Western-dominated. Missionaries from the two-thirds world will increasingly occupy the center of the stage. Indeed, the internationalization of the missionary movement is "the great new fact of our time." Evangelicals show every evidence of growing in numbers and maturity as we approach A.D. 2000. But their response to the challenges of the days ahead means that tomorrow's missionary obedience will hardly resemble what we see around us today (Glasser

1989:7).

On the other hand, can there be one missionary structure that the worldwide church can follow? Bosch emphasizes "mission in many modes" in the last chapter of his book "Transforming Mission" (Bosch 2003:511). I do not believe that the worldwide church need not and cannot have a single missionary structure. This is because the environment of the world is very diverse and complex, and change is unimaginably rapid. And the situation is different for each church in each country. Even if the Vietnamese church wants to do missions, it is difficult to use the missionary structure of the Korean church. This is because Vietnamese churches are still under the control of communism, and their size and economic power are quite different from those of Korean churches. Local churches in each country must develop their own missionary structure appropriate to the political, economic, social and cultural environment in which they find themselves. Filipino churches are making efforts to volunteer Christians for mission among the 10 million Filipino overseas workers. It would be appropriate for churches in China, which borders 13 countries, to develop a structure to mission-motivate Christian merchants. Historically, Chinese merchants were famous as excellent silk merchants.

Christianity will be recognized as a truly global religion only when it has local appearances. Unless Christianity is translated into local forms, Christianity will still be perceived as Western. This is also true in missions. The overall picture of missions is still very Western. Asian churches should not stick to the existing mission structure or model, but should keep an eye on how God is working today. If the Asian churches respond to the flow of God's mission and develops unique structures suitable for the Asian churches, the global Church will be able to enjoy greater and richer benefits than before.

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One Person Media Ministry

Minhye Kang

ABSTRACT

Over the past three years, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced churches and ministries to shift to online platforms to connect with their congregations and audiences. This transition has highlighted the importance of online ministry in bridging the gap between gathered and scattered communities. As more people continue to live their lives online, the use of online media has become a vital tool for Christian ministry.

One person media ministers and churches are conducting various ministries online, leading to social and religious changes. Communication has become one of the most important elements for mankind, and the online media has enabled Christians to continue their religious practices despite the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

As a result, questions have arisen about the characteristics and ministry of online ministry. This thesis will focus on the ministry of individual media ministers and churches within the pandemic situation, exploring the ministry, missionary, and religious values embedded in their efforts. It will also examine the significance and direction of ministry beyond the pandemic.

The online ministry has opened up new opportunities for evangelism and discipleship. With the increased reach of online platforms, Christian ministers can connect with people from different parts of the world and share the gospel with them. The pandemic has also highlighted the importance of community and fellowship in Christian ministry, and online platforms have provided a way for people to stay connected with their churches and each other.

However, online ministry also has its challenges. The lack of face-to-face interaction can make it difficult to establish relationships and build trust with people. It can also be challenging to maintain people's interest in the absence of physical gatherings.

In conclusion, online ministry has become an essential tool for Christian ministry in the pandemic situation. It has enabled ministers to continue their work and reach more people with the gospel. The lessons learned from this experience can guide the direction of ministry beyond the pandemic, and the church can continue to harness the power of online media to fulfill its mission of spreading the gospel and making disciples of all nations.

INTRODUCTION

Due to the pandemic, Christians and media

ministers around the world have been engaging in unique ministry through one-person media. While there are many examples of well-prepared content being produced and having a positive impact, there are also cases of fake news and misinformation being spread. Despite this, one-person media ministry can be a valuable tool for Christian outreach and ministry.

The importance of online ministry has only increased during the pandemic, as it provides a way to connect with communities even when face-to-face interactions are limited. With so many people living their lives online, personal media ministers have been able to plan and produce ministries from the comfort of their own homes. As technology continues to develop and provide new ways to gather believers as a community, it is important for Christian ministries to adapt and embrace these new tools.

Practical experience has shown that one-person media ministry can be effective and efficient, but it requires careful planning and attention to detail. Christian media ministers must ensure that the content they produce is accurate and grounded in truth, and they must also engage with their audience in a way that fosters a sense of community and belonging.

Overall, one-person media ministry has the potential to be a powerful tool for Christian outreach and ministry, especially in a world that is increasingly digital and online. By embracing new technologies and working to create meaningful and engaging content, Christian media ministers can help to spread the word of God and build stronger communities of believers.

The dissertation explores the impact of the pandemic on Christian ministry and the emergence of one-person media as a tool for outreach. Everett Rogers' theory of diffusion of reform is applied to explain the spread of communication and adoption of new ideas in response to the pandemic. The importance of online media for Christian ministry is highlighted, and issues related to the characteristics of online ministry and one-person media ministry are discussed. The ministerial, missionary, and religious values contained in such attempts are analyzed, and the meaning and direction of the ministry after the pandemic are explored. The dissertation also emphasizes the need to actively accept and utilize new technology for ministry and suggests that individual media workers should acquire new skills to effectively take root in the ministry.

ONLINE MINISTRY

According to a survey conducted by the Korea

Ministry Data Research Institute (MHDATA) immediately after the lifting of social distancing measures in April 2022, there was a significant increase in on-site worship attendance and a decrease in online worship attendance. About 68% of respondents reported attending on-site worship at the church they regularly attended, which is an increase of 11% compared to the previous survey conducted in April 2022 when the distancing was lifted. In contrast, the percentage of people attending online worship dropped by 11% from 27% to 16%.

According to the Ministry Data Research Institute's 2023 statistics, there has been a significant decrease in the influence of 'attending church services/pastor's sermons' on the growth of faith, with only 28% of respondents citing this as the most helpful factor. On the other hand, 'family' and 'media' factors have shown an increasing trend, with 20% and 19% of respondents respectively citing these as the most helpful for their faith growth. The influence of 'worship and sermon' has been steadily decreasing since 2012, dropping from 64% to 28% in 2023. Notably, the 'media' factor more than doubled in importance compared to 2017, increasing from 7% to 19% in 2023.

The statistics mentioned in the previous section indicate that new technologies are playing an increasingly important role in the growth of faith, both in churches and through various media outlets. In order to keep up with these changes, it is essential to actively embrace and utilize new technologies and prepare for ministry in the digital age. The United Nations has identified three key characteristics of online media as a communication tool: connectivity, scalability to public goods, and inclusive access. These advantages stem from the fact that online media can overcome limitations of time and space and provide broader access to information and resources.

Since these three characteristics are the advantages of using online, one-person media workers can produce and share more quickly than churches or mission organizations.

Most of the media shared online is content, and content is introduced centering on media that has grown based on digital. With the introduction of the concept of digital media, the contents of each medium are called contents, and developing contents has become an important value in the cultural industry era.

Content can generally be regarded as meaning informational products and informational contents as a cultural product that can satisfy users' desires such as information seeking or entertainment. Specifically, it refers to the content of information in the form of text, sound, image, video, etc., and includes a wide range of fields such as publications, music, images such as movies, images such as photos, and game databases. (Seomun 2018: 154)

Then, online ministry based on online must be studied and observed from a cotton perspective. Kevin Lee, an English-speaking pastor of an American

church, organized the following.

1. Online ministry should start with the word "ministry." The ultimate purpose of the ministry is to help a soul on the journey of meeting Jesus and becoming like Jesus. Online ministry is to give that help through the channel called online. Online ministry may look different depending on the purpose of each church and individual.
2. The purpose of online ministry Because online ministry is a ministry within the church, it must ultimately fulfill the purpose of the church. Online ministry is to realize the purpose of the church or personal media ministry. It has to be a priority." (Kevin Lee 2021:74-75)

In other words, the purpose of online ministry is to help worship through online worship, help fellowship through online small groups, help believers mature in faith through online training classes, and preach the gospel in their lives through the gifts they have received from God. It can be said that the

Regarding this, Lee Sanghoon said, "It is a kind of innovative idea to recognize the online space as a mission field and use it as a tool for ministry. Missions begins with preaching the gospel to the places where people who do not know God are staying. Of course, the biggest missionary field of this era is the online space. The future opens through someone's adventures and challenges," he said. "I hope that leaders with greater dreams and dedication will appear in the Korean church now and that the church will become healthy and open the way for creative ministry." (Kosin News 27 October 2021)

According to Kevin Lee, an English-speaking pastor of an American church, online ministry should be viewed as a means to help individuals on their journey to meeting and becoming like Jesus. The purpose of online ministry should ultimately align with the purpose of the church and can take on different forms depending on the needs of each church and individual. Online ministry can include activities such as online worship, small group meetings, and training classes to help believers mature in their faith and share the gospel.

Lee Sanghoon further emphasizes the importance of recognizing online space as a mission field and using it as a tool for ministry. He suggests that the online space is currently the largest mission field and calls for leaders with greater vision and dedication to emerge in the Korean church to promote creative ministry.

ONE PERSON MEDIA

The rise of one-person media platforms has had a significant impact on the way information and content are shared and consumed in society. It has allowed individuals to create their own content and express their ideas and opinions without the need for traditional media gatekeepers. This has democratized the media landscape and given a voice to those who

were previously marginalized or excluded from mainstream media.

One-person media platforms have also opened up new opportunities for businesses and organizations to reach their target audience and engage with them on a more personal level. They can create their own content and share it directly with their followers or customers, bypassing the need for expensive advertising or PR campaigns.

However, one-person media platforms also come with their own set of challenges and risks, such as the spread of misinformation, cyberbullying, and privacy concerns. As such, it is important for individuals and organizations to use these platforms responsibly and with a critical eye towards the information they consume and share.

According to Hofstede, the 21st century requires a greater understanding of individuals living in diverse cultures, and as cultural values evolve, new patterns that are suitable for the environment will emerge (Hofstede 2014: 5). One-person media is a new pattern that has emerged, and it is an essential pattern that reflects trends and responds quickly to changes in them. (Hofstede 2014 :5)

One-person media ministry refers to individuals using their media skills and capabilities to deliver Christian values and messages. This can be done through popular media channels, such as YouTube, blogs, podcasts, and social media.

Park Ki-ho said, "The church must do the overall ministry or the Lord's ministry without neglecting the cultural mandate or the evangelism mandate. The church has word ministry and action ministry, vertical ministry and horizontal ministry, verbal communication and non-verbal communication, personal ministry and social ministry, ministry for the present kingdom of heaven and ministry for the future kingdom, internal training and external evangelism. It is necessary to do all of them" (1999:190-191).

The biggest advantage of one-person media ministry is that it is personal, social, and futuristic. Unlike ministries provided by general churches or Christian organizations, individuals can directly participate and demonstrate their own creativity in the process of creation. In addition, since it is easily accessible worldwide through the Internet or social media, it is also an advantage that it can preach the gospel to many people through the media, carrying out cultural mandates without being greatly restricted by geography.

ONE-PERSON MEDIA MINISTRY

As a one-person medium, there are several potential advantages to doing Christian ministry. Flexibility is one such strength, as it allows you to engage in ministry on your own terms, setting your own schedule and working at your own pace. Control is another advantage, as it enables you to have complete autonomy over the content and messages you share

with your audience. This can be particularly valuable in remaining true to your own personal beliefs and values without being swayed by outside influences.

Cost-effectiveness is another strength of one-person media ministry, as it eliminates the need to pay for staff, rent buildings, or purchase equipment. Furthermore, by leveraging free or inexpensive online platforms, you can easily reach a wide range of users without incurring significant expenses.

Personal connection is another benefit of one-person media ministry, as it allows you to establish a more intimate and personal relationship with your audience through direct communication channels such as social media or email. This fosters a sense of community and promotes a deeper connection with the people you serve.

Finally, one-person media ministry can encourage innovation and experimentation in ministry approaches. By eliminating the need for approval from a larger organization or board of directors, you can try new formats, styles, or methods to effectively communicate Christian values and messages.

It's important to note that there are potential downsides to one-person media ministry, such as the difficulty of managing everything on your own and the risk of burnout. Therefore, individuals should carefully consider their goals and resources before deciding on this approach. However, the contents produced by one-person media creators can be effectively used in church or missionary work, as long as the church is willing to accommodate and curate high-quality content based on sound theology. Additionally, it's important to view the era of one-person media with a positive mindset, learn diligently, and adopt and follow your strengths to make the most of this new trend.

According to Kim Tae-ryong, the rise of one-person Christian media serves several important functions. Firstly, it provides a means for individuals to strengthen their religious identity by allowing them to connect with others who share their beliefs and experiences. This is particularly important for those who may not be able to attend traditional church meetings due to time or space constraints. Through one-person media, they can still participate in religious activities and form a sense of community with others who share their faith.

Secondly, one-person Christian media helps to change the social perception of Christianity by acting as a mediator between Christian culture and those outside of it. Just as foreign YouTubers can act as a bridge between different cultures, Christian one-person media can help to break down barriers and create a more open and inclusive understanding of Christianity.

Lastly, one-person Christian media provides a platform for believers to share information and knowledge with each other. By creating content that is easily accessible and shareable, Christian YouTubers can help to fill gaps in religious education and provide

a space for individuals to learn and grow in their faith. These channels can also help to foster a sense of community and belonging among believers who may feel isolated or disconnected from traditional church settings.

EXAMPLES OF MINISTRY USING ONE-PERSON MEDIA

(1) Ministry using Youtube

YouTube is an online video platform with a very large influence worldwide.

YouTube Started in the United States in 2005, 'YouTube' is a media platform for sharing free videos. The biggest feature of YouTube is that it created an advertising system between the platform, advertisers, and creators, allowing media creators to create content and directly generate revenue (Seomun 2018: 151).

Through this monetization function, YouTube has become a platform representing one-person media. With the advent of YouTube, the form of a one-person media platform began to change from text/image-centered to video/voice-centered.

Through this, church and Christian online ministries are active in various ways.

(2) Ministry using Podcasts

Podcasts are audio programs that are distributed online and can be downloaded or streamed. They have become increasingly popular in recent years and offer a unique opportunity for one-person media ministry.

Podcasts can cover a wide range of topics, including sermons, Bible studies, and Christian discussions. One advantage of podcasts is that they can be easily consumed on-the-go, making them a convenient way for people to engage with ministry content during their daily commute or while doing other activities.

Additionally, podcasts can be produced relatively easily and inexpensively, making them a cost-effective way for one-person media producers to reach a wider audience.

Many churches and Christian organizations have started their own podcasts, but there are also many individuals who use this medium to share their perspectives and insights on faith and spirituality.

According to the survey conducted by the Korean Pastoral Data Research Institute (MHDATA), 'praise' was the most popular content among the top 4 churches in terms of cumulative views on church-centered YouTube channels. The research center analyzed the content of about 400 churches with over 1,000 members from major denominations through Social Blade.com. The survey was conducted due to the spread of non-face-to-face culture caused by COVID-19.

A one-person media creator refers to a producer and creator who creates and uploads content based on a one-person media platform, and is responsible for the overall production of content, such as planning,

recruitment, composition, filming, and editing. It has advantages such as expansion of materials and reduction of production cost. On the other hand, since individuals are responsible for overall content, there is a disadvantage in that content with a lower quality is produced compared to content created by a large number of people or experts.

Charles Kraft wrote that even proposals that are genuinely helpful to message recipients are likely to be rejected if they are not perceived as appropriate. Explain that even if surface structures (music or story) are themselves complex and interesting, our main focus should be on how they function to connect one person's deep mind to another person's deep mind. (Kraft 2001:175-176).

The key to success on YouTube is simplicity and style. However, for Christian YouTube, the focus is on strengthening religious identity, changing social awareness, and sharing Christian information among believers. According to Ann Handley, successful content creators are those who always seek new things, want others to be interested and involved in their content, have a differentiated voice and perspective, encourage interaction between producers and audiences, and aim to solve problems or gain new insights through original content. (Handley and Chapman 2012:17-21).

The author of the text runs three YouTube channels focused on Christian and cultural content, which are provided to users free of charge and shared with organizations and missionaries. One of the channels is dedicated to producing a program called "Praise with the lyre and harp," which features praise, classical music, and short messages intended as music healing content. This program has been broadcasted on both radio and YouTube for over 10 years, with the intention of sharing grace with regular listeners and subscribers. The author notes that when the audience interacts with sympathy and empathy, a safe community can be formed with the creator, building trust and leading to expectations for new content from the producers. Through this process, YouTube has become an important tool for online ministry and has allowed one-person media ministers to touch even the smallest details of people's lives.

(3) Christian education through ZOOM

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the untact culture spread rapidly due to social distancing. As telecommuting and online classes became mandatory under each country's government policy of social distancing, real-time video conferencing platforms were used as an essential work tool, not an option, by companies and government agencies. Among the various applications that provide real-time video conferencing services, Zoom is being used as a term representing real-time video conferencing as it spreads around the world.

Additionally, Zoom has various functions that make online classes similar to offline classes, and as a result,

it has become the primary platform for remote classes in many schools and educational institutions.

Zoom has become a popular tool for church ministry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many churches have shifted their offline worship and Bible study meetings to online platforms like Zoom, allowing them to continue their ministry while keeping their community safe. I have been using Zoom for Bible study since April 2020 and has established it as a formal program of their church. They also expanded their ministry by providing personal lecture ministry to other local churches and Christian organizations through Zoom. The continuous online face-to-face Bible study has helped increase the interest and knowledge of the Bible among the participants during the pandemic. The author's one-man media ministry invites female missionaries working alone in South America and Southeast Asia, as well as laypeople living in areas with few Koreans, to continue learning through their educational ministry, which offers lectures for three semesters each year.

The Zoom training program described by the author caters to a wide range of attendees, including those in their 50s to early 80s. The author believes that many older people are not digitally underprivileged, as they have become accustomed to using smart devices during the pandemic and can benefit from their millennial children's knowledge of mobile devices. The author sees it as their responsibility as a media minister to actively lead older people to the field of Bible study and help them develop.

In order to effectively educate attendees, the author recommends developing and applying unique educational methods, such as using Zoom small group materials that address the attendees' needs. I emphasize the importance of creating a curriculum that meets the felt needs of the congregation, which refers to the needs and pains felt through the skin. By creating textbooks that address the attendees' needs, dividing them into groups based on their circumstances, discussing topics, and revealing problems, the author hopes to provide effective online small group materials that promote learning and growth.

Instructor suggests three methods for conducting Zoom small group classes: 1) creating small group materials that address attendees' needs, 2) using a conversational small group method with pre-determined sharing topics, and 3) conducting the class for a total of 2 hours with 400 minutes of lectures and small group activities, including short videos and interactive questions. By using PowerPoint and video content during class, the burden on the instructor can be reduced, and if the contents to be learned are made into textbooks in advance, a high-level curriculum can be created. After the group meeting, when returning to the main classroom, the lecture can continue with deeper sharing by deriving the contents covered in the small group. It is important to have experienced leaders who are trained by the lecturer in advance and

can continue the conversation on the topic of the day.

It is difficult to apply this method equally to all churches or mission fields. Each ministry site is different, and the ability of the lecture hall and the given environment are different. However, the method of capturing the unchanging essence of the gospel may change according to the times and cultures, but we should not be afraid of new changes. We need to learn the culture properly and help to develop the power to further strengthen the essence of church education.

Regarding the advantages of online education, Park Young sook said, "If you are giving a lecture online, you can record the session to better understand the level of participation, or even use artificial intelligence to analyze it in real time. Other benefits of digital learning include instant downloads of course materials instead of printing and shipping textbooks, and easier reporting of grades and other results, a requirement of many schools and social services institutions. As seen in other digitized industries, digital learning can grow and scale at a much lower cost, she said. (Park Young sook 2020:149)

Rogers regarding the limited use of media, "The interactive nature of new communication technologies creates a mutually dependent relationship between adopters. He argued that in order for interactive media to have a useful function for system members, it must be adopted by a sufficient number of people who constitute a critical majority. (Rogers 2007:366)

Zoom can be a valuable tool for one-person media ministry, but the educator's capacity and preparation are important factors for its success. Utilizing the opinions of scholars, theologians, and cultural anthropological data can enhance the learning experience. Online Bible study should not be viewed as a substitute for in-person classes, but rather as a tool for ministry and discipleship.

EMBEDDING MISSIONARY VISION INTO ONE-PERSON MEDIA MINISTRY

One-person media ministry- It is a calling

The Korea Employment Information Service (KEIS) selected one-person media creator as a new job group in 2016. A one-person media content creator is a job that creates and uploads personal video content on social media platforms such as YouTube and generates revenue through it. At this point, which is the initial stage of market formation, it is necessary to make efforts to establish a systematic basis for creating various contents by one creator. (Korea Employment Information Service Future Occupation Research Team) Likewise, single media ministers must work with a mission to develop and distribute content based on systematic planning and theology in order for the ministry to bear fruit.

Bevans writes, "The primary task of those who will culturally acclimatize the Gospel is to engage

in dialogue with the context in which the Gospel is preached or in which the Christian life is described, and the unchanging aspects of the Christian faith and the particular experiences, cultures, and societies within a particular place or particular people. It is to listen and distinguish the best way to challenge and connect the changing facets of location or social change. (Bevans 2011:711)”

One-person media ministry is not just a job, but a calling that requires a missionary vision. The mission of a one-person media minister should be to develop and distribute content based on systematic planning and theology, in order to bear fruit in their ministry. In order to culturally acclimatize the Gospel, one-person media ministers must engage in dialogue with the context in which the Gospel is preached and connect the unchanging aspects of the Christian faith with the changing facets of location or social change. This requires listening and discerning the best way to challenge and connect with different cultures and societies. Therefore, one-person media ministry should not be seen as just a trend or a way to generate revenue, but as a tool for spreading the Gospel and fulfilling the Great Commission.

As modern society becomes more intense, people are increasingly looking for a space where they can find rest and comfort for their bodies and minds. It is the responsibility of one-person media ministers to address these needs by creating a space that embraces and gives rest to those who feel lonely and despairing. This mission should be seen as a participation in God's mission, where our primary focus is on creating a space for hope in the midst of a changing world.

To accomplish this mission, media ministers must continuously learn about new digital technologies and share their knowledge with the community. They should also help to integrate these technologies into the community, so that no one is left behind or feels alienated. By fulfilling their mission in a missionary way, they can confirm God's footsteps in the midst of their media ministry.

It is important to remember that God's transformation is different from human innovation, and that our mission belongs to this age, not the next. As such, media ministers must always be aware of the changing world around them and adapt their strategies accordingly. They must be newly born ministers who are not lagging behind in a rapidly changing world, but rather actively engaging in it to bring hope and comfort to those in need.

One-person media ministry - Propose collaboration with the church.

We propose a way for small churches and churches in small provincial cities with weak digital content base to interact with one-person media ministers and share content. This is because it is advantageous to respond quickly in line with rapidly changing situations. The content produced by the church itself is a priority, but if the environment is not met, it is a good way to exchange and cooperate with external

organizations or one-man media ministers to operate various programs.

Scharmer, an economist at Harvard University, has developed a social skill called presencing, enabling those who dream of reforming the world to utilize it in the space of the future. He started out with the intention of realizing eco-life, insisting on symbiosis in which people live beautifully together in a capitalist world that only pursues profits (Scharmer and Kaufer 2014: 169-188).

He must develop his theory into a relationship with one-person media, church, and missions, and live a life of faith by working together in a future space that is different from previous generations.

Collaboration between one-person media ministers and churches can be a mutually beneficial way to create and share content. Small churches and those in provincial areas with limited digital resources can benefit from working with one-person media creators to develop and distribute content that speaks to their community's needs. At the same time, one-person media ministers can benefit from working with churches to access their established networks and audiences.

One-person media ministry- dreams of apostolic ministry

The limitations of traditional church and mission practices have become apparent, even before the COVID-19 pandemic. To adapt to a changing world, a paradigm shift is needed in the way churches operate. This includes challenging traditional doctrines, forms, and pastoral styles in favor of a more transformative approach to the gospel. The use of media has also become essential for ministry in the current context. In a world that is becoming increasingly globalized and subdivided by interests, a new type of relationship is required to connect with people and effectively transmit the gospel. One-person media ministry has the potential to be an apostolic ministry that can respond quickly to changing situations and bring a touch of healing to the world.

Inculturation is rooted in a Christology that realizes the “seed of the Word” in every historical and cultural context. Inculturation is the work of the community, not the individual. So, in addition to the church's influence on this spread, there exists an anthropology that recognizes the deep social nature of man and also recognizes the excellence of human experience and the process of making human culture. Culture, whether cherished as “holy ground” in the anthropological model, as in the counter-cultural model or directed with any suspicion, is still regarded as paramount for theology and Christian life. Humans are not abstract creatures; Bevans explains that they are fundamentally cultural beings (Bevans 2011:714) of flexibility and innovation, one-person media ministers who contribute to the spread of the gospel will draw out the aspects of Christian faith from Christians trapped in tradition with organized thinking and

new technology and grow into Christians as cultural beings that do not fall behind this generation. You should be able to help. It seems like we are going on a path that others do not go, but we must remember the following Bosch's suggestions and firmly follow the path of our mission.

"Uniqueness does not mean isolation. We must remember that any theology is a discourse about a universal message. This dialogue creates tension, but it becomes a creative tension if we seek unity in reconciled diversity. If we follow this path, our understanding of mission and the Church will indeed be qualitatively different from all earlier models, while we will at the same time experience a vital exchange with earlier periods" (Bosch 2017: 708)

Content users want new content to be produced when they become accustomed to content in a similar way. Because the audience empathized and empathized, they expected something new from the creator. When producing new content by applying leadership to these demands, it should play the role of a bridge that can lead to changes in the audience.

This can be confirmed in the Bridge Theory, a practical model of Clinton's leadership. He said that a leader is a person who has the potential and responsibility given by God to influence a particular group to move toward God's purpose for that group (Clinton 1992: Chapter 1:1).

One-person media ministry requires a significant amount of individual effort, time, and passion, and having a clear vision for the ministry is crucial. Therefore, it is necessary to plan and prepare adequately before starting such activities and work apostolically with a sense of calling and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Lee Sanghoon emphasized the importance of specialization in online ministry and creating an environment and culture suitable for the target audience. He also stressed the need to consider the possibilities and scalability of online ministry, even though it may seem small in comparison to popular YouTubers or influencers.

It is essential to recognize that the impact of one-person media content and the vision of God's kingdom transcends one's own thoughts and limitations. As such, individuals engaged in this ministry must always remember that it is a future-oriented ministry that requires a sense of calling and responsibility to move forward.

CONCLUSION

The post-pandemic world has brought about many changes, including the rise of online media missions and the need for practical media ministers who can adapt to a changing world. While the one-person media ministry may be a lonely endeavor, it is a calling worth pursuing with passion and responsibility. As the world enters the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, churches and mission

fields must adapt to the changing times and find ways to reach believers and locals who may be turning to online resources for answers.

However, the digital world has also brought about negative side effects, such as depression, panic disorder, drugs, and suicide. In this environment, there is a need for content that emulates the love and compassion of the Lord, particularly for those who have been weeded out of society due to fear of loss or loneliness. It is important for media ministers to create content that represents these stories and brings hope to those who are struggling. Ultimately, the goal should be to shine the light of Christ in a changing world and provide practical solutions to the challenges of the post-pandemic era.

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The Impact of Covid-19 on Transforming Missional Perspectives on Public Health

Grace Y. Kim

The World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. Department of State, and many other global authorities have acknowledged impeccable efforts and the role of religious leaders and non-governmental organizations in responding to health and humanitarian crises, particularly in responding to COVID-19 globally. Many countries' governments have granted religious leaders and NGOs to provide essential services to reach out and assist the poor, hungry, needy, and unemployed. Research suggests that COVID-19 has provided new mission-focused perspectives on the realities of the sufferings in the world and moved ministries to help. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted people's life, work, and the mission and theology of the church. The response of leadership is critical in strengthening the health security of the communities they serve. Christian leaders and members are committed to enhancing and improving global health by addressing poverty and other health determinants, leading to health equity based on the biblical foundation.

Several major NGO activities have taken place in Southeast Asia in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and some of the critical areas of focus include:

1. Providing healthcare services: NGOs are working to provide healthcare services, including medical care and testing, to vulnerable communities affected by COVID-19. Many NGOs are partnering with local healthcare providers to increase access to testing and treatment for COVID-19.
2. Supporting vulnerable populations: NGOs support vulnerable people such as migrant workers, refugees, and low-income families affected by the pandemic. This includes distributing food and supplies, offering shelter and assistance in accessing healthcare, and offering educational resources and mental health support.
3. Advocating for policy changes: NGOs are advocating for policy changes to address the pandemic's root causes and prevent future outbreaks. This includes supporting improved healthcare systems, increased funding for research, and better regulation of industries that contribute to the spread of infectious diseases.
4. Promoting community engagement: NGOs are working to promote community engagement and education around COVID-19, including promoting social distancing, mask-wearing, and other measures to prevent the spread of

the virus. They also work to dispel myths and misinformation about the virus and vaccines.

5. Supporting economic recovery: NGOs are working to support the economic recovery of communities affected by the pandemic, including providing job training and support for small businesses.

NGOs play a crucial role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in Southeast Asia. Their activities will likely continue for the foreseeable future as the region grapples with the pandemic's impacts. It's important to note that the specific activities of NGOs in Southeast Asia after COVID-19 will vary depending on the country and the needs of the local communities.

The core value and philosophy of public health align with the work of Jesus in terms of promoting health, in particular for the vulnerable population, with an inspirational and dedicated holistic approach. The public health approach has been focused on the core functions of health protection; health surveillance; disease and injury prevention; population health assessment; health promotion; and emergency preparedness and response to relieve health inequities, particularly in resource-poor regions. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health inequities are "Avoidable inequalities in health between groups of people within countries and between countries." Health inequities have been historically rooted in unfair consequences of morbidity and mortality.

Health inequities have become even more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic, with individuals from globally poorer socio-economic backgrounds, urban and rural disadvantaged locations, and vulnerable groups of society suffering the full force of its effects. This review aims to understand the disparities within different communities and recommend guidance for religious leaders and organizations to improve health literacy amongst underprivileged communities in preparing for future pandemics.

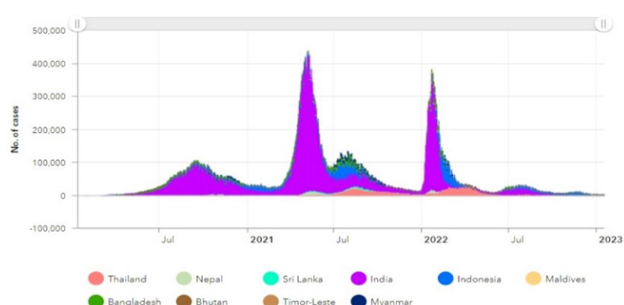
THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

As of January 5, 2023 (WHO, 2023), over 660 million confirmed cases have been recorded, including 6.7 million deaths associated with COVID-19 globally. Regional distribution of points is recorded as highest in Europe, the Americas, Western Europe, South-East Asia, Eastern Mediterranean, and Africa, respectively. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of

human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems, and businesses. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic has accelerated the risk of falling into extreme poverty for tens of people.

The number of undernourished people is estimated at nearly 822 million as of the end of the year 2020 (WHO, 2020). In other words, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the global crisis of food security, public health, and employment and labor issues, particularly among vulnerable societies, more than ever in human history.

Figure. COVID-19 Situation in the WHO South-East Asia Region
Reported COVID-19 cases by country and date



India – 44,681,154 / Indonesia – 6,726,311 / Thailand – 4,725,885 / Bangladesh – 2,037,377 / Nepal – 1,001,051 / Sri Lanka – 671,964 / Myanmar – 633,750 / Maldives – 185,702 / Bhutan – 62,577 / Timor-Leste – 23,406 (Source: <http://who.maps.arcgis.com>)

FOCUS AREAS IN NEED OF PREPAREDNESS FOR THE NEXT PANDEMIC

Christian leaders and organizations can develop long-term sustainable strategies to focus on challenges facing the health and agri-food sectors. Priority should be given to addressing underlying food security and malnutrition challenges and tackling rural poverty. One way can be by providing more and better jobs in the rural economy, extending social protection to all, facilitating safe migration pathways, and promoting the formalization of the informal economy. Researchers underscored the high association between poverty and low socioeconomic status and poor health outcomes, for example, in South Africa or a region with sizeable economic disparity, which leads to severe health inequality (Mishra et al., 2021).

Although healthcare resources are strained in such difficult times, it is vital to prioritize the at-risk groups and to encourage a more comprehensive health delivery by NGOs and humanitarian agencies. Several measures can be implemented at a community level to help reduce disparities. COVID-19 has demonstrated the seriousness of the consequences faced by those from underprivileged backgrounds and highlighted their predicament between poverty and the pandemic. Swift action must be taken to ensure the needs of these individuals are met sufficiently for them to survive the pandemic and be well-equipped to endure any further strains on global health in the future.

The literature by Tagai et al. (2017) affirmed that faith-based organizations are critical in promoting health for people who lack access to medical care. Christian leaders, missionaries, and mission-oriented organizations based in underserved regions play a role in focusing their mission on both the physical and spiritual needs so that their collaborative works can transform beliefs and the quality of life in the communities they serve. Such organizations are designed to aid in overcoming various types of challenges for individuals, families, and communities. Providing individuals with knowledge concerning basic health principles and practices can promote and achieve better health within communities. Health promotion is multifaceted and allows missionaries to be part of a collaborative team addressing the need for physical, spiritual, emotional, and social well-being. It is a strategic way to facilitate holistic transformational development or an integral mission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The World Health Organization has underscored that religious leaders, faith-based organizations, and faith communities play a significant role in saving lives and reducing sickness during pandemics such as COVID-19. For instance, essential support, comfort, guidance, and access to health care and social service for their communities can be offered. Christian leaders and missionaries can share health information to protect individuals, who can expand to broader communities as liaisons between the government and the communities they serve. Pastoral and spiritual support can be provided during public health emergencies and other health challenges and advocate for vulnerable populations' needs. By communicating up-to-date, evidence-based steps to mitigate the devastating impacts of pandemics, faith-based organizations can provide helpful information, prevent and reduce fear and stigma, reassure people in their communities, and promote health care practices. Lastly, service and dedicated networks can integrate Christian leaders and organizations into their communities. They can often reach the most vulnerable with assistance and health information and identify those in need. Collaborative global efforts to promote and care for underprivileged populations align with accomplishing one of the utmost missions, which is to love your neighbor and give to all Christians for the glory of God.

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Missions in the Post-Pandemic Era: Challenges and Opportunities in the New Normal

Esther X. Yang

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with records of the World Health Organization, the COVID 19 pandemic has infected over 762 million, and has been the cause of death for over 6.8 million worldwide. Out of this large picture, several hundred ordained bishops and ministers from the Church of God denomination (Cleveland, TN) have passed from this deadly pandemic in the past three years. These deaths are not strangers, but close coworkers and fellow missionaries, dedicated ministers, and anointed preachers in the field. The Church of God has considered these lives as a major loss toward the work of the mission field, where the “harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few” (Matthew 9:38).

The purpose of this paper is to explore the challenges and opportunities in the post pandemic normal so that it might be a helpful and practical application. In order to do so, I intend to layout the five characteristics of the new post-pandemic normal, then I will lay out challenges and opportunities as it relates to those on the missions field. The five areas of examination are: mental health, caregiver burnout, education, behavioral and social changes, and economic stress. After outlining the major characteristics, I will explore the main obstacles and opportunities on the mission field and present practical tips for ministers.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

To see the challenges and opportunities of the new normal, we will look at the characteristics that have shifted our world, post pandemic. According to the University of Alabama in Birmingham, the pandemic has shifted our attention to the field of mental health (UAB, 2022). The increase of deaths and widespread social isolation has brought on or at least exposed tremendous cases of depression, insomnia, anxiety, and suicidal ideation among all age groups. Furthermore, many families and friends were not able to grieve in typical ways as they were barred from seeing the loved ones in their final hours. Those left behind in a wake of grieving were often left to grieve alone.

The isolation and grief caused major challenges as those in traditional ministerial and medical roles could not practice as they normally do. Hospital chaplains were often prohibited from physical visits. Pastors with congregants in the hospital could not do their usual visits, and many churches and Christian funeral homes struggled with issues of capacity and

availability.

Gospel minded Christians consider the growing awareness of mental health as an opportunity for the Church at large to take action and heal a broken world. This focus on mental health presents an opportunity for missionaries to show care when people need it most, or are at their most vulnerable stages.

CAREGIVER BURNOUT

The subject of caregiver burnout applies to both medical staff as well as ministerial staff. The pressure both in the demands and the amount of clients or congregants overwhelms caregivers to the point of exhaustion. Stress, depression, insufficient rest, spiritual dryness, loss of motivation, feelings of isolation, sensitivity to temptation, and disengagement or lack of compassion to those one serves are all characteristics of burnout we have seen over the recent years. Burnout can be physical, spiritual, relational or emotional.

Regarding the opportunities from caregiver burnout, there is great potential for missions workers to change their focus to ministries of recovery and retreat for weary souls. Whether silent retreats, specific conferences, or even off-site pilgrimages, these acts of spiritual rest can provide great nourishment for those who have experienced burnout.

The major challenge for missions and church ministry regarding caregiver burnout is prevention and recovery. Kevin Halloran with Word Partners offered salient tips on how to reduce this ministry burnout (Word Partners, 2020). He recommended that one spend increase time in prayer and Scripture reading, focus on the positive, participate in energizing activities, cut off draining relationships and find ways to express gratitude. The best suggestion the author offers is to regain lost vision for ministry. I believe this is the most crucial key because without this vision, nothing more can be accomplished. As Matthew 11: 28-30 advises, those who are weary, can find their true rest in their faith in Christ. Furthermore,

I Corinthians 15:58 advises believers to be “steadfast and un-moveable” because one’s work and service for the Lord is never in vain.

Regarding the opportunities from caregiver burnout, there is great potential for missions workers to change their focus to ministries of recovery and retreat for weary souls. Whether silent retreats, specific conferences, or even off-site pilgrimages, these acts of spiritual rest can provide great nourishment for those who have experienced burnout. By seeking these opportunities of recovery and retreat, one should look for chances to cooperate with other businesses and organizations to enlarge their scope of impact.

EDUCATION BARRIERS

The pandemic has brought on significant educational challenges as many young and adult learners shifted toward online learning. Since March of 2020, most schools in America shifted immediately in person classes to online presence and digital communication, even if schools and institutions were not ready to give such quality education. Similarly, the Church at large had to adjust to online services and Facebook Live streaming Church events.

For many who are not technologically savvy, learning through screens and computers presents a major challenge, especially for older generations. For those that did grow up in the digital age, relying on technology, rather than face to face interactions makes it harder to sense and speculate what another person might be needing. Many people, especially ministers, rely on interpersonal interactions to be able to minister at their best because they can use facial expressions, body language, tone and inflection to determine what a person might need at that moment.

While online education presents quite a few challenges and can be exhausting for many, it also offers a great opportunity to reach far more people than could ever have attended in person events. The advantage of online education and ministry is the ever increasing, almost limitless scope of those that can be reached. Furthermore, this also highlights a new and different demographic to reach, as people who are more technologically inclined can access online events or participate in online learning, whether synchronous or asynchronous. Online ministry expands far beyond a set location or time—ministers and missionaries are able to connect with people half a world away, with the touch of their fingertips. The shifts in learning and technology can span a wide range for different types of learners, as many ministers have employed “hybrid” services in churches where congregants can choose physical or virtual attendance. In short, a move toward online education forces the church and its workers to adapt to a new age, and to develop new skills for reaching the lost, whether video streaming, internet chat systems, and social networks.

David Royall recommends many practical suggestions for running hybrid churches, which can

also be used for hybrid missions (Royall, 2023). He recommends presenting the mission first; because ministries can often change and adapt, churches must hold to their mission and core values as the times and modes change. Secondly, he recommends for churches to “set out a digital welcome mat” and think of the digital world as its own congregation. The physical and virtual congregation should both be taken seriously. Lastly, he suggests that churches should be open to experiment by focusing on connection and trying new methods of outreach and worship. As the old saying goes, the last words of a dying church are, “We never did it that way before!” There are endless possibilities for engagement, as long as the purpose remains the same, the methodology can change.

BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL CHANGES

The pandemic restrictions such as social distancing, long periods of quarantine, and mask wearing have subsequently weakened social ties that have impacted communication and trust in society. Overall, there is less understanding and trust between individuals. The Church and the mission field was not exempt from these changes, and the downsides of the social and behavioral changes within society present a huge challenge when spreading the Gospel. Communication between leaders, pastors, ministry teams and their local congregations as well as the relationships between missionaries and their nationals has deteriorated the trust between groups, especially between ethnic and cultural boundaries. This decline in trust, which is the foundation for non Christians to be open to receiving the Gospel, has grown among across social groups in the wake of an atmosphere of mis-information and anger.

According to Dr. Hong Yang, there five foundational factors to building the crucial foundation of trust: test, time, trajectory, transparency, truth. Any activity (Yang, 2013) or sharing of faith requires truth and honesty between parties, and without this transparency, a missionary will lose social and personal credibility. When a missionary is on the field, those receiving their message are not only learning to trust the one sharing the Gospel, but also, in many ways, they are “testing” the message, and it’s deliverer. Furthermore, trust must be built over time, and the longer time a person has embedded themselves within a community, the more the trust increases.

These behavioral and social changes of an atmosphere of mistrust has, however, created more opportunities. The pandemic has forced missionaries to adjust, be flexible, and adapt to different situations and social behaviors. These re-strategizing means that missionaries must think of new ways to engage. If missionaries can employ activities and engage in a way that help build trust, whether conventional or

non-conventional ways, their mission will succeed. There is a well-known Chinese adage by Lao-Ze, which says, "If you tell me, I will forget. If you show me, I will remember. If you involve me, I will learn." This is the heart of readjusting to build more trust in a post-pandemic society.

THE YO-YO ECONOMY

Out of all the changes the pandemic has created, the economic landscape has arguably rocked the global landscape the most. Not only has the pandemic affected the American economy, but worldwide trade, production, and distribution at large. In the present atmosphere of 2023, the aftermath of the pandemic brought about an economic recession of progress and drastic inflation of prices. While job growth two to three years out of the height of the pandemic has not stagnated, the price and cost of living has caused tremendous challenges for the average home, and for missionaries.

Missionaries face struggle from both sides: the donor base and incoming missions giving have fluctuated based on the average national salary, also the outgoing costs for upkeep and travel has increased greatly for missionaries. Regarding the donor base, inflation, shut downs, and changes or losses of jobs has effected the regular giving of households to missions and non profit work. Families under financial stress or survival mode choose to cut donations and non-essentials to make ends meet. Missionaries also cannot operate with the same budget pre-pandemic, even if there were no changes to the giving. For example, a missionary to China could purchase a ticket for \$1000 before the pandemic, however, since the People's Republic of China changed their policies regarding foreign visits and blocked previously granted visas, the average cost of a ticket increased to \$4000 to \$7500 at its peak. This travel cost only reflects the international plane ticket, not to mention the increase in domestic travel from city to city.

The dramatic changes to the economy during and after the pandemic have impacted missionaries negatively, however, there are opportunities. The unstable economy causes believers to rethink the things we treasure and bring the sayings of Jesus to reality—"store your treasures in heaven where moth and rust cannot destroy, and thieves cannot break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be" (Matthew 6: 19-20). The economic struggles allows us to prioritize and reprioritize what means the most to us. Those on the mission field grow in authenticity in discipleship and faith that God will provide. Working in the mission field is not about converting the non-believers but about making disciples for Jesus who are solid in character.

CONCLUSION

The pandemic was unexpected, and brought on

hardships no one foresaw. In the darkness and struggle, the church can find light and hope. This essay briefly focused on five categories of change: mental health, caregiver burnout, education, social and behavioral changes, and economic stress. These topics only reflect a few of the major post-pandemic realities, there are many more unlisted. This essay has explored many of the challenges that the church faces in adaption, but also has discussed the opportunities these realities bring. As missionaries continue to share the Gospel and return the field, my prayer is that those who serve continue to receive revelation from the Holy Spirit on engagement and opportunity.

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NATIONAL REPORT: VIETNAM

Evangelism in “4IR” Era

Tran The Thien Phuoc

Vietnam today is a country located to the east of the Indochina Peninsula, with a population of about 97 million people. It is a very dynamic economy and a very high level of integration, and trade with the world. It is a developing and potential country in many ways. However, Protestantism in Vietnam in this “4IR” era is still a small community with a proportion of only 2.16% of the population. Even though Protestantism in Vietnam has undergone a history of 112 years of establishment and development (1911-2023), it is still not growing as expected. Therefore, it is necessary to look back at the past, and realize the reality in order to be able to look to the future with a brighter perspective for the development of the evangelical churches in Vietnam in the coming years.

LOOKING BACK AT THE PAST

The Gospel was introduced to the Vietnamese people more than a century ago. In 1911, the frontier missionaries of The Christian and Missionary Alliance brought the Gospel to Vietnam and concerted some Vietnamese people to God and established the first Evangelical church in Da Nang.¹ Then the Gospel continued to spread to the North, in Hai Phong and Hanoi, the capital of Indochina.² By 1918, missionary work had begun in Saigon and other cities in South of Vietnam.³

The first decade of missionary work (1911-1921) was an exploratory one. After 10 years establishing the first Evangelical church in Da Nang, the Vietnamese Evangelical community has been formed with 8 churches and 183 baptized believers, and the total number of believers is about 2,000 people.⁴

In the next two decades (1921-1941), The Evangelical Church of Vietnam (ECVN) was formed its organization in 1927 with the original name of the Eastern French Evangelical Church. They have faced many difficulties, typically the Privy Council under Bao Dai's reign, which issued a notice banning the spread of Protestantism in 1925.⁵ the Japanese military occupation in 1941 causing 22 churches to be closed.⁶ But it was also at this time that the methods

of evangelization were thoroughly applied, marking a great step forward in the work of evangelism. By the end of this period, the ECVN had 203 churches,⁷ 11,751 baptized believers and a Evangelical community of about 60,000 people.⁸ In addition, since 1929, the ECVN has made efforts to bring the Gospel to the ethnic minorities, resulting in 14 ethnic minorities having received the Gospel, as of 1942.⁹

In 1954, the ECVN had 17,007 baptized members.¹⁰ According to the Geneva Agreement, Vietnam was divided into two countries at the 17th parallel border: the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the North and the Republic of Vietnam in the South. During the years of 1954-1955, more than a million people from the North migrated to the South, including 1,014 ECVN's members. The church in the North remained about 2,000 members and 14 pastors,¹¹ and continued to decrease to about 1,200 members in 1975.¹²

From 60,000 members in 1941, the number of members of the ECVN increased to 100,000 in 1961 (South Vietnam only).¹³

In the next 15 years (1961-1975), besides the ECVN, there were about 25 other missionary organizations operating in the South of Vietnam.¹⁴ However, the Evangelical community was still only a small religion among other religions in the country, with a membership of about 280,000 in 1975.

In the decade of 1975-1985, after the Vietnam War, Vietnam faced many economic and social difficulties. Evangelical denominations are not recognized, the Gospel is suspected and opposed. Yet, God's Church has grown tremendously through personal witness work, church evangelistic programs... After a steep initial decline, the number of believers rebounded rapidly, to 330,000 in 1985. Many new churches were established through the government's resettlement programs to New Economic Zones.¹⁵

In the decade of 1985-1995, Vietnam's economy had a renewal and development that opened up many

1. I. F. Irwin, *With Christ in Indochina* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, Inc, 1937), 26-27.

2. Irwin, 30.

3. I. R. Stebbins, *Forty-One Years with the Vietnamese Church. Memory of a veteran missionary who served with great distinction in the Central and Southern Districts of the ECVN* (n.d.), 5.

4. Lê Hoàng Phu, *Lịch sử Hội Thánh Tin Lành Việt Nam 1911-1965* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Tôn giáo, 2010), 128, 129.

5. Lê Hoàng Phu, 166-167.

6. Lê Hoàng Phu, 202.

7. Reginald E. Reimer, *The Protestant Movement in Vietnam: Church Growth in Peace and War among Ethnic Vietnamese* (Master thesis, School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, May 1972), 47. Le Van Thien, *Church Development In Vietnam* (PhD Dissertation Submitted Trinity Theological Seminary, 2000), 63.

8. Lê Hoàng Phu, 203-205.

9. Tổng Liên hội, 'Khai trình Đại Hội đồng,' (1942), 8-10. Lê Hoàng Phu, 347.

10. CMA, Annual Report for 1954, 120.

11. Tổng Liên hội, *Kỷ niệm 90 năm Tin Lành truyền đến Việt Nam*, 2001.

12. Ginnetta, et.al., *A report on Vietnam, April 1975-December 1988* (Atherton, California: Aurora foundation, 1989), 107.

13. Lê Hoàng Phu, 358-359.

14. David Barrett & Frank Kaleb Jansen, *The world in Figures* (Lausanne, July 1989), 13-34.

15. Le Van Thien, 101.

opportunities for the development of the Church. Churches in the cities continued to conduct periodic evangelistic programs in their churches and while rural churches held evangelism on festive occasions at home. Membership increased to 558,000 in 1995, especially among ethnic members.¹⁶

In addition to the ECVN, which is the largest denomination in Vietnam, most other missionary organizations came to Vietnam after 1954. The Christian Missionary Church were established in 1956 and had 2,613 baptized members in 1972. The Mennonite Society arrived in 1957 and had 124 baptized members; Southern Baptist arrived in 1959 and had 1,173 members; The Church of Christ arrived in 1962 with 100 members, and other small groups.¹⁷ After 1975, for various reasons, many Evangelical denominations ceased to operate in Vietnam, but a number of new denominations appeared due to separation from the ECVN as well as being imported from abroad.

In 2001, it was estimated that the number of members of the ECVN and other denominations was about 800,000 people. Up to now (2023) it is estimated that there are about 1.4 million believers, 6,300 churches, more than 2,300 pastors in Vietnam belonging to about 100 different organizations.¹⁸ In which, the ECVN is the majority with about 1 million believers, 2,253 churches, 1,619 pastors and about 15,000 deacons of more than 40 different ethnicities.¹⁹ In addition, there are 61 churches for foreigners with more than 9,000 members.²⁰

ENTERING THE “4IR” ERA

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, 4IR, or Industry 4.0 is the industrial revolution following the trend of information and data exchange in production technology and production automation, taking place mainly in three fields: physical, digital and bio-technology. In this era, the church has to face more challenges of faith but also larger and broader opportunities to preach the Gospel with new methods, in line with the trend development of the times. However, Covid-19 pandemic is a test for the church

16. Le Văn Thiên, 141. Patrick Johnstone, Operation World, year 1998. Johnstone đã ghi nhận con số tín hữu Tin Lành tại Việt Nam là 600.000 người. This number is consistent with the report of the Vietnamese government in Ban Tôn giáo Chính phủ (1), Những nội dung cơ bản về Đạo Tin Lành (Hà Nội: Tài Liệu Phổ Biến Nội Bộ, 1997), 1-6.

17. Reinald E. Reimer, Protestant directory, churches, missions & organizations in Vietnam (Sài Gòn: Office of Missionary Information, 1972), 47.

18. According to government statistics in December 2020, there are about 1.12 million Protestants. Ban Tôn giáo Chính phủ (2), 'Tài liệu bồi dưỡng kiến thức, kỹ năng nghiệp vụ thông tin, tuyên truyền chính sách, pháp luật về tín ngưỡng, tôn giáo và công tác tín ngưỡng, tôn giáo,' (Hà Nội, 2021), 83.

19. <https://danhba.hltvn.org>. In response to the growing needs of the Church, a seminary (The Institute of Bible and Theology) was established by ECVN in 2003 that offers a 4-year bachelor's degree program (B.Th.) and a master's program (M.Div.), in addition to the theological centers for training the workers for local churches. Every 2 years, there are 100 graduates of bachelor's degrees and hundreds of graduates of other training programs.

20. Ban Tôn giáo Chính phủ (2), 83.

to enter the “4IR” era also.

Not long after the outbreak of Covid-19 in December 2019 in China, on January 23, 2020, the first Covid-19 infection was also detected in Vietnam.²¹ The social life of Vietnamese people was strongly affected. The state of emergency over the epidemic was declared by the government, along with restrictions on freedom of movement, freedom of residence and freedom of assembly. In addition, the chains of infection stemming from religious activities concentrated in the United States,²² South Korea²³ as well as Vietnam have led the government to impose more restrictions on religious activities during the pandemic outbreak.²⁴

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, 4IR, or Industry 4.0 is the industrial revolution following the trend of information and data exchange in production technology and production automation, taking place mainly in three fields: physical, digital and bio-technology. In this era, the church has to face more challenges of faith but also larger and broader opportunities to preach the Gospel with new methods, in line with the trend development of the times.

During the pandemic, Evangelical denominations in general and each local church have taken advantage of the opportunity to participate in epidemic prevention and control activities very actively²⁵ such as donating money,²⁶ joining the epidemic prevention and control force, giving medical equipment,²⁷ medications,²⁸ providing meals and necessary supplies for people,²⁹ creating a good image of the Gospel - which is

21. <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-exemplar-vietnam>

22. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/us/coronavirus-churches-outbreaks.html>

23. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/south-korea-coronavirus-daegu-sues-religious-sect-over-covid-as-it-grapples-with-2nd-wave/>

24. In May 2021, the investigative agency prosecuted the case of “spreading diseases related to The Revival Evangelical Church.” This action has become a great pressure for the church's concentrated activities in the epidemic situation. <https://thanhvien.vn/khoi-to-vu-an-lam-lay-lan-dich-benh-lien-quan-hoi-tin-lanh-truyen-giao-phuc-hung-1851072817.html>

25. Ban Tôn giáo Chính phủ (2), 90-92.

26. <http://mattran.org.vn/dan-toc-ton-giao/tong-lien-hoi-hoi-thanh-tin-lanh-viet-nam-mien-nam-ho-tro-11-ty-dong-cho-quy-phong-chong-dich-covid19-tp-ho-chi-minh-38776.html>, <https://trao.vinhlong.gov.vn/xem-chi-tiet-tin-tuc/id/188038>

27. <https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tin-tuc/tong-lien-hoi-hoi-thanh-tin-lanh-viet-nam-mien-nam-trao-may-tho-oxy-cho-benh-vien-da-chien-thu-dung-1491880824>

28. <https://www.binhthuan.gov.vn/4/469/66822/571263/thong-tin-quyen-gop-covid-19/ban-dai-dien-hoi-thanh-tin-lanh-viet-nam-tinh-ung-ho-lien-va-nhu-yeu-pham-phong-chong-dich-covid.aspx>

29. <http://mttq.bentre.gov.vn/loi-dung/ban-dai-dien-hoi-thanh-tin-lanh-viet-nam-tinh-ung-ho-lien-va-nhu-yeu-pham-phong-chong-dich-covid.aspx>

stigmatized in society because of misunderstandings about the Gospel beliefs and propaganda.

In the situation of "social distancing," religious institutions including churches must close and the church must quickly adapt to the new situation by organizing activities online. Plans to send missionaries to new fields were interrupted. Worship programs, personal witness, as well as church or stadium outreach programs that could not be performed, have been replaced by programs of worship,³⁰ evangelism,³¹ study Bible, training... online through Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook, Youtube and many other media platforms.³²

By the end of 2021, when the epidemic situation has been brought under control, the Vietnamese government gradually loosen restrictions during the epidemic emergency and social life will shift to a "new normal" - activities social life is gradually restored to the way it was before the pandemic. The spiritual hunger after days of "social distancing" became a greater need than ever. Church activities gradually resumed with more people attending; witnessing work is promoted; stadium outreach programs were held with tens thousands of attendees and thousands of people adopting faith in the Lord; Many new churches continue to be opened...

At the beginning of 2023, after many postponements due to Covid-19 pandemic (February 22-23, 2020; December 4-5, 2021), Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has finally been able to hold the evangelization campaign called the Spring of Love in Hochiminh city for 2 nights: March 4-5, 2023. There were around 25,000 people to attend on the spot each night,³³ 165,000 viewers through different media channels and 4,500 people who were willing to accept Christ Jesus.³⁴

The pandemic has passed, but its effects still affect many aspects of Vietnamese society and create many challenges:

The negative aspect: the economic recession along with the effects of the war in Ukraine has made people's life difficult.

Many people have a suspicious or even discriminatory view of others because of their obsession with disease transmission. Leading to reluctance in contacting strangers and going to crowded places, making it difficult to witness and invite friends to participate in any outreach program.

The consider of government in religious activities and missionary work on social networking platforms with the ambition of managing religious activities in

tin-lanh-viet-nam-mien-nam-tinh-ben-tre-tuong-tro-nguoi-dan-vung

30. <https://httlvn.org/ca-mau-muc-su-hoi-truong-giang-boi-linh-truc-tuyen-cho-cac-hoi-thanh-trong-tinh.html>

31. <https://httlvn.org/truyen-giang-giang-sinh-truc-tuyen-cua-ban-dai-dien-long-an.html>

32. <https://httlvn.org/dak-lak-boi-linh-hiep-nguyen-truc-tuyen-quy-i-2022.html>

33. <https://congthuong.vn/tp-ho-chi-minh-hang-ngan-nguoi-dan-cung-hoa-minh-trong-dem-nhac-xuan-yeu-thuong-244875.html>

34. <https://oneway.vn/tin-tuc/xuan-yeu-thuong-cong-tac-cham-soc-4500-tan-tin-huu-50535.html>

cyberspace.

The sending of missionaries to other countries has stalled.

The social media environment is like a double-edged sword, a good means to spread the Gospel, but also a means for cults to spread false doctrines.

MOVING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE

According to a report by the Missionary Committee of the ECVN, in the period of 2009-2022, on average 60-80 new churches were established each year (the rate is 2.5-3.6%/year), which corresponds to the annual membership growth rate surveyed by the Joshua Project (approximately 2.6%/year).³⁵ Although the process of globalization integration with the world has had a positive impact on the development of the Church in Vietnam over the past 30 years,³⁶ the number of believers has increased about 2.5 times from 558,000 in 1995 to 1,400,000 in 2023. The number of ethnic groups that have received the Gospel from 14 in 1942 has increased to more than 40 in 2022. However, the percentage of Evangelical community in Vietnam today is still low, only at 1.44% (1.4/97 million people),³⁷ it is a long time before Evangelical community can become a strong community in Vietnam unless a revival hits Vietnam.

Therefore, entering the "4IR" era, the Vietnamese Church needs to quickly access scientific and technological achievements, to seize the existing opportunities to devise an effective evangelization strategy in the challenging and rapidly changing "4IR" era:

- The view of the Evangelical Church of the government and the people becomes more open and sympathetic through the church's practical contributions during the pandemic, creating a better relationship between the community so that the church can receive more people.
- The spirit of camaraderie and suffering spread during the pandemic pulls people closer together. People are more open to receiving God's love.
- Online meetings have become more popular. People in rural areas or the elderly, who have little access to social networks, have gradually become familiar with technological devices and social networks. It is an opportunity for the church to preach the Gospel across borders through social media platforms without being limited by space and time.
- More attention should be paid to the field of Christian communication on social media platforms, applying AI (artificial intelligence)... both to protect the faith against heresies and to spread the Gospel beyond the limitations of space and time.

35. <https://joshuaproject.net/countries/VM>

36. Ban Tôn giáo Chính phủ (2), 78, 92.

37. The Joshua project's statistics have higher results with about 2.1 million believers out of a total of 97.5 million people, reaching 2.16%. <https://joshuaproject.net/countries/VM>

- The spiritual hunger after the pandemic is an opportunity for the seed of the Gospel to be sown and bear fruit.
- Targeting unreach ethnic minorities (Chut/Arem, Gelao, Coong, Giay/Nhang, Lu, Qabiao, Xinh Mun/Puoc...).³⁸

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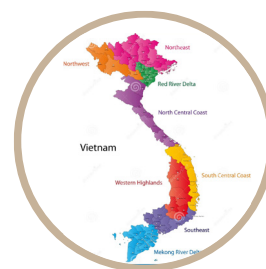
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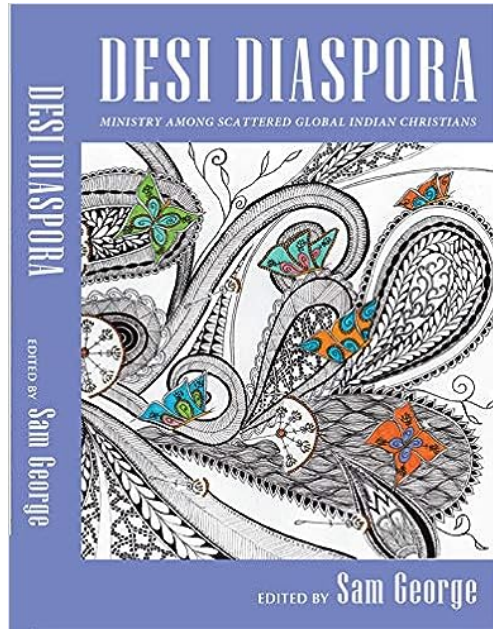
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BOOK REVIEW:

Desi Diaspora: Ministry Among Scattered Global Indian Christians

Reviewed by *Suraja Raman*



We are now living in an age of migration of people bringing along their beliefs and practices. In *Desi Diaspora*, we read of the unique accounts of ministry among global Indians. The author, and editor, Sam George, is an Indian American who is based in Chicago and serves as catalyst of diasporas for the Lausanne Movement. In this book, he provides a heartwarming account of the scattered global Indian Christians in every continent.

The readers can expect to be introduced to diaspora mission, including Scriptural foundations of diaspora church that: identifies with the teachings of the apostle Paul, and we are ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). That having being reconciled with Christ, we are now reconciled with one another (2 Corinthians 5: 14-21).

In *Desi Diaspora* (book covers), the scattered global Christians who have left their places of birth and have chosen to live in faraway lands with all the challenges and uncertainties of survival in the new territory. There is a sense of relief, when one's career is determined with accomplishments and success. The extended families are reunited at times in the new place that is finally called home!

There are 17 chapters covering places such as Australia, England, and Canada.

I found the following essays as a few highlights that stood for me:

Ushaben HR Patel is a British Gujarati Christian, and together with her husband, Matthew, they had served in cross cultural missions with several international mission agencies.

Stanley V. John was born and raised in Kuwait. He and his wife live in New York City. He is the director and assistant professor of missions and intercultural studies at the alliance Theological Seminary, in Nyack.

Geomon George writes- 'The End is a New Beginning.' My aunt has a nursing degree, and carried with her dreams and aspirations for her family and community, to pursue a career in the United States.'

In the book, the contributing authors are drawn from different denomination backgrounds such as Catholic, Orthodox, Mar Thoma, Evangelical, Reformed, Pentecostal and others. All are involved in church or ministry leadership of some form in their respective places of settlement. It covers both first and second generation of overseas Indians. I believe these narratives will continue to engage the readers and aspire the future generations.

As the largest diaspora community in the world, this book features wide array of Christian ministry by and among them in diverse socio-cultural settings, especially in light of the growing number of Christians in diaspora.

Overall, this book is an excellent read and recommended to understand dispersed Indians and how God is working among them worldwide.

As a reader, I am encouraged to be steadfast in the Lord, in the ministry of teaching the Word of God, to continue in the mission of reaching out to Indians and, for the glory of God.