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Missions Alongside the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas

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Editor's Pen

Walking Alongside Our Indigenous Siblings

HEATHER PUBOLS *Editorial Director*

In July 2023, I attended three back-to-back meetings in Brazil for foreign, national, and Indigenous missionaries. During that time, they celebrated more than 30 years of collaboration among these groups. This collaboration came about because of outside pressures. The region's remaining groups without a gospel presence were increasingly off-limits to foreigners and non-Indigenous. Missions strategy would have to look different.

God did not take this difficulty away. Instead, he accompanied his people into a new season of relationships – ones that challenged foreign, national, and Indigenous people to find a place *alongside* and not *ahead* of each other.

What started in Brazil has spread to other countries in the Amazon and lowland regions of South America – including Columbia, Peru, and Suriname. Even Indigenous people in the highlands are looking into collaborative strategies. Foreign, national, and Indigenous people are finding ways to work together to reach the remaining unreached people groups across the continent while strengthening the existing church.

In the final meeting I attended in Brazil, I listened to tribal church leaders in Suriname talk over Zoom about the work they are already doing to share the gospel with other Indigenous communities near them. They further shared that they sent a couple to study English in Canada with a goal of reaching out to Native communities in Northern Canada. And they are needed there.

While the Joshua project lists no unreached Indigenous people groups in the US and Canada,[1] the need for faithful gospel witnesses among Indigenous communities in North America remains. Government attempts at assimilation (with historical help from missionaries and churches) left festering wounds that need healing. These show up in high suicide rates, domestic violence, alcoholism, drug use, and more.

Like in South America, missionary partners in North America recommend participating from a posture of mutual interdependency. Walking alongside our Indigenous siblings, we can provide support through building genuine relationships, encouraging, compassionate service, and training and equipping. Listening to and acknowledging the pain of the past is also a profoundly important way we can demonstrate the gospel in action and participate in God's ministry of reconciliation.

This issue of *EMQ* lets you have a peek at how this is playing out on the ground across the Americas right now. Our contributors explain what has gone right, what has gone wrong, and ways we can move forward together.

Our extras section contains two articles which complement our theme. They explore what cultural intelligence and acculturation look like when missionaries cross not just one, but many cultures. ■

1. "People Cluster: North American Indigenous," Joshua Project, accessed February 13, 2023, https://joshuaproject.net/clusters/246.

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AMERICA

2
COUNTRIES

210
INDIGENOUS PEOPLE GROUPS

3+
MILLION INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

0
UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS

* Statistics from the Joshua Project: "People Cluster: North American Indigenous," https://joshuaproject.net/clusters/246, accessed February 13, 2024.

TOP: COURTESY OF WYCLIFFE CANADA. USED WITH PERMISSION. BOTTOM: ARNE, ADOBE STOCK.

We Are Still Here

I am a Christian and a Native American from the Yuchi tribe. My family's story reflects the challenges Native Americans experienced when Christian faith was not contextualized to their cultures. Yet I've also witnessed how Scripture engagement can honor cultures and bring God glory.

My story begins where I was born – in Tulsa, Oklahoma in the south-central US. Tulsa's history is a complex tapestry involving the descendants of Indigenous, European, and African peoples. In its modern history, it is influenced by many megachurches and was the location of one of the first televangelists.

Earlier in the twentieth century, Tulsa was home to Black Wall Street – a prosperous African American business district.[1] Before this, an oil boom earned Tulsa the title of "Oil Capital of the World."[2] And all of this intertwines with Tulsa's history in the 1830s as a place of resettlement for Native American communities.

In many ways, this tapestry is woven into my very core. From the impact of mainstream Charismatic Christianity to my family's Native American legacy, Tulsa is part of who I am, and I am part of Tulsa.

Esau McCauley says in his book *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise of Hope*, "Ethnic identity and the Christian community, a question asked and answered a generation ago, must be addressed again in our day so that our people know that God glories in the distinctive gifts we all bring into the kingdom."[3]

I resonate with Esau's words. While my first identity is and will always be Christian, my second identity is Native American. I am convinced both find beautiful form and function in the kingdom of God.

THE YUCHI

I am a proud member of the Yuchi[4] tribe, one of the oldest tribes in North America. For generations, we've called ourselves the

PHOTO BY VIOLETKAIPA, ADOBE STOCK.

The Yuchi people call themselves *Tsoyahá*, meaning "children of the sun."

> While my first identity is and will always be Christian, my second identity is Native American.

"Children of the Sun."[5] I am proud to be a child of the sun. Our community originally lived in the southeast of what is now the US. In the sixteenth century, Yuchi people lived in what is now eastern Tennessee. By the next century, they migrated south establishing communities in present-day Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina, close to the Muscogee Creek people. Some groups also ventured into the panhandle of Florida.

Epidemic diseases and conflicts brought significant losses to the community in the 1800s. Those were compounded by the forced removal of native people from the southeast in the 1830s by the US government via the *Trail of Tears*.[6] The Yuchi walked the trail with their allies, the Muscogee (Creek), to "Indian Territory" (present day Oklahoma).

Today, the Yuchi predominantly inhabit northeastern Oklahoma, and many hold enrollment as citizens within the federally recognized Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The Yuchi tribe is small – approximately 2,000 individuals can trace their lineage back to around 1,100 individuals documented as ethnically Yuchi by the Indian Claims Commission in 1950.[7]

Preserving our cultural identity remains important. Yuchi people maintain long-held rituals and ceremonies, unique foods, traditional clothing, and their Yuchi language. Our beautifully complex language is a linguistic isolate not known to be related to any other language. Men and women speak distinct languages, adding to its complexity and beauty. Yet, the last known native speaker passed away in 2021.[8]

In the 1970s, linguists worked to transliterate the Yuchi language into the English alphabet, marking a significant effort to capture and document the language.[9] This continues to be built upon. The 1994 establishment of the Yuchi Language Project brings hope of language revival. According to the non-profit's administrator, about 20 people have been trained to speak Yuchi as their second language. This increase in Yuchi speakers made it possible to open a Yuchi language immersion school for children up to nine years old in 2018.[10]

Christian faith is a part of the lives of more than 50% of the Yuchi tribe.[11] Missionaries established churches and schools in the 1800s among the communities, including the Yuchi, that arrived in "Indian Territory."[12] Yet their engagement with communities became marred by the residential school era (1860–1978) when missionaries and churches participated with the US government in a program that sought to eradicate Native cultures and languages.[13]

FORSAKEN CULTURES NEEDING REDEMPTION

My great-grandmother, Nellie Staley, a proud member of the Yuchi tribe, was one of the many Native children forcibly separated from her family and placed in a Christian boarding school. She was taken at five years old and given the English name we came to know her by. Her Native name was lost.

At this institution, where smaller tribes were represented, the prevalent practice was to make students learn English by memorizing the Bible. Nellie endured a harrowing childhood marked by beatings, starvation, and torture for speaking her native language, adhering to traditional customs, donning traditional attire, and not conforming to the what the school prescribed as the teachings of the Bible.

The Bible, for her, became merely a textbook as well as a symbol of abuse rather than the Word of God. It was a form of punishment rather than an invitation to have a relationship with a God who not only welcomes every person from every tribe but creates and celebrates our ethnic identities. Deep fear was instilled within her of both the holy Scripture and Christians, and she grew up grappling with the notion that her heritage made her a heathen and a sinner.

This method of Bible instruction contributed to three generations of my Yuchi family and many other Native American tribes abandoning their native languages and forsaking crucial aspects of their culture and traditions, all under the banner of spreading the gospel. In her adult life, Nellie never spoke Yuchi, and discussions about God or the Bible were

noticeably absent from her conversations with her children and grandchildren.

This raises questions about the intentions of the church during that period – did they aim to *civilize* her, seek her salvation, or educate her about God? The consequences of this approach to Scripture engagement have had lasting impacts on the cultural heritage and linguistic traditions of Yuchi and other Native American communities. Native cultures, languages, and religious practices were not considered. The Yuchi, with their belief in a Creator and a Spirit governing the world, were met with oppression instead of understanding and contextualization.

BEING CHRISTIAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN

As I consider the future and my generational role and responsibility, I am reminded of the missiologist Gene A. Getz and his *Three Lenses Framework* (see figure 1.1). Getz argues that to develop any biblical philosophy of ministry, three lenses must be considered: Scripture, history, and culture.[14]

The first lens is Scripture. In the New Testament, functions and directives are frequently outlined without accompanying descriptions of form. An example of function without form comes from Acts 5:42. "And every day in the temple and at home, they did not cease to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah."

Teaching in every home is the function, but the form or how this should be done is not detailed. When the Scripture does delve into form, the details provided are consistently partial or incomplete. Duplicating the exact form and structure of ministry outlined in the Bible becomes a challenging task due to the inherent absence of certain details and elements in the Scriptural text.

Moreover, the partially described form and structure differ across various New Testament settings, making it clear that a precise replication is often impractical. While Getz calls form and structures *non-absolutes* in the Bible, function and principles are absolutes. A commitment to do no harm through Scripture engagement is a biblical absolute. However, countless precious souls around the world today and stretching across generations have encountered the rigidity of mistaking our forms and structures as absolutes rather than non-absolutes.

Getz makes it clear that any true biblical philosophy of ministry must be viewed through all three lenses. Scripture cannot and should not be the only lens through which we see the world. Our perspective must be consistently challenged and tested by the inclusion of history and culture to ensure our forms and structures reflect the Spirit of God work in building his kingdom here are on earth and using all of his kingdom to do that work.

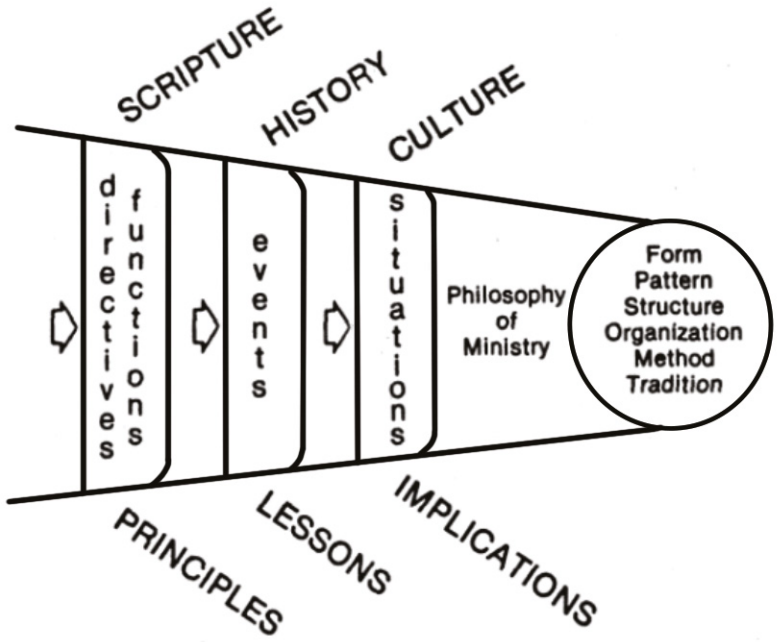

Figure 1.1 – Three Lenses Framework.

The church and school my great-grandmother attended, while well-meaning from their own perspective, interpreted the Scripture in a way they felt was literal. Yet it was through their cultural lens. Without that perspective, they prescribed and insisted on their own forms. This led to abuse and deep generational trauma. Simultaneously, they neglected to consider the historical and cultural context of their ministry environment. They did not develop a holistic and healthy approach.

Being Native American involves embracing the belief that the world is

infused with spirits, fostering a profound physical and spiritual interconnectedness. Across diverse expressions, Native Americans have consistently held the conviction that the world is inhabited by both benevolent and malevolent spirits, creating a supernatural realm.

However, a historical challenge has been the presence of superstition and fear, particularly in addressing concerns related to evil spirits. How do we navigate and overcome these apprehensions in the context of Christianity? How do we respect and renew ethnic identity into a beautifully enhanced expression of kingdom identity?

In his book, *Whose Religion is Christianity*, the late Yale Divinity School professor Lamin Sanneh describes what would happen if he were to send an African to Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Oxford, or Cambridge. He describes how the staff at these universities would say to this student, "'Oh, we love multiculturalism. Wear your African dress and eat your African food, but we are going to destroy your Africanness, because we are going to tell you that everything has got a scientific explanation.'" He says that this kind of experience turns Africans into cultural Europeans.

Sanneh goes on to explain that Christianity is different. "Africans sensed in their hearts that Jesus did not mock their respect for the sacred or their clamor for an invincible Savior, so they beat their sacred drums for him until the stars skipped and danced in the skies. After that dance, the stars weren't little anymore." He says that Christianity helps "Africans become renewed Africans, not remade Europeans." It respects Africanness and lets Africans remain African.

For me, Sanneh's insights are a kingdom of heaven vision for all cultures here on earth. And for Native Americans, it shows that Christianity can respect Native Americanness and let us be fully Christian and fully Native American.

FROM WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN TO WHAT IS

It's disheartening to realize that it took so long – three generations – for the ill-treatment of Scripture to be redeemed in my family and for the significance and ethical considerations of contextualization to become normative in cross-cultural Scripture engagement. What could have

A commitment to do no harm through Scripture engagement is a biblical absolute.

Cheeaexeco, a Yuchi woman: oil on canvas painted by George Catlin in 1838.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

happened to those three generations if they could have expressed Christian faith through their ethnic identity and not apart from it?

The church's participation in a form of ethnic *whitewashing* that oppressively imposed the English language and Euro-American customs caused great harm. What would have transpired if the Church had embraced the Yuchi language and contextualized its culture as it engaged them in Scripture? How could history have recorded the redemption of our language and culture?

The absence of a Yuchi Bible and the limited translation of hymns underscore the persistent gap in preserving and celebrating the Yuchi cultural and spiritual heritage. Would a translated Bible have helped generations of Yuchis come to know Jesus? What if the church had committed to a biblical version of the Hippocratic Oath, "To my greatest ability and judgment, I will do no harm or injustice?"

Despite what could have been, I am reminded of Deuteronomy 7:9 (NRSV), "Know, therefore, that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." I have experienced this faithfulness. Three generations later, I am a follower of Jesus serving at OneHope (onehope.net).

It feels remarkably redemptive to be a part of an organization dedicated to creating and sharing contextualized Scripture engagement materials tailored for children and youth in their native languages and relating to their cultural realities. Every day I see the reality of what can happen when people are engaged with God's Word in a way that brings them honor and brings God glory.

In my own community, I take heart knowing that "yUdjEhanAnô sô KAnAnô" – "We, the Yuchi people, are still here." God knows us. And he loves our people, our language, and our culture. ■

> Christianity can respect Native Americanness and let us be fully Christian and fully Native American.

Trail of Tears: ink on paper drawing by Muscogee (Creek) artist, Jerome Tiger, 1966.

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Navigating Uncharted Territories

In mission history with First Nations in Canada, relationships were broken and Christianity often meant oppressive religiosity. This has resulted in open opposition to the church occurring in Indigenous communities. But a missions focus on building genuine relationships and holistic ministry is making a difference.

The world is changing at an unprecedented speed. Today we face enormous socio-cultural challenges including global-localization, the rise of people with no religious affiliations, changes to family structures, hyper-connection alongside hyper-individualism, and political polarization. Mission fields are not exempt from these changes. But how can Christian leaders and missions organizations be faithful to God when the world is changing so rapidly?

In this book, *Canoeing the Mountains*, Tod Bolsinger argues that Christian leaders must find new ways to engage in the changing, unexpected, and complex challenge of the world. To ascend the mountains and move through uncharted territory, we need to abandon the canoes and discover new navigation instruments.[1]

In our post-Christendom world, traditional churches must become missionary churches. Churches that do this successfully need to recognize that the world in front of them is nothing like the one behind them. They need to prioritize building relationships because no one will follow them off the map without trust. As they enter uncharted territory, they must learn to adapt and work together with others. Finally, they must see that reality will be different than their expectations, and it will keep changing.

This is appropriate to consider as we look at missions among Indigenous (or Aboriginal) peoples of Canada. The Canadian government recognizes three distinct Indigenous peoples: First Nations, the Inuit, and the Métiz. The 2021 census counted more than 1.1 million people amongst First Nations in Canada. These

PHOTO BY ANOVVA, ADOBE STOCK.

Canada: Colorfully decorated First Nations canoes are docked by the edge of a body of water.

Old Hazelton, British Columbia, Canada: Traditional long houses and totem poles of the Gitxsan or Ksan First Nations Natives.

included 630 First Nations communities and 50 recognized nations and Indigenous languages.[2] The census recorded nearly 70 thousand Inuit[3] and around a half million Métiz.[4]

There are many complicated dimensions to missions in these communities. Opposition against the church has become more vigorous, enough to demolish church buildings. This is because a significant part of the church's historical engagement with the Indigenous peoples in Canada has been marred by either an overt endorsement of cultural genocide or a silent ignorance of it. Underneath this is a lack of sound missiology and a proliferation of wrong theology.

What could have happened if the church engaged differently? How might church history have been changed if the gospel message was contextualized for Indigenous contexts in Canada and delivered in a humble and compassionate way?

LOSS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

A key contributor to current suffering was government-funded and church-run residential boarding schools. This program ran in Canada from 1870s until 1997.[5] It separated Indigenous children from their families with the goal of isolating them from their languages and cultures to assimilate them into the majority Canadian culture. These schools were mostly administered by Roman Catholic, Anglican, United Church of Canada, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches.[6] Children in these school suffered abuse and even death.

Dramatic cultural identity losses occurred in residential schools, which left a vacuum where life, purpose, and meaning might reside. The consequences have been devastating. Various studies show that Indigenous communities in Canada have the highest rates of alcoholism, substance abuse, family loss, domestic violence, physical illness, depression, mental illness, and suicide.

Dr. Roderick McCormick (Kanienkehaka-Mohawk) is a psychologist and was an associate professor of counselling psychology at the University of British Columbia (UBC) for 18 years. He, along with five others, studied suicide risk among Inuit. They concluded that residential school abuse in all its forms is a significant factor in increased risk of suicide.[7]

A 2019 government report on suicide risks amongst Indigenous peoples in the province of British Columbia revealed significantly higher rates of suicide amongst Indigenous in comparison to non-Indigenous between 2011 and 2016. The First Nations suicide rate was 300% higher. Amongst Métis, it was 200% higher. And with Inuit, the rate was 900% more.[8]

In another study, McCormick noted, "the devastating effect of the attempts at cultural genocide have revealed to Aboriginal people the strong link between cultural dislocation and sickness." Therefore, he suggested healing strategies that are sensitively able to respond to the factors that facilitate healing for Indigenous people.[9]

For this reason, many Indigenous communities are collectively engaging in rehabilitating and preserving their own cultures. Gerald Taiake Alfred (Kanienkehaka-Mohawk) envisions a future where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people connect in a "nation to nation relationship" that facilitates "cooperating

PHOTO BY SL-PHOTOGRAPHY, ADOBE STOCK

and sharing the land."[10] He suggests a contextual approach to resolving Indigenous issues and insists that the only way for First Nations peoples to survive is to reorient their way of life – their culture and politics – toward their own values.[11] Yet some parts of the movement toward cultural restoration have turned into an anti-Christianity movement.

RETHINKING MISSION

According to David Bosch, "Mission is a multifaceted ministry, in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualisation, and much more."[12] Mission is to not only to proclaim Jesus, but also to actively express his concern for justice and poverty.

Churches, missionaries, and mission organizations are called to Jesus's holistic work: restoring people into right relationship with God, themselves, others, and to all of creation. Mission can be defined in terms of restoration of all these relationships.

As theologian Tim Keller said, "The kingdom is the renewal of the entire world through the influx of supernatural power. As everything is brought back under the rule and authority of Christ, it will be restored to health, beauty, and freedom."[13]

Mission communities also must express the gospel properly within the context of a target group's culture. To do this well, we need to understand the culture and history of our mission field. And we need to be willing to collaborate, working alongside the local communities we want to serve to affirm the expression and the relevancy of the gospel in their context.

All cultures have their own ways of expressing meaning, purpose, constraints, impossibilities, and boundaries within which they can create or reject. The challenge comes in discerning how to express the gospel message within the context in ways that are accurate to both the culture and Scripture.

Indigenous cultures in Canada share a deep respect for nature. In traditional spirituality, nature is viewed in a more animistic way. Human beings are part of the larger web of all creation and have spiritual kinship with the earth and other creatures. My Indigenous friend explains it like this: "Stones are alive. Trees talk. Birds have feelings. Animals have a conscience. The earth rejoices and hurts. All creatures are from mother nature. Nature is sacred and spiritual."

Indigenous cultures also highly value relationships. They place importance on having humility, listening to neighbors, being generous to strangers, respecting elders, being discreet and thoughtful, preserving harmony in relationships and life, spending time contemplating reality, cooperating with others, caring for family and friends, and sharing their customs.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LOVE CORPS

British Columbia, Canada: Love Corps opened the Aboriginal Mission School in May 2013 for anyone interested in Aboriginal mission.

Mission is to not only to proclaim Jesus, but also to actively express his concern for justice and poverty.

It takes spiritual discernment to understand where cultures align or collide with a biblical worldview. Without cultural analysis, missions can cause more complicated problems – even spiritual abuse or syncretism. At the same time, cultural understanding must inform the transmission of the gospel. Throwing out cultural identity is a serious theological mistake, and we can see the dire consequences of doing so in missions history. It does not properly integrate with how the image of God is imprinted on a people and a culture.

LOVE CORPS

In 1995, Rev. Hong Sung-Deuk launched Love Corps (lovecorps.com) with co-founder and Indigenous leader, Bruce Brown, in response to Korean churches in Metro Vancouver sensing a collective calling to engage in First Nations mission together. They were joined by Korean congregations and missionaries from South Korea and the US. Together, they are a strong alliance of individuals, churches, and denominations ready and willing to participate with one another in a complex mission field. And their collaboration continues to be important in the implementation of the *missio Dei* strategies among the First Nations peoples they serve.

The mission movement initiated by Love Corps spread into Alberta, Manitoba, and Toronto. Love Corps BC was followed by Love Corps Alberta and Love Corps Manitoba. More than 50 churches have participated together to

> … when we participate in God's ongoing work of practicing his compassion, we become Spirit-empowered partners with him in his ministry of reconciliation to the world …

serve Indigenous communities on 70 reservations. They have successfully implemented outreaches that are both long and short-term with an emphasis on both Christ-centered and context-orientation mission. Since Love Corps began almost 30 years ago, more than 40 missionaries have been sent to Indigenous reservations in challenging rural and remote locations across Canada.

As I trained first-term missionaries, I told them, "Slow and steady wins the race. Silence speaks louder than many words. Humble servanthood! Friendship!"

Priority is placed on building relationships with communities living on reservations and Indigenous leaders. Instead of direct gospel proclamation and church planting, Korean mission communities tenaciously focus on developing friendships and building trust until they earn the right to speak about other topics.

One way this occurs is through cultural exchange programs. Korean communities and First Nations people share their food, drama, dancing, art, and drum-performance which forms non-religious common ground they can stand on, together. This elevates friendship and mutual respect and opens the door of welcome by Indigenous people.

Mission communities emphasize demonstrating Christ-like character. Humility, empathic listening, and a no condemning policy shape the foundation of relationship-oriented strategies. Compassion is paramount, and focus is placed on being a "faithful presence."

Discovering needs and fulfilling them in various ways is also a critical part of how Korean missionaries serve. They have provided childcare, after-school programs, acupuncture therapy, vegetable production in green houses, business operation (a mushroom producing company), taekwondo lessons (Korean martial art), and a healing ministry by prayer.

They also seek to understand the context of First Nations in terms of socio-cultural level, history, tradition, rituals, and mission movement. In mission history with First Nations, relationships were broken and Christianity often meant oppressive religiosity. Korean missionaries acknowledge the errors and wrongs of previous church engagements and mission endeavours. They work to be part of re-writing mission narratives, and they give attention to diverse aspects of healing and reconciliation ministry that benefit both individuals and whole communities.

By going from where First Nations people are, not from where we are, attitudes have slowly and steadily changed.

Pohang, South Korea: In 2019, Love Corps organized a vision trip for a group of First Nations people to South Korea.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LOVE CORPS

For example, at Ahousaht Reserve on Vancouver Island, the community shifted from hostility to hospitality and supplying for the needs of our missionaries including housing.

Korean mission communities fully admit that they can fail. Approaching missions from their own assumptions and perspectives would result in imposing their own theological agenda or presuppositions. This would worsen relationships and potentially create some of the same problems found in residential schools. This would be religious violence and an obstacle to the gospel!

Context is key in mission engagement. Self-awareness, cultural analysis, spiritual discernment, and adaptive processes all help prevent mission work from becoming ineffective or misinterpreted.

"CHURCH ON THE ROAD"

The pandemic has further changed the worship context and provided opportunities for fresh innovation in our mission approaches. In the wake of the pandemic, the shift to online platforms became a necessity for various sectors, including church worship services. This transition has made people more accustomed to virtual services and online meetings.

Embracing this new normal, a novel approach to mission and worship emerged. Rev. Lip-Boon Lee developed a unique worship model that combines forms of online and offline church. He calls it "Church on the Road." It is aimed at connecting First Nations individuals and churches with vacant pulpits with worship services.

Services are conducted online which eliminates geographic barriers and enables individuals to worship collectively from diverse locations. Worship is set in ever-changing venues. This adds an intriguing element for participants as they anticipate locations. Glimpses of surrounding scenery are offered and coupled with music and narrations specific to each worship location. This helps make worship welcoming for even nonbelievers or those unfamiliar with church settings.

This experimental approach not only fosters a shared mission journey but also provides participants with the opportunity to explore the beauty of God's creation, engage in rural and Indigenous ministries, visit holy places mentioned in the Bible, and delve into meaningful locations in Christian history – all while partaking in Holy Communion Services.

PRACTICING COMPASSION

Antagonism against churches and missionaries is intense on most First Nations reservations across Canada, so many people wonder how we can do missions with these communities and in these locations. Biblically speaking, when we participate in God's ongoing work of practicing his compassion, we become Spirit-empowered partners with him in his ministry of reconciliation to the world (2 Corinthians 5:14–21). People in crisis and suffering are inclined to search for an external source of healing and solution. Healing and restoration can occur through relational empowerment in the context of constructive relationships.

Compassion is a crucially redemptive factor; it desires not merely to share, but to overcome the suffering of the other together. As Henri Nouwen properly affirmed, the simple presence of Christian believers with others in their times of suffering and pain can do more than any other action or word of advice to console them.[14] Compassion must be the norm on which all other values, theories, and facts are based and exercised. Compassion works both internally and externally to grant power to individuals, in particular to First Nations people to overcome their dependence and despair.

When Karl Barth calls Jesus "a man for others," he means that Jesus came to sacrifice, show compassion, and ultimately give himself for others.[15] Jesus did not merely help people in suffering from a safe distance. He entered into their suffering and pain and showed us the greatest example of solidarity with others. We are called to follow his example and similarly join ourselves with others in their sufferings and pains.

We are made in the divine image of God but have fallen from this basic identity. Merely on our own we are lost and confused. True identity is reclaimed by God *in Christ* so that we return to our genuine, made-in-the-image of God's image.

The Bible says, "Be compassionate as your father is compassionate" (Luke 6:36–37). Compassion respects the integrity of the one in need and ultimately transcends conditional pity, sympathy, and empathy. It is both the basis and incentive for actions of morality, and it is neither egoistic nor malicious. Ultimately, compassion is the redemptive expression of God's love, and people respond to it.

Mission movements fail when they are implemented without taking the socio-cultural context into account.

First Nations people are in a period of deep spiritual disruption, anguish, and complex emotional conflict. Compassion can shepherd and guide their inner life through their acute pain and despair to full healing. When we come alongside suffering people, we do so as Christ himself. This becomes a redemptive bridge to First Nations people.

BACK TO BASICS

Despite the brokenness and complexity of this mission field, our answer should be *ad-fontes* (back to basics). Mission movements fail when they are implemented without taking the socio-cultural context into account. In mission history, wrong theology and misguided missiology has de-humanized, deformed, and de-valued people. Local churches and mission organizations, as mission communities, need to firmly stand on biblical grounds. We need to

participate together in God's ongoing redemptive story in the right way as his kingdom community.

Mission must also be a collective response to the calling of the mission field. It must be congruent with the calling of God to restore the genuine value of humanity – the image of God in every person. In First Nations communities, we need to rethink, restart, and restore their cultural narrative from a theological framework that relevantly engages with them in the mission of God. Missions is participating in diverse ways in the ongoing story of God. First Nations missions should be done in relevancy, within its context. All should be done for the kingdom of God and his glory alone! ■

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Chondeug Joseph Jang was born in the Republic of Korea, and he has engaged in First Nations missions in Canada with his wife, Hanna, since 2004. Their focus has been on church planting and leadership development. He is currently working on his doctorate at Trinity Western University. He desires to see Korean churches and prayer teams mobilized for mission, to support and mentor missionaries, and to see the next generation engaged in God's mission.

The Creator's Community: A Vision for Truth and Reconciliation

Throughout the Scriptures, the Creator has written a story about a reality in which gentiles and outside nations have been invited into reciprocal relationships where everyone can contribute to the creation of a people who are to be a blessing to all. But in our collective past, so many have been drawn in by reading ourselves into the stories of conquest and domination and imposed relationships of power and control that we have forgotten our original instructions.

More than forty years ago, on one of several family visits to Mexico, I found myself standing in the ancient temple at Cholula, Puebla. Absorbing the modern sites and sounds awakened in my 8-year-old mind and heart what has become a longstanding curiosity about the beliefs and experiences of my ancient relatives and other Indigenous peoples across this continent.

The guide led the tour in both Spanish and English, evidence of Europe's longstanding domination over the languages, cultures, politics, and business of the area. The stories he told described the Spanish conquest of the Indigenous peoples of Mexico and the almost complete annihilation of the cultures that predated their arrival. The echoes of this reverberate across Turtle Island (now known as North America) today.

As we peer through the layers of history, beginning in the late 1400s, it is clear that despite the diversity of Indigenous beliefs and ways of life around the globe, there are certain universal elements found in Indigenous experiences with dominating colonial forces. Indigenous nations worldwide have historically been forced to contend with dehumanizing assumptions of Amer-European colonizing powers. This has resulted in culture and identity loss. It is also the root of the continued struggle to be recognized as having a valuable participatory role in weaving the social, political, educational, and spiritual fabric of the modern nations in which they exist.

As people of North America, we have a history that many have never learned and may be traumatized by hearing. Yet to move forward together in a right relationship, we must discover how to dialogue. The goal is not to promote a sentiment of guilt for the past actions of ancestors. Instead, it is to recover a sense of where we have come from and discover a sense of responsibility to move toward where we can be collectively as people sharing this history and land.

THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

Beginning in the late 1400s, the Church developed a complex web of laws and proclamations that determined who had the right to land. *Terra nullius*, meaning empty lands, granted dominion through the right to invade territories peopled by non-Christians and subjugate in perpetuity the "soulless" people found there.[1] While Indigenous nations were developing concepts to guide them in the management of shared spaces, Catholic popes were developing their own incongruent ideas.

This legal framework of papal bulls, on which the doctrine is based, developed over hundreds of years, peaking during the colonial era. "It established spiritual, legal, and political justification for taking land from those who existed outside of the church's influence, other peoples with whom the Europeans came into contact. The Doctrine of Discovery declared that lands discovered by European powers belonged to those powers because it wasn't owned by Christians."[2]

Most of this history precedes the formation of several Protestant denominations. Yet it "situates itself very much in Western Christianity as rooted in Roman Catholicism, ... we need to clearly understand that Roman Catholicism is indeed our foundational heritage and to try and distance ourselves from that is to distance ourselves from our own history."[3]

Understanding our history and how it has affected our theology enables us to move forward in the light of the truth of the gospel. It also helps us build community in a way that honours the Creator's work in Christ and creation.

THE LEGACY OF THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

The *doctrine of discovery* and its attendant ideas continue to separate Indigenous people groups from their piece of the earth. It forever altered their communities. It also contributed to normalizing wrong beliefs about the place of Indigenous populations in Western societies. Dysfunctional and oppressive actions rooted in these flawed assumptions are deeply engrained in the Western imagination[4] and psyche. Out of them grew a worldview that allowed for the displacement of Indigenous bodies.[5]

The European settler worldview was shaped by the theological imagination foundational to the doctrine of discovery in its legal and political role. This set of legal principles governed the colonizing powers of Europe, particularly regarding the administering of Indigenous land. It remains the primary legal precedent that controls Indigenous affairs and rights.[6] The intentional use of language in these documents created an identity for those outside the realm of European Christianity and enforced the labeling of non-Europeans as "other."

These ecclesial statements were embraced first by the Portuguese who began perpetrating the slave trade from the African continent to the European and American continents. The Christian body saw the African body as another resource to be taken and used "for the pleasure and profit of the European Christian body, the one made most fully in the image of God."[7]

Subsequent mid-to-late-fifteenth century papal bulls would sow the seeds for the erroneous theology that was fulfilled and manifested in the slave trade. They also justified the actions of the European powers against African and Indigenous peoples by asserting that the salvation of their souls sanctioned European Christian Authority and activities over their lands, bodies, and possessions. This created an ideology that presented Europeans as the true and pure representation of Christianity in the world with the privilege to determine what is right and just.[8]

RESISTING THE LEGACY

Setting up entire groups with a label such as "other," obstructs the hermeneutical process that enables one to relate to the narratives that a people create about themselves. We must challenge ourselves to think deeply about the associations we make, where they come from, and whether available narratives accurately portray truths about a people or a situation, or to simply rely on convenient assumptions to do the thinking in our place.

The Church can be an effective agent for change. We can become a community of leaders in repairing and building new relationships with Indigenous peoples by analyzing assumptions and the narratives that spring from them. This can be done with a lens that encourages prioritizing authenticity and works to change narratives that cause unnecessary divi-

Duncan, British Columbia, Canada: The First Nations peoples of the Pacific carve totem poles for a variety of reasons including to represent or remember ancestors, events, or history.

PHOTO BY IAN HOWARD, ADOBE STOCK

sion, dehumanize others, or deem other cultures inferior. This can ostensibly lead to the creation of a new narrative that honours Indigenous cultures, peoples, and histories while providing a good way forward toward reconciliation.

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION IN CANADA: RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS AND CULTURAL GENOCIDE

The harmful theology that arose from the doctrine of discovery justified the attempted genocide of Indigenous peoples across the globe. In Canada, one of several methods used in genocidal actions was the removal of Indigenous children from their homes, families, languages, and cultures for placement in Residential Schools. These schools operated in collusion between the government and churches across denominational lines.[9]

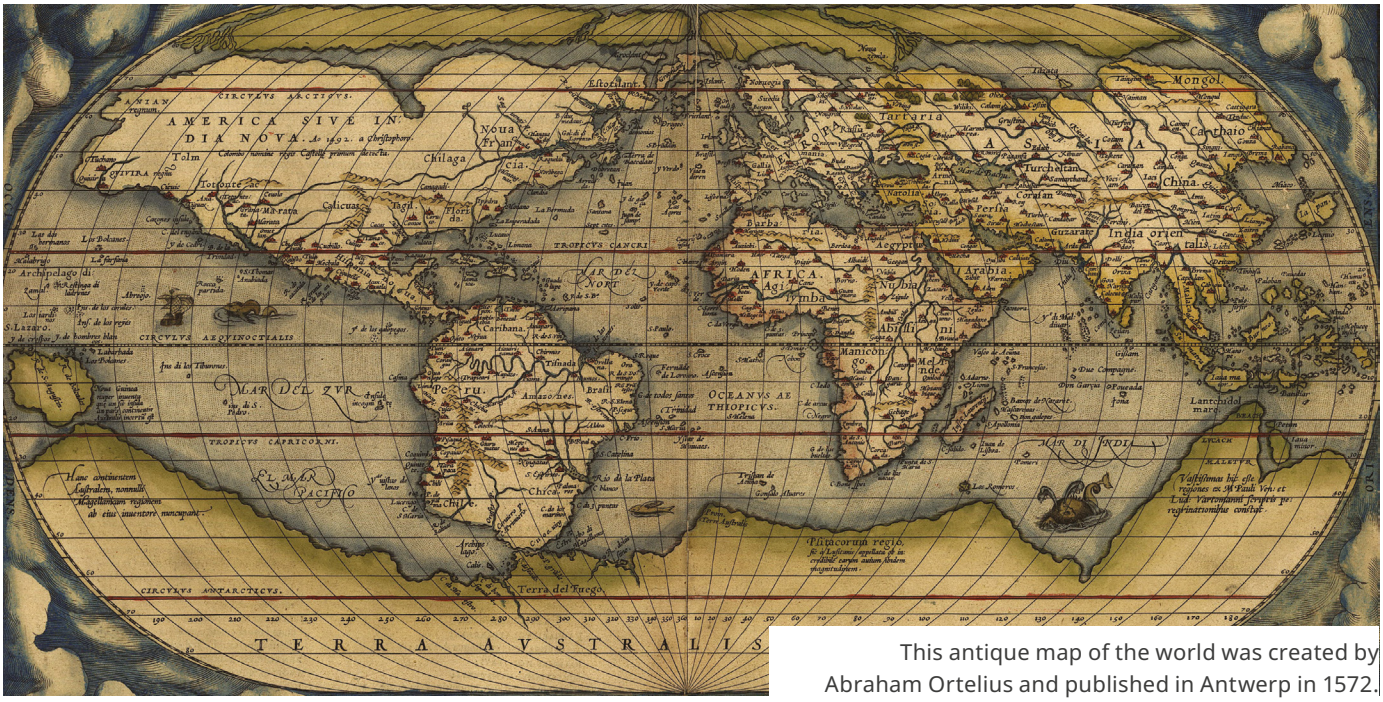
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issued 94 Calls to Action, with Calls to Action 48, 49, and 58–61 directly inviting the church to respond in various ways. The Commission calls upon "the church parties to the Settlement Agreement, and all other faith groups and interfaith justice groups to comply with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*,"[10] and "to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery" and its attendant concepts used to justify European sovereignty of Indigenous lands and peoples.

The Calls to Action invite the church to respond in ways of thinking and being that lead to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada and beyond. According to the Commission, reparative actions should include ongoing education strategies to ensure that congregations discover the role of their church in colonization, "the history and legacy of Residential Schools, and why apologies were necessary."[11]

Further recommendations for conciliatory actions towards Indigenous peoples by the church invite church parties into collaboration with Indigenous spiritual leaders, Survivors, and religious training centers including seminaries and schools of theology to develop and teach curriculum for all student clergy, especially clergy and staff working in Indigenous contexts to respect Indigenous spirituality. They call for church leadership to teach "the history and legacy of religious conflict in Indigenous families and communities and the responsibility churches have to mitigate such conflicts and prevent spiritual violence."[12]

In the final call to the church, the Commission calls for collaborations with Survivors' representatives of Indigenous organizations to create

> Relational and historical knowledge of the people and land around us provides a foundation for creating mutually transforming relationships … .



This antique map of the world was created by Abraham Ortelius and published in Antwerp in 1572.

PHOTO BY CASCOLY2, ADOBE STOCK

> Truth and reconciliation is about reading our histories differently and finding a way to live together in peace, honesty, and respect.

sustainable funding for Indigenous peoples toward community-controlled projects. Sustainable projects will be centered on healing and reconciliation, language and culture revitalization, education and relationship building, and spaces for Indigenous youth and elders to discuss Indigenous spirituality and self-determination.[13]

Exploring and leaning into these Calls to Action with a lens focused on truth, justice, and reconciliation provides clear answers and direction for the church to actively participate in building relationships that can lead to reconciliation between Indigenous communities and followers of Christ.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Relational and historical knowledge of the people and land around us provides a foundation for creating mutually transforming relationships that are respectful of the theology, practices, and experiences of other members of the community of creation. It addresses language that is dualistic, individualistic, and condemning. It can also help recover values and teachings within the Christian tradition that allow us to approach people and the earth with care and rectify and/or atone for the abuses perpetuated by the church and Christians.

The church must intentionally set aside past assumptions of Amer-European superiority that fail to acknowledge the longstanding, well-developed spiritual beliefs and practices of Indigenous peoples. Perspectives that view Indigenous peoples as empty vessels to be filled with European culture or blank slates upon which Christian missionaries can write the gospel must be challenged. Missionaries must re-evaluate paternalistic styles of evangelism that deny the presence of the sacred within Indigenous cultures and diminish the role of any part of creation in the work of God.

The Bible reveals our original instructions of connection and relationship, yet they have been overlooked or redefined in service to settler-colonial ideas about how a society ought to be ordered. Creator made creation sacred by calling it very good, yet we have devalued it by subjecting it to capitalist ideas that are incongruent with the shalom economy that is illustrated to us throughout the Scripture. The Spirit of the gospel of Christ gives his people the power to reject the colonial ideas that have made the good news difficult to believe among Indigenous peoples.

Throughout the Scriptures, the Creator has written a story about a reality in which gentiles and outside nations have been invited into reciprocal relationships where everyone can contribute to the creation of a people who are to be a blessing to all. In our collective past, so many have been drawn in by reading ourselves into the stories of conquest and domination and imposed relationships of power and control that we have forgotten our original instructions. The church has run roughshod over all of creation and responded to the differences they saw by either elimination or absorption. These actions and motivations of our forebears should not be a model to follow, but instead should serve as a cautionary tale.

In Niagara, we are surrounded by Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee stories and knowledge that can provide us a lens through which to see our own stories differently. God calls us to be ministers of both truth and reconciliation. Truth and reconciliation is about reading our histories differently and finding a way to live together in peace, honesty, and respect. Patty Krawec, Anishinaabe follower of Christ writes, "We need to go back to the beginning or rather to a story of new beginnings in order to start again." [14] She continues:

> Almost every civilization has recorded a flood story as part of their ongoing creation. Just as a creation story tells us about our origins, a flood story can tell us how to rebuild. In the Anishinaabe story, Nanaboozho, the only human survivor of the flood, together with animals, rebuilt Turtle Island with a handful of mud gathered from deep below the floodwaters. In order for us to return to our original instructions and to pick up that handful of mud, we too, must travel through the floodwaters. We are living through a time of crisis and upheaval, a flood event, and we have the potential to create something new.[15]

Creation stories are a kind of story that we can revolve around and come back to over and over again. Searching these fundamental narratives for clues about how we got here and why we are here is a pivotal piece of the puzzle. The Anishinaabe creation story is like the origin story of the Hebrew people in that it begins with a thought from which comes a breath. With that breath, everything comes into existence. After all things are made, the Creator takes four parts of Mother Earth and blows into them, and with this breath, man has come to life![16]

The last form to be created and lowered onto the earth, humanity is the last, the least, and the neediest of all creation. Every part of creation relies on the one before to exist and while creation existed without us despite everything we have done, the creation of God still continues to provide for us.

Of all the layers of creation only the rocks, natural forces, and spirits would survive independently. But they would not be content if they survived alone because they would be unable to keep their promise to ensure survival for all others as their original instructions have been defined by the Creator.[17]

The early commands to Adam and Eve and the words of Moses could be seen as original instructions. The words of Jesus form the original instructions to the church, and these are the responsibilities of us as human beings. We are to remember these and then build our lives around them, to go back and remember those instructions before colonialism and capitalism overlooked and redefined them. We must return to the beginning to remember who we are.[18]

RELATIONSHIP FOR RELATIONSHIP'S SAKE

As the church considers how to continue to engage in sharing the gospel with Indigenous peoples, it is important to understand that relationship for relationship's sake must come first, instead of as a means to an end. No one appreciates being made into a project; people respond to respect and the vulnerability that comes with authenticity and genuine love.

Many evangelicals hold onto a future promise of a heavenly home imagined as an eternity spent as angelic beings floating around in that otherworldly sky. A mining of the Scriptures under the tutelage of elders, theologians, and pastors has made it clear that we do not await this existence as citizens existing in a colonial kingdom empire, but we are members of the sacred family in the New Jerusalem, in a kingdom that is best described as the community of creation (Revelation 21:9–11, 21–27).

When we prepare to share our faith across cultures, we must work as Paul did in 1 Corinthians 9:20–22. This is a powerful impact statement that is clear about the posture we must assume as those about to enter a world that is unlike our own:

PUBLIC DOMAIN

American Progress: oil on canvas painted by John Gast in 1872. The painting shows Columbia, the woman in the center, bringing light, education, technology, and agriculture as she guides American settlers westerward. Ahead of them darkness, Native Americans, and bison move off the left side of the canvas. It depicts the prevailing idea that this displacement was directed by God in line with the ideas of the doctrine of discovery.

> To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. (ESV)

Paul means that the most successful way to reach others is to use words, language, and concepts that they can understand and relate to. Be willing to humbly enter the world of another and listen for the ways Creator God has been working in that world. From this posture of listening one can prepare a safe space to co-create a mutually transforming dialogue.

The Scriptures illustrate God's expectation of diversity throughout the Hebrew creation narrative and in the genealogy of Christ. Even more, we can see God's repeated redirection in humanity's tendency to seek security and safety in the sameness of our neighbours in the story of Babel. God called their motivations and actions profane as they rejected the diversity of God's creation while finding security in and preferring the likeness of their neighbour, rather than in the provision and protection of God.

We can avoid that same problematic position of preferring safety in sameness over the safety of walking in harmony by looking through the lens of Scripture, with God's focus on relationships. We must take off the lens of the colonial culture that has been our frame of reference for so long.

Each nation or Indigenous people group in Canada has a creation narrative and original instructions that offer perspectives on building relationships with the Creator, non-human creation, and each other. In those relationships, we discover ways to share the gospel and be in ministry with others, using language that centers Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Together we can work through ways to enter the world of another for the sake of relationship, rather than creating relationships for the sake of evangelism alone. Relationship begins with connections that are made strong with the understanding that listening brings. Times of deep listening with an intentional aim to understand the experiences of another create the space for mutual sharing and reciprocity.

Our responsibility as Christians is to avoid profaning the community we are attempting to create. It is our mandate to be an active force, joined together with the love of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to achieve the communal goal of growing the community of creation through a model of love and humility lived out in the form of Christlike servanthood. ■

For excellent insight into working for reconciliation with Indigenous people groups in Canada, please visit The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's website: evangelicalfellowship.ca/IndigenousRelations

Our responsibility as Christians is to avoid profaning the community we are attempting to create.

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Carrying Gospel Light to the Ends of the Earth

Despite immense challenges and forces of evil that worked to destroy our culture, my family stands as a testimony of people who served God through our culture. Through many days of darkness, they carried gospel light to my people – the Wichita. Today, I continue in their legacy, facilitating the engagement of Native American churches in global mission.

In a small town, 40 people gather in a church to celebrate the life of a church member who made their heavenly journey. A leader quietly prays in English, the common language in the room. Then people begin to sing hymns one by one in their own languages as they feel moved to do so. After a period of silence, one stands and sings, "Nee Wah Sta Wah, Wah Nits o Kaw." Several join in. They sing hymns in their own languages. The next song begins in another language, and later another and another.

But who are these people, where do they come from, what languages are they speaking, and how long have they lived where they are? Is this a church of refugees or immigrants from other lands?

Let me reveal the answers.

This was a funeral for a member of my family who recently passed away. The songs were in my language – Wichita[1] – as well as in Choctaw, Kiowa, Cheyenne, Muscogee, and Comanche.

COURTESY OF DEREK ROSS

Anadarko, Oklahoma: The Rock Spring Indian Baptist Church was established in 1874. It was the first Baptist church among Plains Indians in the US.

Anadarko, Oklahoma Territory: A traditional Wichita grass house from 1885.

All of us are from tribes that have lived in this land we now know as the United States of America for thousands of years.

The church is the Rock Springs Indian Baptist Church in Anadarko, Oklahoma – the church where I grew up. It was the first Baptist church among Plains Indians in the US, and it was planted 150 years ago (est. 1874) by Rev. John McIntosh, a missionary from the Muscogee Nation.[2]

Jesus said, "Be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth." While some missions are destinations to be traveled to, we were the ends of the earth right here in the US.

THE PEOPLE GROUPS OF THE US

Native American tribes are sovereign nations within the boundaries of what is now the United States. The federal government recognizes 574 *American Indian Tribes*[3] as well as 400 more non-recognized tribes.[4] We once spoke hundreds of languages. Today, of the more than 200 Native American languages documented in the Ethnologue, most are extinct or endangered.[5]

The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes (Waco, Tawakoni, Keechi), number 3,700 and comprise one of the federally recognized tribes. The Wichita lived in and controlled areas from Waco, Texas to around Kansas City, Kansas for more than a thousand years,[6] perhaps even several thousand years. Archeological research in Wichita, Kansas shows that the Wichita Tribe might have had a population of 200,000 people prior to their first contact with Europeans in 1541.[7]

Native American tribes, including my community – the Wichita – are the Indigenous peoples of this land. But after European expansion, we became like immigrants. My ancestors did not have to live in a faraway place to struggle through adapting to a new culture. It came to us.

And when the US was a new nation, we were not citizens. While some Native Americans received citizenship through treaties or military service as early as 1817, citizenship was not granted to all Native Americans until 1924. Yes, that's correct. This year, 2024, is only the 100-year anniversary of all Native American being granted US citizenship.[8]

IMPRINTS OF GOD'S TRUTH

Tribes have oral stories from time immemorial that mirror biblical narratives. In 1903 anthropologist George A. Dorsey collected several stories from people in my family. One that he documented was "The First Creation." Here is an excerpt:

> "In the time of the beginning there was no sun, no stars, nor anything else as it is now. Time passed on. Man-never-known-on-Earth (Kinnekasus) was the only man that existed, and it was he who created all things. When the earth was created it was composed of land and water, but they were not yet separated. The land was floating on the water, and darkness was everywhere. After the earth was formed, Man-never-known-on-earth made a man whose name was Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light (Kiarsidia). He also made a woman for the man, and her name was Bright-Shining-Woman (Kashatskihakatidise)."[9]

This sounds remarkably like portions of Genesis 1–2.

Another Wichita myth that Dorsey documented is the "Deluge and Repeopling of the Earth." It goes like this:

> "In the times of this story there were many villages and many people, some good and some bad. ...Things were going wrong, for there was no such thing as death. ...The prophet was told by a voice from above that he had a work that was soon to begin, for everything was going wrong; that he was to begin a work; that things were getting worse. The prophet was told to get a tall cane, and place in between the joints all kinds of seeds, grass, corn, etc., using joint after joint of the cane. Then he was told to select in pairs those animals he thought best should be saved. ...

PHOTO BY THOMAS DATE, COURTESY OF DEGOLYER LIBRARY, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

My ancestors did not have to live in a faraway place to struggle through adapting to a new culture. It came to us.

> He was then told to go to the north where he would see someone standing; that he should tell him that he had everything ready, and beg him to go ahead with his work and do the rest. ...when the time should come there would be a sign indicating that dire things were going to happen.... The prophet called into the cane. The people wondered what was the reason for this.
>
> Finally the animals came, and the people began to find out what was about to happen. They began to cry and to run for the mountains and for other places, but it did them no good. After the birds and animals had passed there came a flood, and the water as all over, and it got deeper and deeper. The bad people were drowned and everything else that was not in the cane."[10]

Notice the similarities with the story of Noah and the great flood we find in chapters 6–8 of Genesis? These are imprints of biblical truths found in the oral history of my people. They remind me that God has been working in the hearts of Native American people for generations.

DESTRUCTION AND DECIMATION

The forces of evil have also been active in the Native American story and have worked against us following Jesus. Between 1492 and 1900, it is estimated that 12 million Indigenous people died in what is today the United States.[11] European explorers and colonial governments, and then later the US government, employed a number of strategies to destroy Native cultures and decimate its peoples.

Their actions were based on a series of papers (papal bulls) issued by the pre-reformation church that became the legal framework for the *doctrine of discovery*, the basis of *manifest destiny*, and the source of a cultural ideology. They established that lands discovered by Christians and occupied by non-Christians

TIMELINE

1591

The first European contact with Wichita people is recorded by Spanish explorer Francisco Vázquez de Coronado.

Early 1800s

Derek's ancestors lived in Waco, Texas area as part of the Wichita tribe

1855

Derek's great-great grandparents Ay-ha-dad and Tun on tah sah sis born in Waco, Texas

1859

Wichita forcibly removed from Texas and settle near Anadarko, Oklahoma

1874

Rock Springs Indian Baptist Church established in Anadarko, first Baptist church among Plains Indians

Ay-ha-dad and Tun on tah sah sis join the church after getting married.

1877

Derek's great-grandmother Wah-Kits born to Ay-ha-dad and Tun on tah sah sis

1899

Derek's great-grandmother Bertha Ross taken from home at age 9 to attend Riverside Indian School

1903

Wichita oral history stories documented by anthropologist George A. Dorsey

1919

Derek's grandfather Milo Ross born to James and Bertha Ross

1924

Native American citizenship granted in the United States

1947

Indian Falls Creek camp started in Davis, Oklahoma

1974

Derek Ross attends Indian Falls Creek and acknowledges Christ

2003

Derek and family serve as missionaries in Manila, Philippines

Today

Derek continues ministry in the Philippines and advocacy work promoting missions among Native American churches

> ... the Bible is filled with narratives of people enduring tremendous pain and hardship that God continued to pursue and reach.

could be taken by Christians, and the "soulless" people in them could be subjugated and enslaved.[12]

The *doctrine* influenced interpretations of "dominion" from Genesis. It also rooted ideas into Luke 11:2 and Matthew 28:18–20, which were contextualized to the European culture in that time-period namely that these passages command an expansion of an earthly and physical Christian empire (Christendom). This then directly linked to manifest destiny – expanding the Christian global empire by conquering more land from non-Christians was a God-ordained right.[13]

The impact of these ideas shows up in places like the US Declaration of Independence. We know these famous words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

What many might not know is that further down in our Declaration there are 27 points ending with the following: "He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless *Indian Savages*, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions" (emphasis mine).[14]

"Merciless Indian Savages" – the first time I read that I could not believe that those words were written by our *founding fathers* in the Declaration of Independence. But this is not surprising when we consider that a prevailing cultural idea at that time was that Native people were 'soulless' non-Christian people whose existence impinged the expansion of the Christian empire.

In 1823 the US Supreme Court under Chief Justice John Marshall decided that American Indians could not own land. The decision was based on the doctrine of discovery.[15] Seven years later, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which authorized the US to set aside lands west of the Mississippi River for tribes.[16] Another act, passed in 1834, created what became known as "Indian Territory" – which included modern-day Oklahoma.[17] For my tribe, this was Wichita Land.

In 1856, during the administration of the 14th US President Franklin Pierce, the US Attorney General Caleb Cushing wrote: "The fact, therefore, that Indians are born in the country does not make them citizens of the United States. The simple truth is plain, that Indians are subjects of the United States, and therefore are not, in mere right of home-birth, citizens of the United States." [18]

Laws and policies prohibited Native Americans from becoming citizens because they were considered "subjects" or "wards" of the government.[19] The federal government then established the Courts of Indian Offenses to prosecute Indians who participated in traditional ceremonies in 1883. The purpose of this was to erase the cultural identity of American Indian tribes.[20]

Between the 1870s and the turn of the century, the federal government forced Indigenous people to take English names.[21] Our people took these names for government record purposes but still used our Wichita names and spoke only our Wichita language. Keep in mind that the US was at this point only one hundred years into its life.

In 1887 the federal government created the Dawes Act, a policy focused specifically on breaking up reservations and tribal lands by granting land allotments to individual Native Americans. Some believe the purpose was to erase community.[22]

From the mid- to late-1800s until the mid-1900s, the federal government removed thousands of Native American children and placed them into government, mission, and church-run boarding schools. The goal was assimilation. Children were not allowed to speak their native languages or participate in their cultures.[23]

This feels like a hopeless history. In our Wichita history, we title the years 1820–1934 "The Days of Darkness," and they were.[24] I served in the United States Marines, I love God and this nation, and I've been a missionary in the Philippines for 20 years. When I think about missions through the filter of what happened to our Indigenous people of the United States, I am shocked. It leaves me wondering, "Where were God's people?"

GOSPEL ENCOUNTER

Yet the Bible is filled with narratives of people enduring tremendous pain and hardship that God continued to pursue and reach. In my small group, recently, I was reminded that I have a choice to make when I examine the sinful history of the American story and my Indigenous people. I can painfully recall it or somehow see it with anticipation of the forgiveness that was coming for me… and others.

In 1855, two children were born in Waco in what is now Texas – a boy, *Ay-ha-dad*, and a girl, *Tun on tah sah sis*. On August 1, 1859, they and the rest of the Wichita in Waco were forcibly removed. Their families settled a few miles north of Anadarko, Oklahoma in the small town of Gracemont. When they grew up, they married. In 1874, they joined a Muscogee Nation missionary and the community of Native people who began the Rock Springs Indian Baptist Church.

In 1877, they had baby girl *Wah-Kits*, also called *Its-kid-ah-hiss* (Suddenly She Stands Up). She and the next generations of my family all stayed at that church. And God worked through them to reach our people and make disciples.

In 1899, my great-grandmother, Bertha Ross (*Ka·santatiyeh* 'following with a scalp,' nicknamed *Tikamrnac*, 'grinding corn') was taken by force from her home at 9 years old and sent to the Riverside Indian School – a residential boarding school in Anadarko, Oklahoma. But she returned. She taught in Rock Springs Bible classes and in church services, and she often served as the Wichita interpreter at the church.

My grandmother, Ruby Warden (born 1899), was a part of the last generation of fluent Wichita speakers. She wasn't born a US citizen but counted her citizenship in heaven (Philippians 3:20).

People from my family over a 150-year period are all buried in the Rock Springs Indian Baptist Church cemetery. While the government worked to prohibit our culture, my family stood as a testimony of people who served God through our culture. Despite many days of darkness, they carried gospel light to my people.

James Warden Ross (Derek Ross's father) and Milo Ross (Derek Ross's grandfather) both served for decades in strategic roles in the US military.

COURTESY OF DEREK ROSS

While the government worked to prohibit our culture, my family stood as a testimony of people who served God through our culture.

FROM THE WICHITA TO THE NATIONS

I came to acknowledge Christ as my savior in August 1974 at Indian Falls Creek (indianfallscreek.org) in Davis, Oklahoma. This "camp for the nations" was started in 1947 by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Today, it hosts over 3000 campers every year who represent over 50 tribal Nations from across North America and over 250 churches, including mine.[25]

Fast forward to 2003. My wife and I, along with four children under 6 years old, committed to two years as IMB missionaries in Manila, Philippines. Two years turned into 18 and five children. Our Philippine mission (bridgingthegap-asia.org) of equipping churches and reaching students in public schools had an annual reach of 100,000 students in public schools across the Philippines and a reach of approximately 10 million people annually through the media. By 2021 we transitioned our work to equipping short-term mission teams from Native American churches from the United States.

Today, we live in Waco, Texas, and I travel back and forth between the US and the Philippines. My time in the United States has been focused on doing discipleship among Native American churches. I am also helping equip Native American churches in Oklahoma to participate in our mission in Manila and other places around the world.

I take short-term teams of Native Americans to Manila. I share about missions opportunities at Native American colleges and events, and I am exploring partnerships that may lead to more missions opportunities for Native Americans. Last year I became part of a small group of Native and non-Native leaders who are doing further research together on opportunities to equip Native American church leaders for missions.

You may have heard stories of people who forgave those who committed terrible actions that harmed them personally. When you see that type of forgiveness, it almost appears like a crime. It's apparent that something amazing has happened. That is what happened to my family and to me. And this is the hope I have for all Native American people. ■

Our Philippine mission continues today. Learn more: bridgingthegap-asia.org

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James 'Derek' Ross was born in Anadarko, Oklahoma. He served in the US Marines. Then he, his wife, and family served as missionaries in the Philippines for 20 years. After returning to the US, they moved to Waco, Texas. God has since opened doors for him to share about his mission at colleges and seminaries. Derek also works as a consultant to the Baylor University Mayborn Museum, works with city leaders in Waco, and serves on several boards.

Rethinking Missions in Native America

The mission to Native America is not complete. We need more Native pastors to plant new churches and to revitalize existing churches. Those pastors would benefit from seminary training and encouragement to persevere in their communities. And we need the non-Native body of Christ to come alongside and support Native brothers and sisters in their efforts to fulfill the Great Commission in North America.

For the last four years, I have participated with a small group of Native American and First Nations pastors in the *Native Pastors Gathering* in Florence, Mississippi. This annual event brings in pastors, leaders, and aspiring pastors for three days to receive rest, refreshment, encouragement, and opportunities to be equipped to better shepherd the sheep entrusted to their care.

During one of the sessions, called "Reports from the Field," attendees gave updates from their ministry locations and shared prayer requests. One pastor, Jim Bird (Cherokee), ministering among the Dakota Sioux near Sisseton, South Dakota, offered his perspective. After serving for decades in that region and meeting with representatives from "all the denominations" during his tenure, Pastor Bird's message to his parishioners and fellow Native Christian laborers simply and soberly was, "the cavalry is not coming."

In centuries past, in another context, those words would have been great news to most Native people's ears, but in the context of present-day missions, there is something woefully sad about the realization represented in that metaphor. Pastor Bird's message was a call to stand and trust in the Lord, rather than in man, yet the Church is also still called to come alongside Native people in their efforts to fulfill the Great Commission.

PHOTO BY BILL PERRY, ADOBE STOCK.

USA: A group of Native Americans play a drum at a Pow Wow.

NATIVE AMERICA – MISSION ACCOMPLISHED?

Are the days of missions to Native America behind us? In his *Forward* to *Crow Jesus: Personal Stories of Native Religious Belonging*, Jace Weaver concludes with this: "In *Crow Jesus*, Clatterbuck demonstrates clearly that, whatever the ethnocentric disagreements of non-Native church administrators, among the Crows of Montana, the job is done."[1]

This conclusion is partly based on an exchange between Presbyterian church leaders (PCUSA) and Vine Deloria Jr. recorded in Weaver's book, *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*.[2] The argument goes something like this: Since Native Americans have been Christians for three and a half centuries, there is no longer a need for churches to continue mission endeavors to Native America.

However, my friends in Crow Agency, right now, will testify that the job is not done. From a *biblical* perspective, there is much to do. But the belief that the job is done in Crow Agency and/or anywhere else in Indian country depends on one's definition of missions.

On one end of the spectrum, some argue that missions is strictly church planting in places where Christ is not known. The other end of the spectrum broadens missions efforts to include various efforts such as mercy ministries (e.g., medical, disaster relief, homeless shelters, human trafficking rescue missions, ESL, vocational training, etc.).

Between those two poles are ministries like children's evangelism and college campus outreaches, prison ministries, and a plethora of parachurch teaching ministries. However, at its heart, missions remains nothing less than the fulfilling of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19–20. Jesus says:

> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (ESV)

Jesus gave us this mission, and it continues until the end of the age.

Ponemah, Minnesota: Two Wah-Bun Chapel members hold up several Christian books.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PATRICK LENNOX.

THE NATIVE AMERICAN MISSION FIELD

It is important to know that the term "Native America" paints Indigenous communities in North America with a broad brush. Native America is a group of groups, or better for our purposes, a field of fields. Native communities are not a monolith, but they do have some common traits. Moving forward, I will use the term *Native* to refer to all Indigenous people in North America.

There are 574 federally recognized Native tribes in the US.[3] While many tribes are not federally recognized, others still are in the application process. The US Census Bureau uses the term American Indian (AI) generically when not specifying tribal names. Included in that total are Alaska Natives (AN), which account for 227 of the federally recognized tribes/villages, according to the Federal Register.[4] In Canada, there are 634 recognized First Nations communities.[5]

At the end of the nineteenth century, the total population of Native Americans in the US was down to less than 250,000. How many are there today? The answer is complicated. If you were to ask the US Census Bureau, you may get an answer something like 9.7 million[6] who identify as AIAN alone or mixed.[7] Of that number, there are 2.7 million who identify as AIAN alone, or as many of my Native friends would say, "full bloods." In Canada, the government reports the total population of "registered Indians" is 901,053, and their 2011 National Household Survey accounted for nearly 2 million with "Aboriginal" (or Native) ancestry.[8]

Less than a third of those who identify as AIAN live on a reservation. Many live near one, while others live far from their tribal communities, yet have strong connections back home. They are enrolled members of their tribe retaining full recognition. Then there are many others who are not enrolled members of any tribe, but who know their ancestry and identify as AIAN on the US census.

No matter how the pie graph is sliced, the harvest is indeed plentiful.

Numerous Native children grew to reject the "white man's religion," deeming it as antithetical to Native culture.

BARRIERS TO THE GOSPEL

Native pastors and ministry leaders with whom I serve consistently report confronting persistent resistance to the gospel. While some level of resistance is to be expected, historical factors have created formidable barriers between the church and her Native neighbors.

Those can be traced back to the conquest and colonization of North America by a dominant culture in the US and Canada that espoused Christianity. But another dispossession followed the dispossession of land that occurred centuries ago. This time it was not the land, but the children. This had deep and far-reaching effects on Native communities for generations up to this very day.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century through most of the twentieth century, both the US and Canadian governments, with participation from many Christian denominations, initiated and sustained the Indian boarding school movement.[9] Native children, as young as four years old, were separated from their parents and tribe and sent to government schools far from home.

The driving doctrine was "Kill the Indian, save the man."[10] At the schools, children endured abuse of all kinds. Many died. The entire program was designed to strip Native children of all cultural influence, beginning with changing each child's Indian name to his or her new "Christian" name.

Numerous Native children grew to reject the "white man's religion," deeming it as antithetical to Native culture. Yet by God's grace, many others did embrace the Savior. In both cases, Native communities, today, live with the fallout of this destructive government program in which a misguided church participated.

Per capita, Native people in the US suffer with the highest rates of poverty, alcoholism, suicide, drug abuse, domestic violence, gang violence, mental illness, PTSD, human trafficking, high school dropout rates, teen pregnancy, and historical trauma.[11] The statistics are nearly identical in Canada.

Yet, these are not just statistics. They are people. Native people are also not historical curiosities trapped in the past or relics discovered through DNA kits. They are communities of families and individuals created in the image of God with a shared history, and a present reality. They are an integral part of God's continuing story of redemption.

STRUGGLING CHURCHES

Despite this historical trauma, Native America has many strong churches. However, others struggle to exist and remain in perpetual mission-church status. I once preached at a Native church in northern Minnesota called Wah-Bun that is over 100 years old. Located in an Ojibwe community outside the Red Lake Reservation, it was 50 miles from the closest city. They often worshipped in a garage with no central heating in the middle of Minnesota winter.

When I visited, only six or seven people came to services, and they had no pastor. The congregation was too small and poor to support a pastor. Church members also experienced many of the same struggles as their community.

For example, on the cold winter morning when I visited the church, one man shared that his wife had taken their car the previous night. Her meth addiction

Florence, Mississippi: Billy Tallas (Navajo) and Huron Claus (Kiowa/Mohawk), both of CHIEF, listen during a time of teaching at the Native Pastors Gathering.

PHOTO BY REY VILLAVICENCIO, COURTESY OF PATRICK LENNOX.

and all its accompanying vices kept her out all night. He asked for prayer for his wife to be found and delivered from her life of addiction. He also asked the congregation to pray that he would find his car and keys so he could get to work in the city the next morning. As a supervisor, he had the keys to his workplace and was responsible to open it. By God's grace, they found his wife, car, and keys later that day. Stories like this are not uncommon.

Sometime after my visit, a non-Native became the pastor at Wah-Bun. In late 2023, they reported that a Native pastor would arrive in the summer of 2024. But many churches, like Wah-Bun, still do not have a dedicated pastor or elders to shepherd them and feed them the Word of God.

Non-Native churches are not the calvary who need to rescue Native churches. Rather we want to recognize and celebrate mutual interdependency.

SERVING IN PARTNERSHIP

Missions among Native communities in North America is not complete, but *how* it is done is critical. Non-Native churches are not the calvary who need to rescue Native churches. Rather we want to recognize and celebrate mutual interdependency.

We all need each other in the church. The Apostle Paul beautifully illustrates using the metaphor of the church as a human body – one body, many parts (1 Corinthians 12:12–15, Romans 12:5). We need to have real, enduring relationships with our Native brothers and sisters. There is much we can learn from them.

Evangelism and ministries of mercy done in partnership with Native communities continue to be helpful. However, more needs to be done to build up and raise up leaders from within Native America. This needs to start with those already serving in Native communities, but younger candidates who can serve in leadership also need to be found.

While there are Native pastors and teachers with graduate and post-graduate degrees, Native pastors are often bi-vocational and without seminary training. More Native leaders need formal training in the Scriptures and to be equipped to disciple those under their care.

Florence, Mississippi: Nanette Butler (left) and her husband, Dino (right), sing during worship at the Native Pastors Gathering. They are Navajo and serve as missionaries with NAIM in New Mexico.

PHOTO BY REY VILLAVICENCIO, COURTESY OF PATRICK LENNOX.

Spiritually and numerically strong churches in Native America will be more equipped to reach the lost in their communities, and beyond! And this is already happening. Remember Pastor Bird? He is Cherokee from Oklahoma serving the Dakota Sioux in South Dakota. He is just one example amongst many Native pastors who cross geographical and cultural boundaries essentially as church planting missionaries.

OCCOM MINISTRIES – TRAINING AND EQUIPPING

Occom Ministries (occom.org) is a ministry of Mission to the World (MTW) focused on equipping and training Native pastors and discipling Native Christians. It is named after Rev. Samuel Occom – the first Native to be ordained as a Presbyterian minister.

One of Occom's programs is the Native Pastors Gathering. This event is for Native American and First Nations pastors who serve on frontlines of Native communities.[12] The event is small by design and focused on growing a core group of Native pastors. Because nearly all who come are bi-vocational with either no extra funds or limited time to be away, the event is free of change and only three days. Wives are also encouraged to attend.

Participants are encouraged and equipped to better serve their communities. The event also fosters long-term relationships, trust that facilitates unity, and connections to other Native ministries such as CHIEF (chief.org). One of my deep friendships with Occom

founding board member Billy Tallas (Navajo) grew out of this event.

Occom is also in the beginning stages of creating Occom Institute, to provide certificate programs and master's level seminary training. Native pastors serving in poor and remote locations, especially bi-vocational pastors with family, face daunting challenges if they want to pursue seminary education.

We live in a time when distance education is readily available. But as ubiquitous as the internet may be, it is not everywhere, especially in remote Native communities. Yet there are ways to overcome that. Another hurdle is the cost of tuition making higher education out of reach for many pastors. That can be overcome, too.

Occom plans to use online courses from Thirdmill (thirdmill.org) as the core curriculum. Ministries such as Thirdmill provide free, seminary-level education, including certificate programs. They also have developed a Master of Arts degree program for a fraction of the cost compared to the older established brick-and-mortar schools that offer distance education.

But Occom Institute will not be merely an *online* school. Week-long intensive courses in Native communities will be integral to the training. Much like CIM's BUILD (Biblical Unity Indigenous Leadership Development) program,[13] Occom Institute will organize teaching events on location where pastors serve, available to be audited by anyone who would like to attend, especially teachers, elders, and potential pastors.

Florence, Mississippi: Dale Tsosie (Navajo) plays a wooden flute during the prelude at the Native Pastors Gathering.

PHOTO BY REY VILLAVICENCIO, COURTESY OF PATRICK LENNOX.

NATIVE AMERICA – MISSION FIELD TO MISSION FORCE

Pastor Daron Butler (Navajo) often says, "I dream of the day when Native America is no longer a mission field, but a mission force." My wife and I share that sentiment and are dreaming with him. For this to become a more pervasive reality, more faithful, gospel-proclaiming, and Christ-centered churches need to be planted. And those churches need shepherds trained in the Scriptures, in preaching the whole counsel of God, and in equipping the saints for every good work. No, the job is not done, and the calvary is not coming. But the Lord of the harvest calls us to join him alongside the Indigenous peoples of North America as we participate with him in his mission until the end of the age. ■

1. Jace Weaver, forward to *Crow Jesus: Personal Stories of Native Religious Belonging,* by Mark Clatterbuck (Norman, OK: University Oklahoma Press, 2017), xiv.
2. Weaver, *Crow Jesus*, xiv. Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 112.
3. Mainon A. Schwartz, *The 574 Federally Recognized Indian Tribes in the United States*, Summary R47414, CRS Report Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress (Congressional Research Service, February 8, 2023), accessed December 13, 2023, https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47414 .
4. "Notices," Federal Register 87, no. 19 (January 28, 2022): 4640, accessed December 13, 2023, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2022-01-28/pdf/2022-01789.pdf.
5. Canadian government sources distinguish between a First Nations community and a government.
6. Figures do not account for Indigenous people on the Hawaiian Islands.
7. "American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month: November 2023," United States Census Bureau, accessed December 13, 2023, https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2023/aian-month.html.
8. "First Nations People in Canada," Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, accessed December 13, 2023, https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1303134042666/1534961203322.
9. In Canada, they are known as residential schools.
10. Richard Henry Pratt, "Kill the Indian, and Save the Man": Capt. Richard H. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans, speech, National Conference of Charities and Correction, Denver (1892), accessed December 12, 2023, https://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/teach/kill-indian-him-and-save-man-r-h-pratt-education-native-americans.
11. "Substance and Behavioral Addictions among American Indian and Alaska Native Populations," National Library of Medicine, *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 5 (March 2022): 2974, accessed December 13, 2023, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8910676/.
12. While this gathering is for Native leaders, other gatherings such as CIM's (Center for Indian Ministries) bi-annual United in Christ conference (centerforindianministries.org) are for both Native and non-Native Christians and ministry leaders.
13. BUILD (centerforindianministries.org/build-program) is a ministry that brings biblical and leadership training to Native leaders – sending teams of instructors to different reservations and communities in partnership with local churches.

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Patrick Lennox and his wife, Regina, have been serving together in Native America since 2006. Since 2014 they have been serving full-time with Mission to the World (MTW), the missions agency of the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA), where Patrick is ordained. He is also the founder and president of Occom Ministries (Occom.org), a teaching ministry that seeks to grow disciples and train leaders throughout Native America.

CENTRAL&SOU

TOP: ELYSE PATTEN, COURTESY OF WGA. BOTTOM: COURTESY OF THE SEED COMPANY.

TH AMERICA

21
COUNTRIES

422
INDIGENOUS PEOPLE GROUPS

25+
MILLION INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

47
UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS

* Statistics from the Joshua Project: "People Cluster: Central American Indigenous," https://joshuaproject.net/clusters/257, accessed February 13, 2024. "People Cluster: South American Indigenous," https://joshuaproject.net/clusters/290, accessed February 13, 2024. Statistics do not include the Caribbean.

TOP: MARC EWELL, COURTESY OF WGA. BOTTOM: ELYSE PATTEN, COURTESY OF WGA.

God's Grace Abounds Among the Quechua

Nearly half of Bolivia's population come from its Indigenous communities of which the Quechua are the largest. Yet gospel resources in Quechua remain limited. While many Quechua people enthusiastically participate in church, few have experienced the transformation of the gospel because they don't understand it.

Across the mountains of central Bolivia, Christians amongst the Quechua people gather to worship together during special weekend conferences. Starting on a Friday night, they come on foot, others on motorcycles, trucks, or any other means of transportation available to them, wearing colorful clothes. No one is empty-handed; they all bring their bulky Bibles or their hymnal. But few know how to read.

After everyone finds a place to sit, the music begins. A group of women sing loudly, and a group of men play instruments – mostly strings but sometimes a keyboard or drums. As the sun goes down, dim lights barely illuminate hymnals and Bibles. The music continues for more than 30 minutes until it is time to share the message of the Word of the Lord.

Then the person in charge approaches the front of the tent, with or without a microphone, to address the audience for about 30 minutes. At first, everyone is attentive, but after 15–20 minutes, most fall asleep. The meeting formally concludes with a word of prayer.

A Quechua woman holds her colorful hat.

PHOTO BY MARC EWELL, COURTESY OF WGA.

Those with transportation return home for the night. Some go to rest at a place nearby. Others stay and eagerly play and sing up to four more hours. Then they also go to rest. The next two days, most return to repeat the routine they started on Friday night.

Of Bolivia's more than 12 million people, nearly 50% are Indigenous. Those include 36 native peoples. The Quechua comprise 49.5% of the Indigenous population followed by the Aymara with 40.6%, the Chiquitanos (3.6%), the Guarani (2.6%), and the Moxeños (1.4%). The remaining 31 groups are a combined 2.4% of the Indigenous population.

The nearly 3 million Quechua people scattered across the country are a quarter of Bolivia's entire population. And while many consider themselves Christian, religious practice is more cultural than transformative. Understanding of the message of Jesus Christ that changes lives through his death on the cross is limited for most.

GOSPEL SEEDS SOWN IN THE SOIL OF HARDSHIP

The Spanish conquest of what is now Bolvia began in the sixteenth century. For hundreds of years after that, they subjected the Quechua and other Indigenous peoples to harsh treatment and suffering. Although the existence of Indigenous peoples was recognized, their rights were not. They were used as objects for the personal and national interests of Spain.

"From the first discovery of these Americas, malice began to persecute men who had no other crime than to have been born in lands that nature enriched with opulence and who preferred to leave their villages rather than submit to the oppressions and services of their masters, judges and priests."[1]

Bolivia became an independent country in 1825. At the end of 1890, God in his mercy allowed the gospel to enter through some missionaries from New Zealand who had already been sharing the gospel in Argentina for some time. They came in through one of the main entry points into Bolivia from Argentina. But their arrival was fraught with potential challenges and risks. Bolivia's road and transportation systems were poor, making journeys deeper into the country complex. And even if travel was successful, they still faced the possibility of violent rejection from local communities.

"We have the account of this history thanks to the diligence of Mrs. Payne, who recorded many details in her diary. Thus we know that on July 5 or 6, 1895, Don Guillermo entered Bolivia for the first time, crossing the border at La Quiaca, accompanied by his wife Elizabeth, his little girl, two believers, one named Allan, another, Pedro Guerrero, and six pack animals."[2]

Through their sacrifice, the gospel was sown in the hearts of Quechua people both in the countryside and the cities.

AN INCOMPLETE MISSION

Evangelical missionaries played a critical role in sowing the seeds of the gospel. Over about half a century, they defined doctrinal guidelines, facilitated ecclesial organization, and guided liturgical development. At times, they encouraged or initiated breaking the cultural and traditional norms of different regions of the country. Throughout Bolivia's geographic regions, the evangelical church experienced organic growth, and many churches were built.

At the same time, Bible Institutes formed to provide biblical training to new followers of Jesus. Quechua people urgently wanted to share the Word of God to their own Quechua-speaking people from their own worldview and language. Yet few teaching materials and no Bible were available in the Quechua language.

Two centers intended primarily for Quechua people, began with only Spanish curriculum and instruction. The first, Quillacollo Bible Institute in the city of Cochabamba, began instruction in 1925. The second, San Juanillo Bible Institute in the city of Sucre, was founded by Donald and Kathie Gale, missionaries from the Andes Evangelical Mission in 1961. Today, it is known as SETESUR, the Theological Seminary of the South (Seminario Teológico del Sur).

Many missionaries there as teachers with the best intentions could not teach effectively in the Quechua language. Attempts to teach some subjects in Quechua largely failed. Without source materials in the language, doing it only orally proved too difficult. Other teachers and administrators demonstrated distain for the Quechua language, hoping it would die out. Even the teachers who were of Quechua origin did not see teaching in this language as something important. However, this kept these institutions from fully achieving their mission. One unintentional result was that many Quechua students from rural areas who remained in the city for their studies never returned to their home areas.

Understanding of the message of Jesus Christ that changes lives through his death on the cross is limited for most.

Over time, the social, political, economic, and cultural situation in Bolivia began to change. The evangelical and broader Protestant church also changed as new generations of church leaders emerged. A few were of Quechua origin, but their ethnicity hampered their advancement. They continued to be overshadowed by Spanish-speaking leadership and relegated to the background. Those from cities also experienced more opportunities for advancement than those from the countryside.

In the meantime, missionaries remained faithful in continuing to evangelize, in helping emerging Bolivian church leaders, and in facilitating new strategies to reach the neediest – most often rural Quechua people. Roads and transportation still created barriers to accessing these communities. So missionaries traveled in trucks, on horseback, and on foot because it was not possible to reach these communities in any other way. This took a significant amount of time.

> There are Quechua churches full of people who have not understood the gospel but who attend and participate in church activities with great enthusiasm.

This sacrificial work was almost always undertaken by foreign missionaries in partnership with Bolivians. While the missionaries carried the message of salvation from God's Word, they brought it in Spanish. The Bolivians who traveled with them knew the terrain and the Quechua language and made efforts to translate that message so the Quechua people hearing could better understand it.

A QUECHUA BIBLE IS TRANSLATED

The first efforts to translate the Bible into Quechua happened before the 1950s, but it wasn't until the 1970s that Scripture portions started becoming available. After almost 30 years of work, the translation of the New Testament into the Quechua language was finally available. In 1983 a bilingual Quechua-Spanish New Testament was published, and in 1986 the complete Bible[3] was made available to the Quechua people, which at that time numbered around 2 million.

The Quechua received their translated Bible with great excitement. At that time, most Quechua people could not read, but demand for the book remained high. Because the Quechua culture has an oral tradition, those who could read found the translated Scripture difficult to understand. They did not read often and had no experience reading in their own language. So they had to spent time learning to read in their own language.

Churches in urban areas with large groups of Quechua-speaking people in their congregations began offering services or worship exclusively in the Quechua language. But few people were prepared to teach in the Quechua language. In rural areas, the same thing happened. Quechua Scriptures made worship in the Quechua language more possible, but churches lacked people prepared to teach the Word of God in Quechua.

MOSOJ CHASKI – TEACHING GOD'S WORD BY RADIO

At the end of the 1990s, a small group of missionaries from 3 different mission agencies – SIM, New Tribes, and Pioneers – came together to consider how they could more easily and effectively reach the Quechua people of the Bolivian Andes. Week after week for four years they prayed to understand what God wanted them to do through them, how he would do it, and what the right timing would be. They wondered how they could economically sustain what God would send them to do, and who would do the work on the ground since Quechua people would most effectively participate in evangelization.

God was faithful. He showed them that a shortwave radio station would cover places that were the most re-

Bolivia: A Quechua woman walks down the road. Quechua people are known for their colorfully woven clothing.

PHOTO BY 279PHOTO, ADOBE STOCK.

mote and difficult to access. God also impressed upon them that the message should be in the language that the rural Quechua in the Andes used. As they began to work, God provided them with the economic, technical, and human resources they needed.

For the next two years, one of the missionaries facilitated a team that produced Quechua language radio programs that clearly presented the gospel. Programming included devotionals, Bible studies, and even hymns of praise to God.

On April 11, 1999 the first radio signal was broadcast from the *Mosoj Chaski* shortwave radio station. It spread the transforming message of Jesus Christ to Quechua people all over Bolivia, but especially those living in the most remote places. The programming on Radio Mosoj Chaski proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ exclusively in the Quechua language – proclaiming God's love to those who had not yet heard and encouraging existing Christians in all those places. Radio Mosoj Chaski has now been broadcasting for a quarter of a century, and God willing it will continue!

Radio Mosoj Chaski became a seedbed for other ministries including discipleship and literacy. It became a connecting point for the distribution of literature to further help with Christian growth and maturity. It gave birth to the Itinerant Quechua Bible Training team which provided mobile Bible teaching to Quechua people for several years. The team had as many as four trainers.

They instructed Quechua church leaders in inductive Bible study and expository teaching. They also taught participants how to use four basic materials to help in the process: a Quechua Bible Dictionary, a Quechua Bible concordance, a Quechua Bible encyclopedia, and a Bible atlas.

Unfortunately, the program was paused for a while due to lack of financial support. Yet it returned under a new name: *Yachay Pujyu*. *Yachay* in Quechua means knowledge, and *Pujyu* is Quechua for a spring of water. Together they can be translated as "source of knowledge." Due to continued financial limitations, the program currently only has one full-time trainer.

Bolivia: Radio Mosoj Chaski ("New Messenger") has been broadcasting in the Quechua language since April 1999. Programming includes indigenous gospel music, Bible teaching, leadership training, and a wide range of information to improve the lives of the mountain Quechua people.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SIM USA.

COLLABORATING FOR KINGDOM ADVANCEMENT

Many Quechua still lack a full understanding of the gospel. More needs to be done to share the gospel with the Quechua in their language and in a contextualized way. Additional resources can help Quechua people know God more each day, obey his teachings in their daily lives, move away from syncretism which harms and confuses the Quechua church.

With more contextualized resources in their language, the Quechua people will be able to fully understand that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and that by believing in him and accepting him as our Lord and Savior, we recognize that he is our Lord. They will come to know that Jesus governs our lives and remains in us so we can live in obedience to each of his precepts expressed in his Word.

Bolivia: A Quechua woman records a radio program. Radio Mosoj Chaski staff create programs for children, youth, women, men, and the elderly.

The mission that the Lord Jesus called us to is not a thing of the past. It is also a present-day task for each one of us. Until the Lord comes for us, we must continue to proclaim the gospel to every person we encounter. We must continue to pray for God to guide us as we share the love of God and work towards the expansion of the kingdom of God.

The most vulnerable and forgotten people need to be prioritized. We must not be guilty of forgetting them. As I explained, Indigenous peoples in Bolivia have been seen by the wider society as less – even worthless. That pattern seems to have crept into how we share the gospel in Quechua communities. Perhaps we like to have them in our midst. Maybe we like their unique music or exotic clothing. But do we really care if they understand the gospel or not?

Someone once said to me, "Many of us will miss not seeing many of our fellow church goers in the presence of the Lord, but we will also be surprised by the many who never set foot in a church and will be in the presence of the Lord."

There are Quechua churches full of people who have not understood the gospel but who attend and participate in church activities with great enthusiasm. Surely there are also people who silently recognized and believe in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross who do not attend any church.

We have so many resources for the Spanish speaking people. Yet the Quechua and Aymara comprise approximately half of the entire Bolivian population. It is time to reflect and invest time and money to develop the work of the Lord in these areas that need our participation.

We need to work for the common good stripping ourselves of competition and an overemphasis on our denominations. Sitting down together, we can analyze what needs to be done, how we should do it, and when we can do it. As God provides, we can share technology, strategies, and innovative approaches to do something together that we could not achieve alone. This is the way of the kingdom of God. ■

1. Gonzalo Viscarra Pando, *El Indio* (La Paz: Editorial Gente Común, 2013), 34.
2. Eliseo Zuñiga Murillo, *La Gran Conquista* (Cochabamba: Ediciones Casa Campesina, 2012), 25.
3. South Bolivian Quechua Bible, https://www.ethnologue.com/language/quh/.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF SIM USA.

Uniting Waves, Transforming Lives: The Three Waves Movement

Across the Amazon region and lowlands of South America, God has raised up a movement of foreign, national, and Indigenous missionaries that are working in unity to see the Great Commission fulfilled. They long to see all the Indigenous peoples in the Amazon region and lowlands worshiping and glorifying God's Holy Name as equal parts of Christ's Body on earth.

In the heart of the vast Amazon region, where the rainforest breathes life and Indigenous cultures weave thousands of stories, the Three Waves Movement (Movimiento Tres Olas – MTO) emerges. This movement is composed of Christian leaders and organizations from diverse nations and cultures who transcend cultural and geographical barriers to work to fulfill the Great Commission – together. They stand as a beacon of hope, working tirelessly to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and accompany the integral development of Indigenous communities in the Amazon region and lowlands.

A VISION FOR THE UNREACHED IN THE AMAZON

This movement began with a vision God gave to a man who grew up immersed in tribal cultures. Paul Johnson's parents worked among unreached tribal groups in Bolivia. But in 1989, God cultivated a burning desire within him to reach the unreached in the Amazon region in a new way – by empowering existing Indigenous churches and their leaders to do it.

In 2004, he shared this vision in a consultation with the leaders of several mission organizations that were already working in the Amazon region. The outcome was the creation

PHOTO BY CURIOSO.PHOTOGRAPHY, ADOBE STOCK

Brazil: An aerial view of the Amazon rainforest.

of a cooperative consortium of organizations. More meetings followed with Indigenous leaders as the main speakers. They shared about the many challenges of their own peoples and communities.

Later that same year Paul shared his vision at an SIL International (sil.org) gathering in Dallas, Texas. Several people who worked in Brazil came to him afterwards and told him he should visit Brazil. They explained that something was already happening there that was very similar to Paul's vision for the Amazon region. Paul heeded their advice and went to Brazil soon after.

He went to a large conference of Indigenous leaders in Brazil. There Paul met Henrique Dias Terena and me (Enoque). Henrique had become the president of CONPLEI[1] (National Congress of Evangelical Indigenous Pastors and Leaders, conplei.org.br) two years before. He is Indigenous from the Terena tribe in Brazil. At that time, I was the coordinator of the department of Indigenous affairs (DAI)[2] for AMTB, a Brazilian cross-cultural mission association.

THE BEGINNING OF THE THREE WAVES

In Brazil, Paul discovered a model for what he sensed God was calling him to do. He observed a movement that later was referred to as the *three waves.* The first wave was composed of foreigners that came mostly from the US, Canada, and Europe into the Amazon jungle to reach out to the Indigenous groups in Brazil. The second wave was comprised of non-Indigenous Brazilian nationals that joined forces with the first wave. Then the third wave was composed of the Indigenous themselves, who also joined this big task of reaching out to all the Indigenous people groups of Brazil.[3]

Inspired by what he saw in Brazil, Paul invited Henrique and I to speak at several Amazon consultations in the US. We shared about what God was doing in Brazil – the cooperation of all three waves. Paul's hope was that by hearing our testimony, North American mission leaders would realize that it was possible for people from all three waves to work together. From there, he encouraged a movement of close partnership between the non-Indigenous missions task force and the growing number of Indigenous missionaries in each country in the Amazon region.

Certainly, there was resistance. Mission organizations in South America had a history of working by themselves and not cooperating nor having fellowship with each other. So Paul's proposal to work together in cooperation sounded strange to those ears. But Henrique and I could publicly support this proposal because we'd experienced it. This gave us a credible platform from which to answer questions from those with concerns.

Paul had faced many frustrations during previous attempts at collaboration in South America. He knew bringing a variety of people and organizations to the same table had dangers. So at these consultations, he articulated a trilogy of common, non-biblical practices (what he called "cardinal sins") that impact the church and missions world: competition, duplication, and territorialism.

To be a part in this movement required participants to address these three *cardinal sins*. They committed to refrain from competing with one another. If someone was already doing something, they would not duplicate efforts. And they would not practice territorialism by excluding others amongst them. In the movement, we since replaced these three *sins* with three biblical virtues: unity, respect, and cooperation.

TRANS-AMAZON NETWORK LAUNCHED

2007 marked a significant year for the movement. Representatives from all three waves including several In-

Brazil: Members of the Three Waves Movement leadership team meet with tribal church leaders from Suriname over Zoom.

PHOTO BY HEATHER PUBOLS

digenous and non-Indigenous leaders from six countries met in the city of Iquitos, Peru, which is on the shore of the Amazon River in northeastern Peru. Indigenous leaders attended from Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, and Brazil.

United in spirit, they came together to listen to God and discern his guidance for what they should do. At the end of four wonderful days of interaction, they created the Trans-Amazon Network and chose its board. Eli Ticuna was selected to be president, Henrique Terena became vice president, and Rafael Ahuanari started as executive director.

This came about because Indigenous leaders from the Amazon region were determined to take an active part in their future. They assumed responsibility to reach the unreached Indigenous people groups in the Amazon region and lowlands. God was certainly directing their action, and these were important steps toward God accomplishing his work in the Amazon region.

The Trans-Amazon Network board, chosen in Iquitos, started working toward a goal to create a country network in each Amazon region right away, so that each country could have their own national Indigenous network. Donors from around the world supported the board so they could travel to these countries to do this work. And over time countries including Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Colombia, and Ecuador developed national Indigenous networks in addition to the network already established in Brazil.

In 2009, this movement that involved foreign, national, and Indigenous peoples working together to spread the gospel finally received a name. It was then that it was officially called Movimiento Tres Olas (MTO) – the Three Waves Movement (movimientotresolas.org/en).

Even positive developments have setbacks. We've experienced leaders leaving the movement – some for personal reasons, others because they had an unclear understanding of it, and still others due to character issues. We also encountered situations where missionaries and mission organizations interpreted MTO as a new mission organization arriving to compete with them. Even though we explained that this was not the case, these situations were not easy to resolve, and remain in some cases.

Also our goal has not been to just establish the movement in Amazon region countries but to create a positive environment to join all the mission forces together to reach the unreached in the Amazon region and lowlands. Keeping this in focus has meant that we've had occasions where we've had to start aspects of this work over from scratch.

> What we see developing is a common understanding that the third wave, the Indigenous, will play the most important and substantial role in the movement's future.

But through all of these challenges, God has been faithful. What we see developing is a common understanding that the third wave, the Indigenous, will play the most important and substantial role in the movement's future. And the first and second waves will play their parts in accompanying them – giving their Indigenous brothers and sisters support as they move towards sharing truth with the remaining unreached tribes.

THE WAVES OF CHANGE

Today, MTO continues to operate through the three missionary forces that intertwine harmoniously like waves that come together to form an ocean of transformation. The first wave, represented by the foreign church, joins the second wave, which is the Latin national church in each country, and both join the third wave, made up of the Indigenous Amazonian and lowland church. This dynamic tripod of collaboration is the very essence of MTO, forging a unique path toward shared mission.

Collaboration in MTO happens through existing consortiums and networks in the countries that make up the Amazon region and lowlands in South America. And *collaboration* is not just a word; it is a deep commitment. It involves working together to reach and disciple the unreached Indigenous peoples in the Amazon and the lowlands in South America with the gospel of Christ while also accompanying them in integral development.

MTO includes networks and consortiums. Consortiums are made up of the foreign church and the non-Indigenous church in each country. Networks are made up of Amazonian and lowland Indigenous leaders in each country, who in turn partner in the large network called the Trans-Amazon Network. This network interconnected with the consortia creates a unique space where collaboration becomes the engine of change.

At the heart of MTO, the consortia bring people together in collective, voluntary, and non-profit service. The consortia and the Trans-Amazon Network are living examples of this, where different entities and leaders come together for a common purpose: to further the mission of the movement in pursuit of the fulfillment of its vision.

The Three Waves Movement of today involves Christian leaders, church, mission agencies, and Christian organizations from diverse cultures and nations that share our vision and the values that unite us. We value the voice of the Indigenous, interdependence, interculturality, collaboration, integrity, and sustainability. The unity of purpose among the foreign church, the Latin national church, and the Indigenous church is necessary for the kind of collaboration that strengthens the foundation of mission.

WHY DOES COLLABORATION MATTER

In a world where efforts for collective works are scarce, MTO seeks to change that reality. Jesus Christ, in John 17, cries

out to the Father for the unity of the body. This call resonates strongly with MTO's purpose: to move forward together in the proclamation of the gospel. The slow progress of this biblical culture is what drives us as a movement to join forces and persist despite the difficulties.

These difficulties are not necessarily born in the heart of the church or missionary organizations as such, and we believe that the believers who are part of them do not want to assume these attitudes either. Instead, we believe that they tend to be rooted in the character of the leaders who use their influence to direct them, assuming territorial and competitive attitudes that unnecessarily lead to a duplication of resources and efforts.

MTO considers these challenges to be mission critical. To address them, we first evaluate ourselves (looking at the log in our own eyes before seeing the speck in someone else's). We are aware that we are all heirs to diverse *organizational cultures* that are influenced by models that are distant from the biblical culture of the kingdom in the development of mission. And we can be tempted to maintain these models to fulfill our goals and give us success (in good faith) thinking that "the end justifies the means."

That is why we recognize that before calling others to act in unity, it is necessary to talk about the institutional sins that we still indulge in our way of leading, which we must face, confess, and set aside from our leadership. This is what really limits the advance of the gospel in each of our cultures and communities. And this is where the collaboration and partnership between Christian organizations working in mission within the Amazonian Indigenous communities really begins.

CREATING SYNERGIES

MTO seeks not only collaboration, but the creation of synergies that maximize resources for a more significant impact. This partnership, beyond rhetoric, stands as a driving force for the sustainable advancement of the gospel among Indigenous peoples.

In the Three Waves Movement, we work day-by-day to make the possibility of working together a reality, as a joint force that cooperates to achieve a transformation with the gospel of Christ in the Amazon region and beyond. And God continues to open new doors for collaboration and partnership.

In 2023, a group from Suriname joined the movement. Suriname is one of three small non-Spanish or Portuguese speaking countries bordering the north of Brazil. For decades, the Indigenous church and its leaders there have been working to reach other ethnic groups in the Amazon Region. Their spiritual maturity is amazing. They have much to offer the movement.

Venezuela remains a challenge for us. We know of many Indigenous churches there and several active mission agencies. Yet although we have some contacts within the country, we've not been able to share the vision with them yet. We hope to do so in God's proper time.

Many Indigenous peoples and groups in the Amazon region are still waiting for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our prayer is for God to bring more people from all three waves to join this small part of God's mission through prayer, finances, or even coming alongside of us. Together we all long to see all the Indigenous peoples in the Amazon Region and lowlands worshiping and glorifying God's holy name as equal parts of Christ's body on earth.

Our movement is still young – just a teenager in its years! It is still learning and growing toward adulthood. But we have no doubt that God raised this movement up, and we're sure that God is also sustaining it for his glory. In this collaborative movement, we find the key to witness and build as a team a path towards a future full of hope, as we await the glorious second coming of Christ. ■

1. Conselho Nacional de Pastores e Lideres Evangélicos (National council of evangelical pastors and leaders).
2. Departamento de assuntos indígenas, amtb.org.br/dai-departamento-de-assuntos-indigenas-da-amtb/.
3. What we came to call the *three waves* was inspired by the writings of the well-known missiologist Ralph Winter who used this terminology to describe the advance of global mission work. He described the first wave as the one that reached the coast of continents and countries, starting with William Carey, a British missionary in India. The second wave moved into the interior of the countries. Hudson Taylor and David Livingstone were pioneers in this phase. And then the third wave came later and focused on unreached people groups. Later Isaac Costa, a missionary in Brazil among an Indigenous people group, wrote a book telling the story of how the gospel spread amongst Brazil's many ethnic groups. He reframed this terminology for Brazil reflecting how we now use it in to describe the foreign, national, and Indigenous engagement with the unreached tribal peoples in the Amazon region.

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Enoque Ozório de Faria contributes to the MTO facilitation team as a representative of the second wave and was the coordinator of the Three Waves Movement (Movimiento Tres Olas – MTO) from 2013–2019. He and his wife were missionaries with several Brazilian mission agencies for more than 40 years. They served in Brazil and in Mozambique. They have two adult sons and three grandchildren.

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Javier Mayorga Ramírez is the coordinator for the Three Waves Movement (Movimiento Tres Olas – MTO). After serving six years in pastoral ministry with the Evangelical Denomination Alliance of Colombia, he was sent to serve as a missionary with Indigenous peoples, which he's done for more than 20 years. He remains passionate about the work of the Lord among the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon region in South America. He is married to Betzabe Mora, and they have two sons.

An Indigenous Perspective on Unity and Collaboration

Indigenous Christians are realizing that the church does not belong to any ethnic group. They see that unity and collaboration applies to the whole church and are the way God desires for his people to participate together in what he is doing. And they are joining with their global brothers and sisters as equal partners in participating with God in his global mission.

In some Indigenous villages, parents and grandparents still sit with their children and grandchildren early in the morning to share oral instructions for life. Unity is a core part of the Indigenous identity which is communicated through advice like this:

- To the parents: "The life you show to your children, that is what they will be when they grow up."
- To the children: "What you are today at home, that is what you will be with your spouse, children, and community."

In an Indigenous village, no one sits around analyzing the definition of *unity*. It is communicated through daily life. Being a good person entails being in harmony with those with whom you live and relate. Indigenous people have a collective mentality, meet to make decisions together, and value the voice of each person in their village.

Today, the Indigenous reality is more complex. A balance must be made between the perceptions of the village Indigenous and the Indigenous who have been academically trained and learned Western culture. But unity remains an important value for tribal peoples across contexts. Young people still turn to the village elders for guidance when a threat is perceived that may have a consequence of damaging unity and harmony within the group.

PHOTO BY ELYSE PATTEN, COURTESY OF WGA.

Brazil: Indigenous and non-Indigenous Brazilian Christians hold hands and pray together during an event.

Brazil: Domingos Ticuna, an Indigenous missionary, leads a worship song at an event which brought together believers from multiple tribes in Brazil and beyond.

PHOTO BY ELYSE PATTEN, COURTESY OF WGA.

AN EXPANDING VIEW OF UNITY

However, unity has had limitations. In the past, a village was made up of only one ethnic group, and usually all from a single genealogical line. So the shared sense of community and unity within one village was high. The bonds of familial kinship made communication and respect for the voice of elders easy to achieve.

Yet with people outside a particular village, even from the same ethnicity, connecting happened carefully. Interaction and integration with people outside a person's own village was difficult. The conflicts between ancestors of people from different genealogical lines lingered leaving their descendants suspicious of one another.

Now we see people from different ethnic groups or even Indigenous and non-Indigenous getting married. This presented challenges to traditional ways of life, and the principles of coexistence had to be redefined. As a result, amongst some ethnic groups, multi-ethnic villages emerged where peoples of different ethnic groups lived together in a new kind of unity.

Many tribal people also came to see that some of their traditions went against God's principles. In Matthew 22:37–39, Jesus said: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" This means that love and unity must continue to extend beyond the boundaries of kinship and ethnicity.

> … love and unity must continue to extend beyond the boundaries of kinship and ethnicity.

WORKING TOGETHER IN GOD'S KINGDOM

The concept of collaboration has a practical and historical application in the Indigenous experience. Generally, ethnic groups each have a particular way to work the land. During each phase of work, they convene and agree on how to do it in collaboration with each other.

When the land needs to be prepared, they orally coordinate the work – nothing in writing – determining how, when, and where they will start and finish. The time they are going to invest in this is also defined. When planting time arrives, their work together is again planned with verbal agreements. This happens once more at harvest.

As more tribal peoples have experienced the transformative power of the gospel, God has worked in their hearts to strengthen bonds across tribal lines. Mutual collaboration is in God's plans, and it is built on humble service and genuine love. Galatians 5:13–14 provides us an important picture of what this

looks like: “You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Some of the missions work in the past implemented among tribal groups was not adequately contextualized to the Indigenous reality. This hindered spiritual growth and healing. But today, the tribal church is getting to know its heavenly Father better. It is gaining a greater understanding of the biblical perspective of being part of the Lord’s church and the great privilege of being a child of God.

Indigenous Christians are realizing that the church does not belong to any ethnic group. As God moves in their hearts, people are reconciling with their neighbors from other communities. Today, Indigenous evangelicals see each other as children of God and joint heirs of his kingdom. Together, the tribal church is challenged by the Word to walk in unity and collaboration.

As we move forward in acceptance of the Lord’s direction, we have confidence that fellowship and harmony are key to gospel advancement. Unity and collaboration applies to the whole church and are the way God desires for his people to participate together in what he is doing. He is challenging the whole church to shift its perspective of serving from transactional to relational. The tribal church is responding and joining with its global brothers and sisters as participants side-by-side in the mission of God. ■

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PHOTO COURTESY OF ALTECO (ALTECO.ORG)

Peru: Leonardo Florez puts his arm around César Rodríguez Sáenz. Leonardo leads the consortium which supports the Indigenous network (LICAC) that César leads.

Stay in the Game: The Role of the North American Church in the Amazon

Foreign missionaries arriving to serve in the Amazon and lowland region of South America are entering a different mission context than 20 years ago or even 10. Capable and wise Indigenous Christian leaders have a significant presence. Yet while the role of foreign missionaries is different, there is still a place to serve.

Foreign missionaries continue to serve in the Amazon and lowland region of South America, and new missionaries arrive daily. Typically sent by Western churches and mission organizations, they arrive eager and committed to make a positive impact. Many individual churches are also directly sending and supporting their missionaries which is admirable church missions engagement!

However, the realities of today's Indigenous church in this region are often not fully understood by those coming to minister. While tribes still exist without external contact or a complete grasp of the gospel, foreign missionaries aren't the sole believers in the Amazon region. Capable and wise Indigenous Christian leaders comprise a significant presence in the area. The unique and crucial role foreign missionaries continue to hold in missions in the Amazon and lowland region of South America remains important. Yet to fulfill the Great Commission in this region, foreigners need to participate in a different way.

Brazil: Indigenous church and mission leaders honor pioneering Brazilian national and foreign missionaries that worked among Indigenous peoples.

PHOTO BY HEATHER PUBOLS

In this season, healthy foreign involvement looks like accompanying and journeying with emerging tribal leaders.

JOURNEYING TOGETHER

Previously, foreign missionaries set the pace, cast the vision, and evaluated the impact. That work helped give birth to a growing Indigenous church. Today's tribal church leaders are in communion with the Most High, meditating on the Word, and equipped to cast vision, set the pace, and assess genuine impact.

In this season, healthy foreign involvement looks like accompanying and journeying with emerging tribal leaders. It's about walking the path together, standing by to support in challenging and confusing times as they faithfully and sacrificially serve their people. Accompanying requires asking strategic questions and attentively listening. Its about seeing tribal leaders and tribal churches as equal collaborators, not employees on a project.

As foreign missionaries in this context, we must clothe ourselves in humility as servants aligned with our tribal co-laborers and focus on quality and sustainability over quantity. Our Indigenous brothers and sisters respectfully ask us to plan collaboratively with them and to join them while the vision emerges from within the tribal church and its leaders. Because the way foreign and Indigenous leaders think and communicate is different, decisions and tasks may take longer and be less efficient. But our patience with this process grants Indigenous leaders ownership of projects.

Tribal leaders need to be involved from day one, and together we need to establish deep, long-term partnerships characterized by mutual submission, appreciation, gentleness, and respect. To do this well entails trusting that the Holy Spirit speaks and reveals his will not only to us but also to tribal peoples. This also means that we trust that the Holy Spirit will empower and equip the tribal church to walk in the direction God leads – not by power or might but by his Spirit. Tucking ourselves behind the curtain and being content with not being the hero shows our support as they step into leadership. It also fosters sustainable and rewarding collaboration.

An active commitment to transparency at every level allows national co-workers to tell us the truth, say no, and to correct us. It looks like listening, evaluating, discussing fears and hopes, planning finances, praying, and perceiving God's direction – together. It also involves a willingness to stay in the game and weather the bumps even when misunderstandings, missteps, and missed goals challenge unity.

In our own Western contexts, communicating about an approach of mutual submission and demonstrating it helps disciple the Western church into a new understanding of missions engagement. This is imperative because it alleviates external pressures to be the leading missionary and encourages serving in inconspicuous yet crucial ways. It's a shift from serving up-front to side-by-side. It fully embraces that the church is one body with many equally valuable parts that work together in God's mission.

PREPARING FOR A NEW MISSIONS CONTEXT

The foreign missionaries of tomorrow are entering a very different missions context than the one from 20 years ago or even 10. As mission agencies and churches prepare new missionaries, it is crucial to prioritize preparedness over speedy deployment.

Grasping the context is the first step in learning to *walk alongside* and not *ahead*. Before going, missionaries need to gain an understanding of a region's political, social, religious and missions history, and current realities. It is also important to study the state of the national and Indigenous church, the breadth and depth of established and emerging missional movements, and the quality and characteristics of collaboration in a region among mission organizations, the national church, and the Indigenous church.

To do this, mission agencies and churches that directly send need to invest time in humbly seeking guidance from people on the ground. Talk with leaders of different denominations, agencies, and the national and Indigenous church. Ask them about what new missionaries need to know before they serve in the region. Find out from local leaders what they hope for from new missionaries and inquire about ways newcomers can best interact and integrate. Encourage a culture of on-going dialogue and active listening that eventually includes new missionaries and continues after they arrive.

Language and cultural training must be prioritized. A common misconception is that once on-site, language acquisition will naturally follow. However, this

Alceria and Arlene Terena are originally from southern Brazil. They serve as Indigenous missionaries in the Amazon region.

> … as we move into what is next, we can praise and value those who served before us acknowledging that we stand on their shoulders.

rarely happens. And while translators can be beneficial as a short-term solution, reliance on them shifts relational connections to another individual, which isn't conducive to long-term sustainability. Allocating concentrated and intentional time for language learning helps missionaries build their own local relationships and fosters trust. An inability to communicate in the local language hampers these.

SHIFTING SEASONS AND ROLES

We have learned so much as foreign missionaries accompanying Indigenous and Latino leaders, and we continue to grow and learn. One profound lesson we learned is to recognize shifting seasons. The conclusion of one season doesn't negate its value. Instead, it signals an opportunity to join the next good work God has prepared. And as we move into what is next, we can praise and value those who served before us acknowledging that we stand on their shoulders. Leaders we work with side-by-side are walking in freedom because of their sacrifice.

While transitions and change can bring grief, new seasons also bring celebration. In the Amazon and lowland region of South America, North American missionaries, agencies, and sending churches have much to celebrate. The existence of the Latin national and tribal churches are the tangible outcome of our collective efforts! Local ownership and their desire to drive local initiatives is also something to celebrate.

Yet our work as foreign missionaries is not complete. We have a new role in this fresh season. To nurture unity within the body of Christ, we must mutually honor and respect each other while we embrace this new season and role. ■

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PHOTO BY ELYSE PATTEN, COURTESY OF WGA.

Strengthening the Indigenous Church

In the heart of South America, the Ammi Training Center brings people from diverse tribes together for discipleship and ministry training. Graduates leave with life-long friendships and ready to reach Brazil's many ethnic groups still waiting to hear of God's love.

Chapada dos Guimãres has fired the imaginations of many anthropologists, archeologists, and tourists. Recently it has stirred the heart in another way. Local lore claims it to be a place of magic and intrigue. This quaint and lovely little town in south central Brazil nestles above walls of red sandstone hovering over an exuberant garden of trees. Camouflaged by lush vegetation are gorgeous waterfalls and singing streams only the curious discover.

It is officially recognized as the center of South America and divides the waters of two great rivers – the Paraguay and the Amazon – one flowing north and the other south. It holds deep mystical meaning for the hundreds of Indigenous people groups scattered over the vast area. Centuries ago, their gaze took in vast, yet unspoiled, plateaus and forests that had been their habitat for centuries. So though great rivers flowed apart, Indigenous people met in this place, though not always for peace.

In this beautiful setting, the Ammi Training Center[1] became a new meeting place where many of the offspring of the ancient peoples of this land gather together for worship drawn by a deeper call. It was to be a place where members of Brazil's more than 300 Indigenous groups could meet their *parentes* (a term meaning *relative* and used to refer to other Indigenous groups).

PHOTO BY HEATHER PUBOLS

Brazil: The red cliffs of Chapada dos Guimãres have fired imaginations for hundreds of years. It was in this beautiful setting that the Ammi Training school was established.

> … Indigenous people, teaching and discipling Indigenous parentes would become the main force to reach Brazil's many ethnic groups still waiting to hear of God's love.

It was to be a true home away from home where they could get to know the Creator God who revealed himself through his Son Jesus Christ. People once divided by ethnic race, fear, and hostility towards each other, could join a greater and multi-ethnic family with a beautiful single focus.

AMMI'S BEGINNINGS

The birth of the school began in sorrow. My husband, Wes, and I (Trudy) had been immersed in just such a school located about five hundred miles south. But in 1994 a situation arose that tore the people apart and pushed us out of this cherished ministry. On the advice of South America Missions (SAM) directors, we accepted the challenge to move north to begin a new training center.

A mission property, originally purchased for a camp ministry, located in Chapada dos Guimães, became the campus for the new endeavor. Three other couples moved as well, one of whom was Henrique and Corina Dias Terena, both alumni of the former school and from the Terena Indigenous community. Henrique had become a respected church leader in his own and other Indigenous communities.

We learned many valuable lessons down south, not the least of which was the realization that our place in missions had to change radically. Indigenous people who had embraced Christianity were highly qualified and infinitely better at communicating and relating to their *parentes* than outsiders would ever be.

Foreign missionaries had to learn to take a back seat and allow their Indigenous brothers to forge ahead, unhindered by cultural clumsiness, and strange mannerisms. Slowly, a new central vision emerged: Indigenous people, teaching and discipling Indigenous *parentes* would become the main force to reach Brazil's many ethnic groups still waiting to hear of God's love. Foreigners would disciple by *serving* and the Indigenous people would take their place as leaders, communicators, and disciplers.

Brazil: An Ammi student reads from his Bible during a class.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAM.

Plans for the new school program quickly grew and took shape. Wes had been struck by the graphic story of Hosea and a gracious "name change!" God declares: "… I will say to those who were not My people, (lo ammi) You are *ammi* – My people!' And they will say, "You are my God!" It is a fascinating fact that most Indigenous people use a term in their language that means exclusively "the people." God uses an *inclusive* term where he refers to his people. *Ammi* was quickly adopted as the name for the school, including underneath the caveat, "by the mercies of God."

PREPARING INDIGENOUS PASTORS

Since its founding in 1995, the Ammi Training Center has trained 160 Indigenous people from 40 different Brazilian ethnic groups. Around 70% of these graduates are working in a wide range of ministries from Bible translation to pastoring to missions or in leadership positions in their communities such as chiefs, teachers, and health professionals.

Edimar Pereira Lili, from the Terena ethnic group, is one of the graduates whose ministry history is rooted in Ammi. He now pastors the Córrego do Meio Evangelical Church congregation in the Terena village in the southern Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul.

In 1998, Edimar was part of Ammi's second graduating class. He recalls that Professor Cullen Rast, in his Christian orientation class, was the first to tell him, "Your calling is pastoral." Four years after graduating from Ammi, Edimar became the head pastor of a church at only 22 years old.

This presented many challenges because in Indigenous culture, young people don't usually teach their elders. However, the advice and guidance he received at Ammi helped his development as a pastor.

"And little by little, following everything I had learned at Ammi, I gained the respect of the community," says Edimar. "At Ammi, relationships between colleagues, the importance of teamwork, Christian character and discipleship are very much encouraged. These ingredients I continue to apply in my ministry, along with the example I had from my teachers of commitment and integrity."

Edimar made note of the influence of teacher and missionary Wes Seng – the director of Ammi during Edimar's time at Ammi. He says that Wes always guided by gentleness and wisdom. Today, Edimar follows this example as an Indigenous pastor in his daily life. Edimar explains that the spiritual formation he received at Ammi was fundamental to understanding the Church's missionary calling, a teaching he always tries to put before his congregation.

But it wasn't just the pastoral vocation that Edimar discovered at Ammi. He met his wife Elizabete Dias during his studies, and they married and had a son, Paulo Marques Lili Neto, now 22. Unfortunately, cancer took Elizabete into the arms of the Lord two years ago. Even so, Edimar continued to live in the Terena village and serve his community as a pastor, and he continues to contribute to Ammi by sharing his testimony at conferences.

EXPANDING THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH

CONPLEI[2] (the National Congress of Evangelical Indigenous Pastors and Leaders, conplei.org.br) officially launched at Ammi. And in 2002, Henrique Dias Terena became its president. CONPLEI is an Indigenous evangelical movement with a focus on building "a genuinely Indigenous biblical church."

It has gained national awareness, respect, and even the attention and ear

Since its founding in 1995, the Ammi Training Center has trained 160 Indigenous people from 40 different Brazilian ethnic groups.

Brazil: Adriano Bakairi and his wife, Ruth, along with their daughters, serve as missionaries and Bible translators in an Indigenous community. Adriano is a graduate of Ammi.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ADRIANO BAKAIRI.

of government entities where it raises a strong voice on behalf of Indigenous rights to make personal choices and decisions regarding Christianity. Its influence has also extended into international space, challenging, and awakening other Indigenous groups in South America to launch ahead in the strength of the Lord to take his message to those who have not heard.

Not long after Henrique began leading CONPLEI, he and an Ammi ministry team went to a Bakairi village where Adriano Bakari lived. At the time, Adriano was only 13, and this was his first exposure to both Ammi and CONPLEI. Five years later, in 2007, he decided to go to Ammi to discover God's purpose for his life.

More than nine different ethnic groups were represented on the campus when he arrived. The common language between all of them was Portuguese. He says that was a real culture shock to him! The language and cultural differences sometimes made relationships difficult. But he says that the interaction in the dormitory and in the classroom forced him to overcome those obstacles. Now he sees all of that as part of God preparing him for cross-cultural ministry.

In his first chapel service at Ammi, Adriano remembers hearing a missionary (David Greiman), talk about the 92 ethnic groups in Brazil that had not yet heard about Jesus. He challenged the students to consider if God may be calling them to minister to one of these groups.

"I knew that message was for me," Adriano explains.

In one of his classes, a missionary (Steve White) persuaded him to translate a verse of Scripture into his language for the first time. Then another missionary (Dr. Paulo Nascimento) gave Adriano further encouragement telling him he had the gift of translation.

Adriano graduated from Ammi in 2009. Two years later he went to Mission Além (wycliffe.org.br), an affiliate of the Wycliffe Global Alliance in Brazil, to study linguistics. From there he answered God's call to serve an unreached people group in Bible translation. He said his training at Ammi, especially in the anthropology classes, significantly helped him in his linguistic studies and later in his missions work.

Adriano told God that he did not want to do the work alone, and he prayed for a companion in the missionary work. In 2012, when he was assisting in a language acquisition class at Alem, he met Ruth Kelli, who had a calling to work with the same people group. In 2013, they married and then moved to the village where they have been for nine years. Since then, their family has grown. They have three daughters, Sofia, Helena, and Aurora.

In the village, they have taught the community to read and write their language. They are also teaching them translated Bible stories while helping with the translation. Today there are only four books of the Bible left to be translated thanks to a growing team that has invested in the work. A small church has also been planted.

"As we say among the [Ammi] graduates: When we leave Ammi, Ammi stays with us: its routine, the liturgy of the services, the devotional life, the example of the missionaries in their time of work, persistence and faith, and God's provision in financial problems," shares Adriano. "Finally, I learned from Ammi the importance of having a personal life with God. It's no use having lots of gifts without an intimate relationship with God."

CONTINUING TO STRENGTHEN GOD'S PEOPLE

The aim of the Ammi Training Center remains the same: disciple followers of Christ so that there is an impact on strengthening the Indigenous church. And our focus continues to be on preparing men and women to teach the word of God to others.

While our vision is unchanged, our dynamic ways of teaching have adapted. Over the years, more Indigenous teachers have joined Ammi's staff, and today I (Meiry) lead Ammi as an Indigenous woman of the Bakairi-Kura people. These shifts have influenced Ammi's curriculum and teaching methods. At the same time, we remain committed to teaching the truth of God's words in ways that have the greatest impact for Indigenous communities.

God continues to work as students apply what they learn to their lives and allow God to transform them into the people that he created them to be. He also strengthens those of us who continue to serve Ammi, helping us to see that serving him is worthwhile.

Ammi could only have come of age with the cooperation and dedication of many gifted colleagues – Indigenous,

Brazil: Two students receive their diplomas after completing their studies at the Ammi Training Center.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VERA BERGMAN

> God continues to work as students apply what they learn to their lives and allow God to transform them into the people that he created them to be.

national, and foreign. Bible translators and teachers in many fields have all contributed to its development.

Every year, at the end of the school year, Ammi holds a conference in which the graduates are invited to share testimonies about how Ammi helped them in their formation and spiritual growth. Most of them say that once they are part of Ammi, they are always "Ammi's family," and relate with emotion how what they have learned has helped them to carry out God's will in their lives.

At the heart of Ammi, God – the artist and poet –chiseled out this place where he draws people from all over to come learn and accept their place in a family, forming bonds far deeper than human blood ties. The blood of Jesus unites them.

People, formerly sworn enemies and killers, now dance together in a "magic" pow-wow circle of joy and praise to their Creator and Savior. God says to them: You are my people (*Ammi*)!' And they respond, "You are my God!" ■

1. Learn more about AMMI on the South America Mission website: https://southamericamission.org/donate/ministries/ammi-training-center/.
2. Conselho Nacional de Pastores e Lideres Evangélicos (National council of evangelical pastors and leaders).

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Trudy Seng was born in Argentina, the daughter of missionary parents. At two years old, her parents moved to Brazil where she lived until leaving for Canada for boarding school and later, Bible School. There she met and married Wes Seng. They have served with South America Mission (SAM) in Brazil among Indigenous people groups since 1971.

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Meiry Yakawa is a missionary with Missão SAIM (missaosaim.com.br) and the director of the Ammi Training Center. She is also an Ammi alumna and came on staff as a teacher in 2007. She has completed further studies in linguistics and cross-cultural education. Meiry is from the Bakairi-Kura people group in Mato Grosso, Brazil, and grew up on the Bakairi reservation. She returns annually to spend time with her family.

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Vera Bergson was born in Brazil. She studied journalism at the Faculty of Communication in Santos (SP), and later moved to the US where she met her husband, Don. In 2004, they joined South America Mission (SAM), and in 2007, they moved to the Ammi Training Center, in Chapada dos Guimarães. She is currently Ammi's academic coordinator. She and Don have two children: Filipe and Amanda.

PHOTO BY HEATHER PUBOLS

A bus stop outside of the Ammi Training Center reads, "Ammi Training Center, Gate of Faith" (Centro de Treinamento Ami, Portão da Fé).

Developing Culturally Intelligent Mission Organizations

The world is changing as people from around the world work together side-by-side. Mission organizations must adapt to accommodate changing dynamics. Improving organizational cultural intelligence is key to sustaining diverse and inclusive teams that can effectively engage in today's mission environment.

The shift in global mission to a *from everyone to everywhere* paradigm has introduced a new level of complexity to global mission organizations.[1] Today, leaders and staff need to know how to cross many diverse cultures often simultaneously. The ability of an organization to do this effectively is known as organizational cultural intelligence (OCQ).

The concept of cultural intelligence (CQ) was first developed in research by Earley and Ang[2] and later gained public attention through the book *Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The Real Secret to Success* by Livermore.[3] Just like IQ (Intelligence Quotient) measures a person's reasoning and problem-solving ability and EQ (Emotional Intelligence) measures the ability to understand, use and manage emotions in positive ways, CQ is a way of measuring a person's ability to function and manage effectively in diverse cultural settings.[4]

OCQ goes beyond the cross-cultural ability of individual leaders and staff to focus on the capability of the organization itself to operate effectively across multiple cultures and countries at the same time. It has been hailed as a key competency for organizational success.[5]

EVALUATING CULTURAL INTELLIGENT ORGANIZATIONS

In "The Culturally Intelligent Mission Organization: Five Factors to Evaluate" published in the October 2016 edition of *EMQ*, Joanna Lima proposed five factors for identifying culturally intelligent organizations. These factors include both the individual cultural intelligence of its leaders throughout the organization as well as key characteristics of the organization itself that facilitate its ability to intentionally adapt to its environment.

South Africa: A multicultural table group discusses an issue during the Lausanne Congress.

PHOTO BY ELYSE PATTEN, COURTESY OF WGA.

The five factors are:

1. **Leadership Behavior** – Culturally intelligent organizations have leaders who are high in cultural intelligence.
2. **Adaptability** – Both the leaders and the organization are able to adapt their way of operating to each unique cultural environment.
3. **Training** – Cross-cultural training and leadership development are understood to play a crucial role in providing effective ministry across cultures.
4. **Intentionality** – Leadership and staff know the importance of being intentional about engaging in self-reflection and getting feedback about how communication and interaction is perceived by others in the organization.
5. **Inclusion** – The membership is diverse and engages in mutual learning from each other. Culturally intelligent organizations are effective at incorporating the skills, abilities, perspectives, and voices of all members.[6]

THE ROLE OF POWER

The crucial role mission leaders play in using their power to expand or curtail the cultural intelligence of their organizations cannot be overstated. While the association of influence, authority, and power with manipulation and self-interest has tainted the concept of power as a negative force in Christian organizations, Scripture emphasizes that power is to be recognized and used positively for the common good.

Jesus addressed the appropriate use of power by instructing his disciples to serve others: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant" (Matthew 20:25–26, ESV).

Proverbs 1:9 projects power as a tool to be used judiciously on behalf of the powerless: "Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy" (ESV). Using power prudently and effectively to serve others means that mission leaders must match the way they use power to what is appropriate in each context.

There is no one best way of leading that works well across all cultures. What makes a leader effective in one situation will not necessarily work in another. The way mission leaders use power can be easily misunderstood by those they lead because of differences in expectations and attitudes regarding how power should be used in a specific context.

In hierarchical cultures such as Nigeria and South Korea, people consider it natural, functional, and correct for leaders to have and exercise more power than those they lead. The expectation is that decisions are made by those in leadership and communication closely follows formal lines of hierarchy. In egalitarian cultures like Australia and the Netherlands, people believe that power should be distributed more equitably; decisions are made as close to the action as possible, and communication often skips hierarchical lines.[7]

In culturally diverse teams, the specific characteristics of the local culture blend with the varied perspectives of team members as well as the goals and obligations of the organization. This can often lead to complex and sometimes competing interests and expectations that can have outcomes that range from subtle to potent.

Mission leaders must be adept at understanding the characteristics of their situation to adjust their leadership to fit the amount of power they have, the expectations of their followers, and the tasks to be accomplished. These characteristics inform a contextually appropriate way to avoid lording power over others as Jesus instructs by using it instead to serve others in a way that empowers them and communicates trust.

> There is no one best way of leading that works well across all cultures.

LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING OCQ

In 2022, I conducted research with six international mission agencies to determine if the level of organizational cultural intelligence was related to the way leaders used different types of power with those they lead.[8] The research considered the five bases of social power proposed in the seminal work of French and Raven (1959).

The five bases of power include (a) coercive power, used to enact the threat of punishment; (b) reward power, used to offer reward or compensation; (c) legitimate power, derived from a person's official position in an organization; (d) expert power, derived from possessing expertise in a specific field; and (e) referent power, resulting from a person's admiration or desire to emulate another.[9]

Expert and referent power were grouped together as informal power; and coercive, reward, and legitimate power as formal power. Formal power is based on the formal position a person holds within the organization's hierarchy, while informal power is linked to the structure but is based primarily on interpersonal relationships.[10]

My research led to several important insights for mission leaders seeking to improve the way they use their influence to improve the cross-cultural effectiveness of their organizations. The following suggestions from that research can help organizations develop strategies for intentionally increasing the cultural intelligence in the team, ministry, department, or organization.

Move Between Formal and Informal Power

Learn how to use all five types of power well. Start by recognizing and describing your own preferred way of influencing others. Do you think the boss should have the final say? Or do you prefer to make decisions through group consensus? The chances are your preferred way of using power closely resembles how leader's use power in your home culture.

In today's global mission organi-

> In culturally diverse teams, the specific characteristics of the local culture blend with the varied perspectives of team members as well as the goals and obligations of the organization.

zations, it is not enough to have an egalitarian or hierarchical leadership style – leaders need to have both. Often this means building on your preferred leadership style by learning how to motivate and mobilize people in ways that may be different to those from your own home culture.

Identify and Adapt to Team Members' Preferences

Discover how team members prefer their leaders use power. In culturally intelligent organizations, leadership involves focusing on followers. As a leader, how are you being perceived by those you lead? If you are in a culture that is not your own, watch carefully how local leaders use their influence successfully. Explain your own leadership style frequently, but also look for ways to adjust the way you use power to the preferences of each person you lead.

Pay close attention to your own interactions to avoid behaviors that trigger silence among individuals that have less power than you.[11] In diverse teams, defining a set of norms regarding communication, punctuality, conflict resolution, and decision-making as a team can establish a blueprint of expectations regarding how power should be used and how diverse teammates can work together effectively.

Use Informal Power from a Position of Formal Authority

Building trust is an important practice for leaders in all cultures. When mission leaders give their followers freedom to make their own work and ministry decisions, there is an increase in trust that is developed in the relationship, but it also decreases the leader's formal power. In other words, as leaders give their followers more freedom to make decisions, the leader's influence shifts from being primarily positional to relational.

Develop your own Cultural Intelligence[12]

For organizations that work in multiple cultures, the link between the cultural intelligence of its leadership and the effectiveness of the organization is undeniable. Leaders that are high in CQ play a key role in bridging cultural, communication, and power differences that restrict the flow of knowledge to other teams in the organization by building trust, developing positive relationships, and a shared vision.[13]

One Size does not Fit All

Global level executive leaders must give local team leaders enough autonomy to make decisions about how the local team will function and what will work best in their context. The effectiveness of a diverse mission team relies on means for managing diversity that are locally specific and, most likely, locally devised. Global mission organizations must be flexible enough in their structure to accommodate local teams with different culturally based preferences for being more hierarchical or egalitarian.

Clarity and Consistency Builds Trust

Formalizing a foundational framework of rules and policies can help organizations clarify the ways that people in different roles in the organization work together and share information with each other. This includes establishing what needs to be defined at a global level and where freedom can be given to local teams to determine their own policies, roles, and rules.

Two extremes which are equally debilitating occur when mission organizations implement, on a global level, a clear set of rules that work well in some contexts but create significant barriers for teams in other contexts and are thus quietly ignored, or when they develop broad principles that do not include enough concrete detail to be consistently applied.

When rules and policies are relevant, clear, and consistently implemented, it helps build relationship-based trust between leaders at different levels, generates cohesion and identity within local teams, and provides a shared framework within which teams that are very different to each other can collaborate effectively.

Build Informal Networks Across the Organization

Intentionally create spaces where people from different teams can meet and interact. Because knowledge within organizations is an interpersonal phenomenon; building informal networks across the organization is crucial for creating and preserving institutional knowledge as well as disseminating best practices and lessons learned from one part of the organization to another.[14]

Additionally, the trust built through strong informal networks creates feedback loops outside the formal structure that can counteract the tendency for local teams with strong hierarchies to suppress their opinions and withhold information due to the pervasive belief that those at the top of the hierarchy are sufficiently knowledgeable.

In complex decision-making, such as approving the proposal for a large project or a new ministry, this phenomenon creates the illusion that those lower in the hierarchy are supportive of

Kenya: Kenyan missionary Edwyn Kiptinness (left) meets with Serge Razafinjatoniary, a missionary from Madagascar. In today's globally diverse missions landscape, leaders and staff need to know how to cross many diverse cultures, often simultaneously.

PHOTO BY RODNEY BALLARD, COURTESY OF WGA.

a proposed decision when they are not. Creating space for informal networks to emerge can be done in several ways such as:

- Scheduling significant downtime and social activities at global events to give people an opportunity to informally get to know colleagues they wouldn't otherwise meet.
- Forming short-term work teams composed of members from across the organization to work on specific, concrete assignments.
- Assembling reference groups in different languages that can advise global leaders on specific international strategic initiatives. These groups can be intentionally designed to overcome language, age, gender, and cultural barriers in the organization by including local colleagues, both men and women of different ages, who don't speak the organization's common language well. Make sure to include at least one bilingual person who can communicate the group's ideas back to the global leaders.

Intentionally Create Opportunities for Cross-Cultural Learning

When leaders play a proactive role in mobilizing and combining the expertise and experience of individuals from across the organization, it can spur new ideas that respond to and strengthen organizational goals.[15] This can increase the cultural intelligence of both the organization and its people.

While global mission organizations by nature bring people into closer proximity to cultures that are not their own, increased contact with other cultures doesn't always result in greater collaboration and learning. Leaders can intentionally promote cross-cultural learning by:

- Building local teams that are composed of a mix of local members and expatriates. The flow of information between local teams and with the global executive leadership is enhanced when local teams are composed of both local members and expatriates who are well connected in the organization.[16]
- Developing and offering ongoing training programs that are intentionally multi-cultural. Inviting speakers from different cultural backgrounds helps ensure that the training itself adheres to more than just one cultural paradigm. Make sure that the training opportunities are offered in the major languages spoken by members of the organization.

Sponsoring a short-term (3–6 months) cross-cultural experience for mono-cultural leaders who work in their own culture and are motivated to learn about another can improve their cultural intelligence and expand their network within the organization to include colleagues from other countries. This could include an assignment to a team in another country with a different language.

Incorporate Diverse Voices

Truly value the wisdom and perspective they bring. The concept of inclusion stems from the conviction that working with diverse groups of people who all have unique qualities makes organizations more effective (1 Corinthians 12:21–26). Leaders must take the first step by being available, supportive, open to new ideas, and willing to give away power through shared decision-making.[17]

Top-down models of decision-making limit participation to those whom the leader intentionally includes while excluding everyone else. The challenge is to create processes that encourage the participation of diverse team members and leverages their differences to create

Turkey: A multicultural group of leaders discusses an issue together.

synergy within the team. When group members work actively to improve their relationships and build trust, they can focus on exploring the full spectrum of creative and alternative viewpoints that relate directly to the group's task.

EMBRACE THIS UNRELENTING JOURNEY

The complexity of leading in a global mission organization is an unrelenting journey of learning to which there is no finale. Enhancing team dynamics can start with identifying two to three areas to discuss as a team, and then taking steps together to implement changes that will increase OCQ. Using influence constructively is a challenging affair. It requires much wisdom, discernment, determination, humility, and commitment to regular improvements. ■

A full copy of the research can be requested from the author.

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PHOTO BY HEATHER PUBOLS.

Navigating Between Worlds

Understanding acculturation strategies helps missionaries know what they personally experience and what members of a diaspora community experience. It also provides several insights relevant to diaspora church planting.

Well-prepared missionaries know that they will need to adapt to their host culture when they arrive in their country of service. However, they may be less prepared to know how to work with immigrants whom they meet in their host country who are also adapting to a new culture.

When we arrived in France as church planting missionaries, we were seminary trained and ready to master and assimilate into French culture. Our goal was to put into practice Thomas and Elizabeth Brewster's principle of missionary bonding where we would spend our first few weeks with the French and avoid the missionary community so that we would integrate and feel like we belonged with the French.[1]

It worked for a few hours or so, but we were not able to find many people in the Parisian suburbs who wanted to bond with Americans who did not speak French very well. By God's grace, the missionary team with which we were to work was quite a bit more welcoming. They provided us with the basic information for day-to-day living and helped us get enrolled in language school.

Nevertheless, we were still determined to fully assimilate into French culture and leave our American culture behind. It was at times very painful. I remember a French professor asking me, in front of the whole class, something like *"Pourquoi étudiez-vous le français? Vous le parlez si mal!"* ("Why are you studying French? You speak it so poorly!").

Although I eventually became fluent, I never came close to losing my accent, and I am sure that no one who ever spoke to me thought I was French. Even our desire to give up English (as our grandparents had given up Yiddish and Swedish when they immigrated to America) slowly faded as we realized that we would never communicate as well in French as we could in English.

During our early days in France, we also assumed that we would be working with well-educated French. I had been

PHOTO COURTESY OF IMB.

Sweden: A missionary from the US prays with a refugee about his visa status.

Although we never thought about it, we soon realized that we were not the only ones adjusting to French culture.

studying Pascal and Voltaire, Hugo and Proust, Sartre and Camus. However, during the first few months in the country, we developed the conviction that God was calling us to do evangelism and church planting among those most open to the gospel, whatever their background.

So, during our 17 years in France, the primary groups of people we worked with were Caribbean and African immigrants. We also worked with the French, and occasionally the Chinese, the Vietnamese, and the expatriate Anglo community, but to lesser degrees.

Although we never thought about it, we soon realized that we were not the only ones adjusting to French culture. These immigrants, most of whom grew up speaking French but who were diaspora members of various cultures, nonetheless, were also adapting and using various strategies to do so.

The changes that occur in people, including changes in beliefs, values, emotions, and behaviors, when they adapt to a new culture result from a process that cultural psychologists call *acculturation*.[2] Wise missionaries will become familiar with the various acculturation strategies that both they and any immigrants with whom they work use.

ACCULTURATION

Culture can be defined as the set of beliefs and values that are generally held in common by typical members of a group and that influence their behavior. When members of different cultures interact, the changes which occur are all part of the acculturation process. At the group level, when members of two different cultures interact, both cultures are influenced; new beliefs and values form, for good or for bad, based on the interactions, resulting in changes in typical and expected behavior.

Acculturation also describes what happens on the individual level. Each person, especially those moving into a new culture, must develop ways to adapt to the new culture. Acculturation should be distinguished from *enculturation* which is the process by which children learn the culture in which they are raised and from *assimilation* which refers to the process of losing the beliefs, values, and behaviors of one's original culture and adopting the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a new culture.[3]

JOHN BERRY'S THEORY OF ACCULTURATION

John Berry of Queen's University, Ontario, observed that not all immigrants respond to their new culture similarly.[4] This would be true of both missionaries and members of a diaspora community who have immigrated to the host country for either economic reasons or as refugees. In Berry's model of acculturation, two primary variables influence how people respond to the host culture.

The first variable is the person's desire to maintain their home culture (a desire which can be high or low) and the second variable is the person's desire to master the new culture, primarily for the sake of developing relationships with members of the new culture (this desire may also be high or low). Although related to each other, these two variables are independent of each other and can occur in any combination (low-low, low-high, high-low, and high-high; see figure 11.1). These combinations result in different acculturation strategies.

The desire to maintain one's home culture, that is to maintain the beliefs, values, and behaviors that one learned as a child, can result from several motivations. Some cultures place a high value on the language, values, and customs that are central to the culture. These are often cultures with strong literary traditions. Members of these cultures often value these traditions greatly and want to pass them on to their children, seeing them as equal or superior to the traditions of the host country.

The desire to maintain one's home culture may also be motivated by familiarity. Whereas the food and humor of the home country may be much appreciated, these aspects of the host culture may seem strange and unattractive. The desire to maintain one's home culture may also be motivated by competence. Whereas the missionary or immigrant might be quite fluent in their home language and culture, they may be painfully incompetent in their host language and culture. Similarly, the desire to maintain a network of close relationships, either in person or through social media, may motivate the desire to maintain one's home culture.

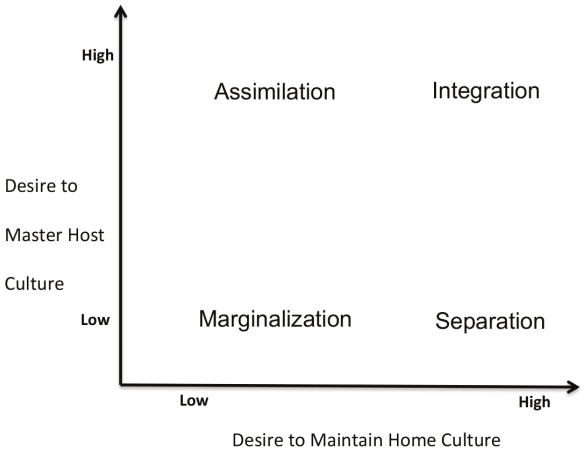

Figure 11.1 – Four Acculturation Strategies (Berry, 1997; Dunaetz, 2015)

motivated by several factors. The most important is the ability to develop relationships with members of the host culture. For the missionary, this will likely be necessary to have an effective ministry. For the economic immigrant or refugee, developing relationships with people in the host culture will likely make finding a job easier.

There may also be a belief that the host culture is superior to the home culture and that one's children will be far more successful to the degree to which they master the host culture. Another factor is age, younger people can learn language and culture easier than older people and may be more motivated to do so as they seek to develop their own social network, which is likely to be much less developed and less stable than an older person's. Like the desire to retain one's home culture, the strength of the desire to master the host culture will vary by individual, whether missionary or immigrant. Some will have a strong desire to do so, others will have less of a desire to do so.

STRATEGIES FOR ACCULTURATION

The various combinations of these two dimensions result in four different approaches or strategies for acculturation (figure 11.1). These four strategies are used by both missionaries and immigrants. It should be kept in mind that this is just a model, an approximate description of what tends to happen. Each individual is unique and lives in unique circumstances. For each strategy described, there is an unlimited variety of ways the details will play out.

Assimilation

When the desire to maintain the home culture is low and the desire to master the host culture is high, a strategy of assimilation is used. The missionary or immigrant seeks to become a fully functional member of the host culture, leaving their home culture in the past. For the missionary, this strategy may take the form of speaking the local language while at home, obtaining the host country's nationality, raising children primarily with the local language, and retiring in the host country. For the immigrant, assimilation may look very similar.

The degree to which assimilation is successful depends on many factors. People who have been educated in an educational system similar to that of the host country (e.g., Western) can assimilate more easily, as well as people who look similar to the dominant ethnicity of the host culture.

Personality also plays a role; people who are more extraverted, those who are more open-minded and open to new experiences, and those who are less anxious tend to better assimilate.[5] One's musical ability is also a strong predictor of language learning, especially learning to speak with the accent of the local population.[6] These factors are generally beyond an individual's control, so assimilation may not be possible even when desired.

Separation

In the quadrant opposite of assimilation, the strategy of separation is found (see figure 11.1). This strategy is used when the desire to maintain one's home culture is strong and the desire to integrate into the host culture is low. This results in the host culture having minimal influence on one's life and the ability to maintain all of the beliefs, values, and behaviors that one had before entering the new culture.

Among missionaries, this approach is often seen in short-term missionaries who do not have the time or resources necessary to learn the host culture and language. It can also be seen in longer-term missionaries who do not make language and cultural acquisition a priority and who work primarily through translators or with people who speak English.[7]

Among immigrants, separatism can be seen in the creation of ethnic enclaves

PHOTO COURTESY OF IMB.

Israel: Eritrean refugees hold a church service on the snow-capped peak of Mount Hermon near the borders of Lebanon and Syria.

where one can comfortably live among one's own people, shop at stores similar to those in the country of one's origin, watch satellite television from one's home country, and have only minimal contact with people from the host culture, often only at their place of work.

Some immigrants may use this strategy for only a short time when first arriving in the host country. Others will use it as a long-term strategy. A major drawback of this strategy is that immigrants who use it may become culturally distant from their children, who are more likely to assimilate into the host culture.

Marginalization

The strategy of marginalization occurs when both the host and home culture are rejected. This typically occurs in social outcasts, criminals, and cult members, but relatively rarely with missionaries. Nevertheless, when we arrived in France to work with a team to start an evangelical church in a town that did not previously have one (eglise-protestante-champs.fr), there had recently been some American missionaries who had lived for a short time in the town. Their only notable action was the distribution of some anti-evolution tracts translated into French. This approach appeared to be a strategy of marginalization because it seemed neither typically French nor typically American.

Immigrants might use this approach to acculturation when they feel rejected by both their home culture and host culture. Marginalization typically results in social deviance and poverty, often leaving people in a worse condition than if they had remained in their home country. It is rarely chosen as a preferred strategy and is often the only option available because of an inability to adapt or poor life choices.

Integration

When one has a high desire to maintain one's home culture and a high desire to master the host culture, a strategy of integration is used. In this approach to acculturation, the missionary or immigrant feels at ease in both cultures and can switch between the two depending on the situation. On a practical level, this strategy maximizes one's ability to function well in a variety of contexts, but it is costly in that mastery of the new culture and the maintenance of existing relationships from the old culture may require extreme effort.

People who arrive in a country and seek integration suffer from less depression and anxiety than those who use separation, marginalization, or even assimilation as an acculturation strategy.

An additional benefit is that, among people who move into a new culture, the use of this strategy is more closely associated with mental health and well-being than the use of the other strategies.[8] People who arrive in a country and seek integration suffer from less depression and anxiety than those who use separation, marginalization, or even assimilation as an acculturation strategy.

For missionaries, integration requires learning the national culture of their place of service. Eventually, we gave up the strategy of assimilation and chose integration. We sought to act French when working with the French (to the best of our ability), but we were free to act American when we were with Americans. Interestingly, acting French around Americans (being direct and frank in expressing critiques of phenomena) caused us more problems than acting American around the French. Switching between cultures is often difficult.

For missionaries who are working with a diaspora culture, this could mean learning a third culture as well. If the immigrants are using a strategy of separation, entering into their home culture and worldview is necessary for effective ministry. Even if they are using a strategy of assimilation or integration, it would be wise to have a deep understanding of their home culture to avoid cultural stumbling blocks that would be perfectly acceptable in the host culture that both the immigrant and missionary are living.

For immigrants, this means learning the host culture, but it also enables them to reap the benefits that come from maintaining a social network of people that they trust and understand. Like assimilation, the degree to which they master the host culture will be influenced by many variables over which they have little control.

However, in the long run, immigrants who use this strategy will be better off. They will better integrate into society and reap the economic benefits that come with it, they will be able to fully understand their children who grow up in the host culture, and they can continue to reap the psychological benefits that come from maintaining close relationships with people from their own culture.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCH PLANTING

Understanding acculturation strategies helps missionaries understand what they personally experience and what members of a diaspora community experience. It also provides several insights relevant to diaspora church planting.

Just as different individuals use different acculturation strategies, young churches may also use different strategies. Although few churches seek a strategy of marginalization, a strategy of separation might be appropriate for a

Colombia: A missionary from the US meets with Venezuelan refugees.

church that focuses on immigrants who have recently arrived in the host country. Such a church may provide a warm and safe community where the gospel is freely communicated in the home culture of those present.

A strategy of assimilation might be appropriate when working with immigrants who want to fully integrate into the host culture through a personal strategy of either assimilation or integration. At church, things are done according to the local culture (in our church plants, using a French style of worship), but at home, the immigrant members may be free to live out their own culture. This approach to church planting has the advantage that the church is welcoming to all ethnicities and cultures, not just a specifically targeted one.

A strategy of integration would be appropriate for a bicultural church, where there is a desire to help people integrate into the host culture. Both languages and both sets of cultural traditions would be present in church activities. This would be most effective in a church that only targets members of one specific immigrant culture.

Awareness of these acculturation strategies will help missionaries make sense of their own experiences, understand what the immigrants with whom they work experience, and provide a tool for developing a church planting strategy. Such a strategy is necessary if we desire "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, … and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:10–11). ■

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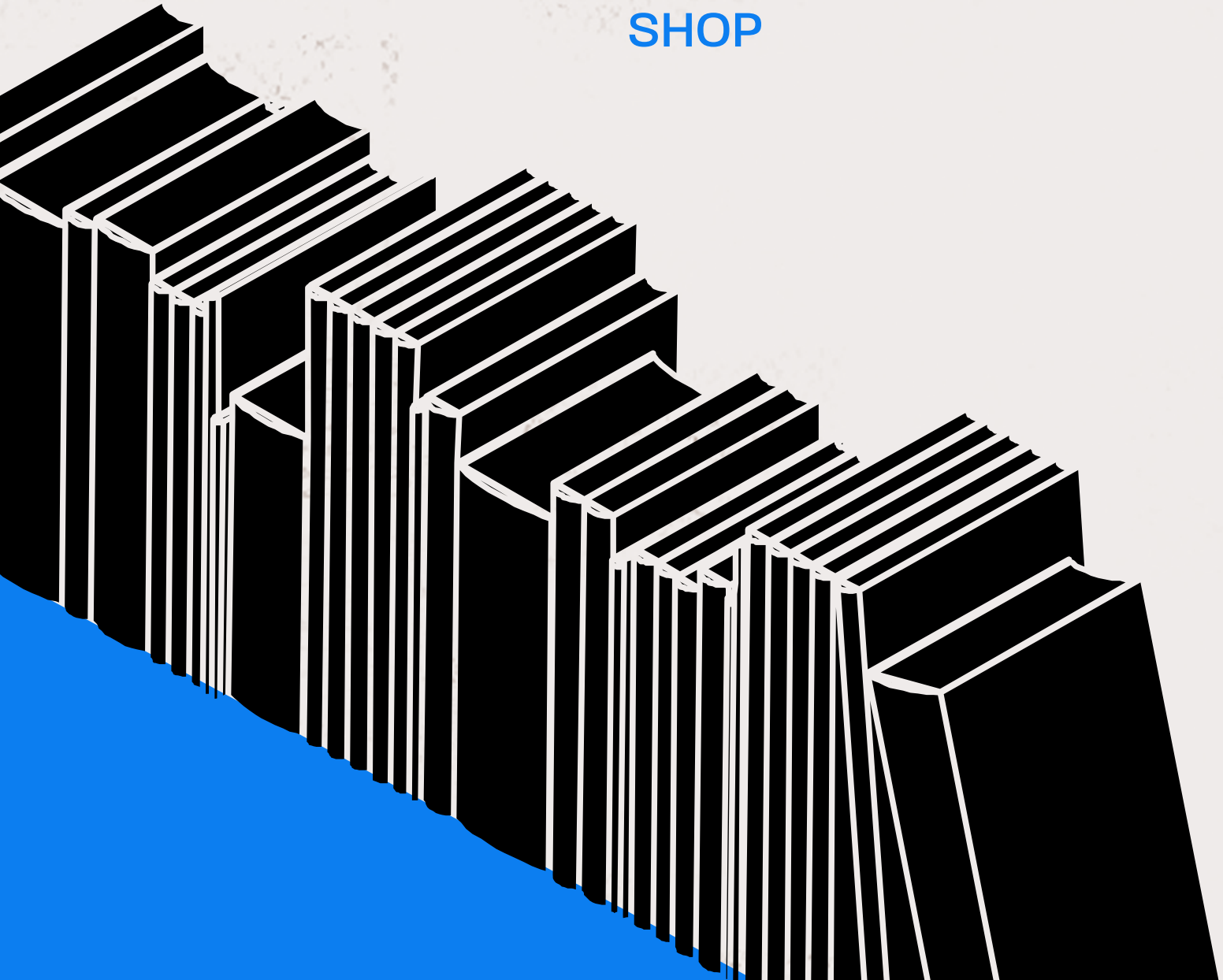

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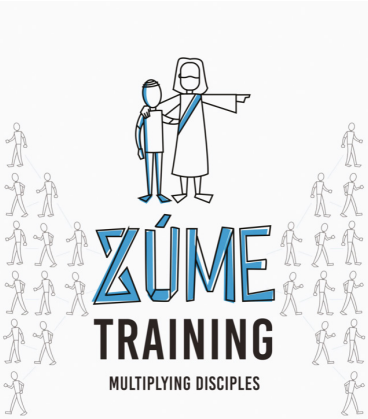

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For Further Reading

More Disciples: A Guide to Becoming and Multiplying Followers of Jesus by Doug Lucas (WIGTake Resources, 2019).

The Kingdom Unleashed: How Jesus' 1st-Century Kingdom Values Are Transforming Thousands of Cultures and Awakening His Church by Jerry Trousdale and Glenn Sunshine (DMM Library, 2018).

Disciple-making is a lost art. In many churches discipleship is largely dependent on programs organized by local churches and an invitation from someone in leadership (rather than Christ) to step up and make disciples.

But Zúme is helping to train and empower the common believer to actively participate in fruitful, holistic disciple making. This little resource is packed full of content that is easily digestible, intended to be applied, and can have a profoundly transformative impact on the life of any believer- either spiritually young or mature.

The Zúme training book provides a basis for radical obedience to Christ through 10 sessions (broken down into 36 specific lessons) that cover a plethora of essential topics and provide helpful, practical tools in order to be able to apply those principles. The design of the book is excellent, which makes it easy to use and even includes QR codes to offer high-quality video versions of most of the teaching sessions, which makes this easily usable with audiences that prefer visual content over written material.

One of the potential challenges of this training manual is that Zúme sets a very high standard for personal obedience. If a gifted and motivated individual were to faithfully apply one lesson each week, they would be having regular times of Bible reading (13), praying for unbelievers (27), prayer walking (63), sharing with non-believers (various lessons and tools touch on this throughout), leading new groups (75) and discipling those that are coming to faith under them (sessions 7–10 focus on leading and coaching others) within two months.

While these are excellent things to aspire to, the pace of Zúme may be too quick for some believers. There is a specific lesson on pace (9.2, on page 103) which does a good job of helping believers reflect on the urgency of the Great Commission and the potential benefits of multiplying sooner, rather than later. This emphasis can be discouraging, particularly for those who are less gifted or who have become used to a consumeristic mentality of church involvement – however, Zúme has a lesson casting a vision for becoming producers, rather than just consumers (21). Nevertheless, the pace and high expectations of Zúme may leave some believers feeling like failures (especially because of the regular rhythms of accountability).

A strength of Zúme training is that it focuses on the heart (motivation) and the hands (application), but there is little emphasis on the head (knowledge). Certainly, this is a corrective to the focus on knowledge that often exists within Western and other Christian cultures. However, Zúme does not *emphasize* theological or doctrinal development, leaving someone who is able to complete the course with a significant gap in their knowledge.

What Zúme training does best is provide simple, practical teaching and tools to empower believers (no matter their level of maturity, knowledge, or experience) to live radical lives for Christ and to multiply disciples in whatever context they find themselves. It meets some essential needs within the Church and will help to establish a clear trajectory to active involvement in Great Commission practices. Trainers might need to take it slow and incorporate other resources that help to develop the theological and doctrinal foundations of those being trained. But all things considered, this resource is a must-have for any ministry that seeks to empower believers to make disciples. ■

Humble Confidence

Reviewed by **Mark A. Strand**, professor, North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota.

As a young Christian, I was introduced to Christian apologetics through the book *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, by the venerable Josh McDowell. At the time, I was taken with the approach, and I mastered many of the arguments, such as the historical veracity of the Bible. However, to my great disappointment, when I tried to use what I had learned in sharing the gospel with others, I found people to have no interest in the evidence I brought forth. Furthermore, the book failed to provide any evidence to address the questions they did ask. My hope for what I could do with apologetics was dashed.

A couple of years later I moved to China to begin cross-cultural ministry to people with a Confucist-Taoist-Buddhist spirituality, overlaid by 35 years of communist secularism. Little of the so-called "evidence" I had mastered for use in defending the gospel applied, and it certainly did not demand anything from my Chinese interlocutors. Fortunately, I had been trained by a Chinese man who set me on a path toward a dialogical approach to apologetics, which proved to be both culturally sensitive and spiritually fruitful. *Humble Confidence: A Model for Interfaith Apologetics* develops in detail just such an approach to cross-cultural witness.

Humble Confidence is written by a Dutch theologian, Benno van den Toren and a Chinese Malaysian working in the UK, Kang-San Tan. They bring a wealth of international ministry experience to the conversation of interfaith dialogue. Their model takes seriously the beliefs of those with whom they are interacting.

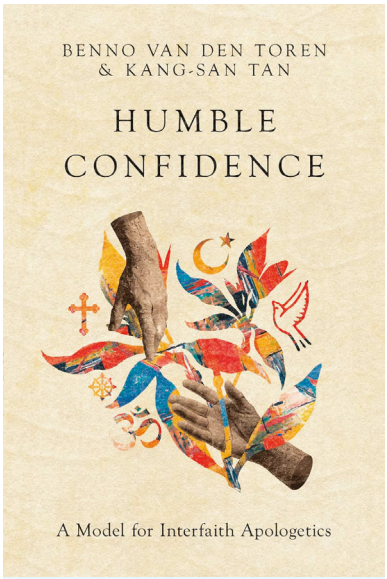
They introduce the "triangular nature of inter-religious dialogue," with oneself and the other person at two of the vertices of the triangle, and "reality as revealed in Christ" at the third (96–98). The assumption is that both persons are genuine in their pursuit of this reality, or what might also be called "truth." This joint pursuit of the truth by both parties is a new contribution to apologetics by the authors, in contrast to approaches to apologetics where the speaker dispenses the truth to a listener or even debates the listener. Their method begins with listening and includes a level of openness that allows for an honest look at oneself as a Christian witness (107).

The authors consider apologetic witness to be multidimensional and holistic. It prioritizes contextualization, the importance of the integrity of the Christian faith, and the Christian faith as the fulfillment of all human quests – as mentioned above, "reality as revealed in Christ."

The first half of the book develops their model, and then the latter half applies the principles to six audiences: primal religions (which used to be called *animistic*), Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, secular ideologies, and modern spiritualities (New Age religions). Interested readers intimidated by a 296-page academic book could read the first half of the book, and then pick and choose from the latter half according to interests and needs.

Humble Confidence was published by IVP Academic, and it certainly would serve as an excellent textbook in college or seminary classes. It would be a challenge for cross-cultural workers without training in world religions or rhetoric to read and fully appreciate *Humble Confidence* on their own.

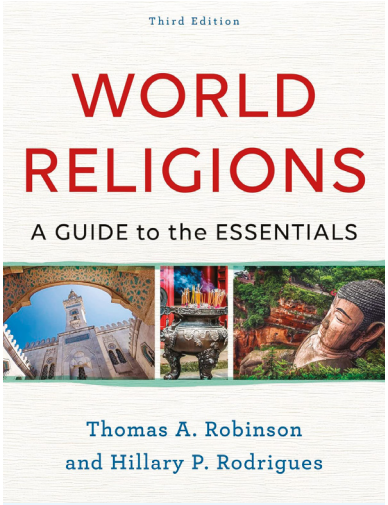
However, it would be an excellent book for a missionary team to study together, as the book includes footnote citations on every page, study questions for each chapter, a bibliography, a general index, and a scripture index. *Humble Confidence* is a welcomed contribution to the mission and apologetics literature, and I highly recommend it for those wanting to engage in cross-cultural witness in a dialogical way. ■



Humble Confidence: A Model for Interfaith Apologetics
BENNO VAN DEN TOREN AND KANG-SAN TAN
Intervarsity Press, 2022
296 pages
US$32.00

World Religions

Reviewed by **Dr. Ryan Klejment-Lavin**, associate professor of intercultural studies at Columbia International University in Columbia, South Carolina.



World Religions: A Guide to the Essentials
THOMAS A. ROBINSON AND HILLARY P. RODRIGUES
Third Ed., Baker Academic, 2022
369 pages
US$40.00

For Further Reading

Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions by W. Courdan (InterVarsity Press, 2012).

The Quest of World Religions: An Introduction and Anthology by J. Studebaker (Cognella, 2024).

The market for textbooks for courses in world religions might be crowded, but Thomas A. Robinson's and Hillary P. Rodrigues' new edition of *World Religions: A Guide to the Essentials* should be afforded room. Robinson and Rodrigues set out to present a clear and condensed portrait of major religious traditions.

In that attempt, they are quite successful. Shunning any type of confessional approach, the authors choose to discuss each religion neutrally and charitably. Robinson and Rodrigues discuss both the ideals of the various religions and how the religions are practiced in reality.

The book is divided into two main sections: Western Religions and Eastern Religions. After a treatment of Ancient Religions, the book begins with The Western religions, which include the so-called Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The Eastern religions section includes the two largest Eastern religions, Hinduism (which the text correctly considers a blanket term) and Buddhism, but also includes several other major East Asian and South Asian religions. Jainism, Sikhism, Chinese Religions, and Japanese Religions all are discussed in their own chapters respectively. The final chapter discusses a host of other religions and major religious subgroups, such as Bahai, Native American indigenous religions, and Christian sects.

Each chapter discusses the history, sources, texts, sects, tenants, and distinctives of each religion. Especially helpful are the graphics explaining key theological terms for each faith. The book is strengthened by the contributions of several other scholars who are experts in some of the specific faiths.

One impressive inclusion in the text is the discussion of ancient religions, particularly from the ancient Near East. This section helps the reader to better understand the historical context in which Judaism – and by extension, Christianity and Islam – developed, and is not commonly found in world religion textbooks.

If the book is lacking anything, one could argue that the absence of African Traditional Religions keeps the text from capturing a large group of religious believers. However, in a brief treatment of major world religions, it is understandable that some omissions are necessary.

This book would be an excellent choice for a textbook for an introduction to world religions undergraduate course, as well as a helpful resource for anyone interested in world religions. While some Christians would rather take a confessional approach to world religions, this book succeeds in its goal to provide clear and neutral portrayals of each of the faiths discussed. ■

Reading the Bible Around the World

Reviewed by **Nathaniel (Than) Veltman** who currently serves as mission scholar in missiology and community development with United World mission's theological education initiative at the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Is there one way of interpreting Scripture? In *Reading the Bible Around the World: A Student's Guide to Global Hermeneutics* the authors present a contextual/global approach to interpreting Scripture in which readers are invited, "regardless of specialized academic skills, to peer into biblical stories for themselves" (11). Through this approach, the authors argue for an openness to interpreting Scripture that allows for a "broad spectrum of interpretative possibility" rather than a definitive singular meaning. As such, this book offers readers not a methodological treatise but rather an accessible guide for understanding and engaging different approaches to Scriptural interpretation around the world.

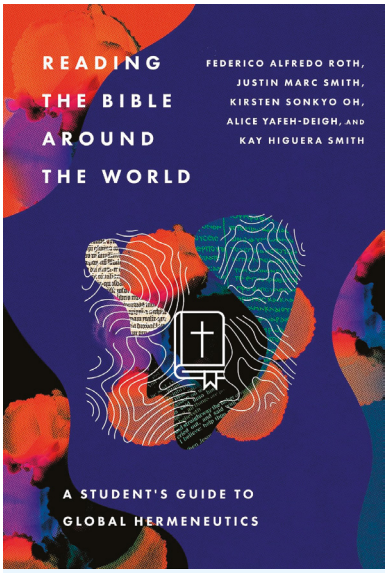
After outlining the aims, scope, and importance of the book, chapter 1 covers Latin American approaches to reading Scripture are presented. Then in chapter 2, special attention is given to the impact of migration and liberation theology. Frederico Alfredo Roth offers insights into how the social contexts of oppression and poverty impact Latin American hermeneutics. In chapter 3, Alice Yafeh-Deigh presents an Afro-Cameroonian reading of Scripture, highlighting the colonial and post-colonial realities of the African context.

Euro-American interpretative approaches are outlined by Justin Marc Smith in chapter 4, demonstrating some of the challenges of these approaches for interpretation today. Chapter 5 focuses on Asian/Asian-American interpretation of Scripture; Kirsten Sonkyo Oh illuminates the influence of Confucian philosophy and its relevance to understanding the social location of Asian and Asian-American Bible readers.

Moving beyond geographic categories, Kay Higuera Smith examines Biblical interpretation in light of contemporary realities of globalization, migration, and diaspora in chapter 6. Smith points to the need for a language that reflects the complexities of shared global categories. Altogether, common threads of self-awareness, other-awareness, and dialogue emerge (145). Each chapter models scriptural interpretation from unique vantage points by focusing on the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) and Old Testament passages.

This book makes an important contribution to advancing and expanding engagement with various hermeneutical approaches to Scripture. By arguing that "all interpretations, provided they undertake a reasoned engagement with the text, exist to complement one another" (140), the authors advocate for greater awareness of potential hermeneutical blind spots and humble openness to alternative interpretations. Such a contextual/global approach provides a more holistic understanding that each perspective cannot achieve on its own.

Seminary students, pastors, lay church leaders, and missionaries will all benefit from this book. As a guide, it presents a starting point for further conversations. Each chapter includes helpful questions for reflection and further engagement. The models and examples provided inspire further study of Bible passages in various contexts, encouraging a collaborative approach to reading Scripture in a community with those different from ourselves. ■



Reading the Bible Around the World: A Student's Guide to Global Hermeneutics
FEDERICO ALFREDO ROTH, JUSTIN MARC SMITH, KIRSTEN SONKYO OH, ALICE YAFEH-DEIGH, AND KAY HIGUERA SMITH
Intervarsity Press, 2022
154 pages
US$22.00

For Further Reading

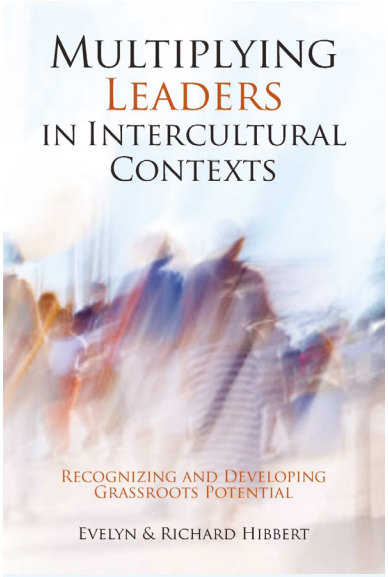
Unexpected News: Reading the Bible with Third World Eyes by Robert McAfee Brown (Westminster John Knox Press, 1984).

Reading the Bible from the Margins by Miguel De La Torre (Orbis Books, 2002).

Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins by Fernando F. Segovia (Orbis Books, 2000).

Multiplying Leaders in Intercultural Contexts

Reviewed by **Bob Bagley** who is now semi-retired after almost four decades of service with Global Partners in various leadership roles.



Multiplying Leaders in Intercultural Contexts
EVELYN HIBBERT AND RICHARD HIBBERT
William Carey Publishing, 2023
176 pages
US$14.99

For Further Reading

Dancing between cultures: Culturally Intelligent Coaching for Missions and Ministry by T. S. Horst (Life Development Publishing, 2017).

Leading cross-culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership by S. G. Lingenfelter (Baker Academic, 2008).

Intercultural Discipleship: Learning from Global Approaches to Spiritual Formation by W. J. Moon (Baker Academic, 2017).

My bookcase is loaded with books on leadership development. However, none are like this book. For starters, it is not focused on the development of leaders at the top leadership level of churches or ministries. Instead, it focuses on "grassroots leaders who lead small groups and ministries within a local church" (50). The Hibberts explain that "These leaders are the growing edge of the church. They are learning about and living for Jesus amid normal life" (1).

Rather than present a new program for leadership development, the Hibberts firmly place it within the relational context of discipleship. They repeatedly return to their assertion that leadership development is an outgrowth of discipleship. They insist that "Failures of leadership are more often because of discipling problems than leadership development issues" (41). To that end they assert that "Doing all we can to establish good discipling across the whole church may well be more important than developing leaders." (139)

The Hibberts nevertheless provide a model for leadership development that they describe as the 4 critical characteristics that need to be strengthened as leaders are developed. They are: (a) *community* – the context in which leadership occurs, (b) *character* – growing in Christlikeness, (c) *clarity* – about the purpose of the community and how to achieve that purpose, and (d) *care* – strengthening their whole community by enabling members to care for one another (58).

The book begins with an exploration of the dynamics of culture as it relates to leadership and the relationship between disciples and leaders. Then, as the authors move on to discuss biblical leadership principles and the development process, they keep bringing the reader back to the application of the cross-cultural principles. For example, when discussing strengthening the community, they advise, "We should invest time watching and learning how groups in the leaders' context make decisions. We should mentor and support leaders in healthy, culturally fitting, group decision-making" (83).

I especially appreciated the extensive bibliography provided by the authors to help readers dig deeper into ideas that are particularly intriguing to them.

Missionaries serving in formal leadership training programs may find the book frustrating, but for those serving on the ground, helping to develop churches and leaders at the grassroots level, this will prove to be an immensely helpful guide. ■

Ambassadors of Reconciliation

Reviewed by **Kyle D. Frohock**, PhD student, Center for Missiological Research, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, and development and intercultural engagement director for The Wesley Heritage Foundation, Midland, Georgia.

Billions of Christians around the world gather at Christmas celebrations each year with lyrics such as *Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the newborn King, peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled*. And yet, our weary world persistently reels from escalating violence, enmity, and division. On this side of the cross, resurrection, and furor of Pentecost, the church might ask, "What is wrong here?"

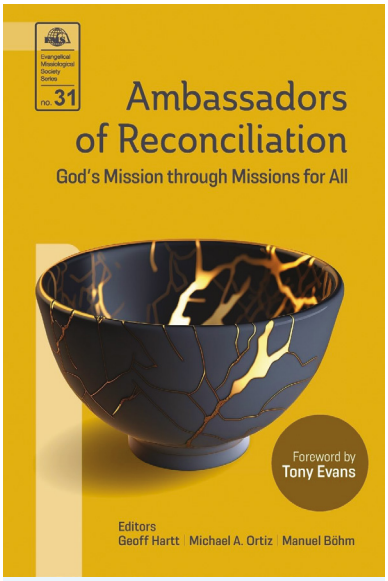
Ambassadors of Reconciliation suggests that not only is our world broken, but so is our missiology. Others have sounded similar alarms recently – for example, the Lausanne movement in 2004 and 2011, the World Council of Churches in 2005 and 2022, and the Catholic Church in 2013. This edited volume of the Evangelical Missiological Society's 2022 Compendium seeks a new paradigm for mission "that brings holistic transformation" (xiii) beyond a "reductionist view of the Great Commission" (xv) that has dominated evangelical mission studies and practice for generations. The book argues an urgent thesis: Reconciliation is the mission of God (*missio* Dei), and the church is sent to represent, and not simply to proclaim, "his kingdom in this world" (xiv).

Reconciliation as a new paradigm for mission emerges from a missional reading of the Bible. Anchor texts such as 2 Corinthians 5 and Colossians 1 frame the Bible's narrative arc. A holy and loving God works to overcome our "alienation and enmity to restore relationship and live in peace" with God, one another, and all of creation (27). Peace on earth is understood to be a derivative of God and sinners reconciled which yields a love for God that will naturally then "incarnate the love and compassion and justice and reconciliation of Christ" with one's neighbors (xiv). This movement serves to organize the book into its sections: reconciliation theology (part 1), reconciliation practices (part 2), and reconciliation case studies (part 3).

Part 1 skillfully recenters God's multi-directional (holistic) mission in *relationships* – between God and people; people and people; and God, people, and creation – which are "inseparably related to and drawn into the life of the triune God" (50). Part 2 introduces an integrated and holistic approach of discipleship as reconciliation that is dynamic, personal, humble, gracious, and hospitable – in a word, Christological, "deliberately and radically breach[ing] the barriers" that alienate and disintegrate (113).

Part 3 provides compelling evidence from diverse contexts for reconciliation as mission. I found James Pursley's account of reconciliation among Turks and Armenians in the Turkish world especially noteworthy, representing a moving synthesis of the book's claims and testimony of the power of the gospel to wholly reconcile and transform communities ravaged by their "communion of hate" (154). Are we, as Christ's ambassadors, willing to join Christ in his mission, who in the words of Aubry Smith "welcomed his enemies into his own family with his *blood*" (118)?

Ambassadors of Reconciliation is an essential resource for church and denominational leaders, mission scholars and practitioners, and students of mission who consider Christ the hope of the world and seek to answer his call to join his saving mission for all. ■



Ambassadors of Reconciliation: God's Mission through Missions for All
EDITED BY GEOFF HARTT, MICHAEL A. ORTIZ, AND MANUEL BÖHM
Evangelical Missiological Society Series #31
William Carey Publishing, 2023
246 pages | US$19.99

For Further Reading

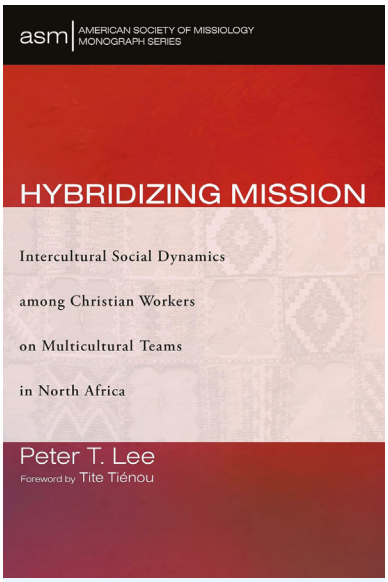
Roadmap to Reconciliation 2.0: Moving Communities into Unity, Wholeness and Justice by Brenda Salter McNeil (InterVarsity Press, 2020).

The Journey of Reconciliation: Groaning for a New Creation in Africa by Emmanuel Katongole (Orbis, 2017).

Whole and Reconciled: Gospel, Church, and Mission in a Fractured World by Al Tizon (Baker Academic, 2018).

Hybridizing Mission

Reviewed by **Mark D. Wood**, PhD, director of the Kingdom Leadership Training Center, Darhan, Mongolia.



Hybridizing Mission: Intercultural Social Dynamics among Christian Workers on Multicultural Teams in North Africa
PETER T. LEE
American Society of Missiology Monograph Series No. 60
Pickwick Publications, 2022
312 pages
US$42.00

For Further Reading

Leading Multicultural Teams by Evelyn Hibbert and Richard Hibbert (William Carey Publishing, 2014).

When I went to the field, I felt prepared for the challenge of ministry in our host culture. What I did not anticipate were the joys and difficulties of working on a multicultural team and how much I would be changed. Experiences such as mine are addressed in Peter T. Lee's book *Hybridizing Mission*. Lee, a veteran international worker, currently serves as an affiliate professor of intercultural studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and works with Operation Mobilization in missiological research.

Lee's study focuses on the experiences of international Christian workers and how "intercultural social experiences in their multicultural teams and the local context respectively and collectively influence the social and cultural change processes at a micro, individual level" (3). Lee describes the study as a qualitative study using ethnographic methods. I would classify it also as grounded theory.

The book is organized into six chapters. Chapters 1–3 follow the standard dissertation format of "Introduction," "Literature Review," and "Research Methods." Chapter 4, "Intercultural Social Experiences in a North African Country" explores the social experiences of international workers in their new culture while chapter 5 describes workers' experiences on multicultural teams. In chapters 6–8 Lee explains "Intercultural Living and Personal Change," "Further Interpretation and Synthesis," and "Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations."

Lee interacts with multiple authors from broad backgrounds and disciplines. This results in a work that sheds new light on the experience of international workers. Central to the book is Lee's concept of the "Intercultural Social Process" (ISP) or how workers change over time. Lee also uses the term, "Diasporic Habitus," borrowed from social research on how people form new practices when they are away from home (208–209).

Lee consistently critiques missiology for outdated concepts in areas such as culture while simultaneously calling missiology to interact more vigorously with current fields of study in anthropology and psychology. I appreciate Lee's sensitive treatment and demonstrated awareness of reflexivity on the part of the researcher.

I recommend this book to mission leaders, member care providers, those working on multicultural teams, and especially those about to embark on serving with multicultural teams. I also recommend it to all international workers to better understand the processes that we go through and how we change over time. This study stands as a definitive work in its multi-disciplinary approach to multicultural teams.

Being very mindful of the restrictions and choices in writing a dissertation, I offer two minor critiques. The literature review did not interact with all the literature concerning multicultural teams which, given the content, would have been helpful to better situate the work in a broader context. I also would have appreciated a more robust theological reflection on the implications of the study. For example, the theme of liminality is a reflection that this world is not our home (Hebrews 13:14–15). I highly recommend this book. ■

Contextualization and the Old Testament

Reviewed by **Justin Wheaton** who is pursuing a master's degree in Old Testament and semitic languages from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

Contextualization and the Old Testament: Between Asian and Western Perspectives by Jerry Hwang is an important read for all students of the Bible, whether they be pastors, seminary students, missionaries, or even academics. This book is needed in the current evangelical climate which often makes the mistake of focusing too much on the New Testament to the detriment of the Old Testament, a reality pointed out by Hwang. Moreover, evangelicalism would suffer from the belief that only Western American/European interpretations of the Bible are correct.The desire that the gospel be supracultural stems from the observation that Westerners sharing the gospel with Eastern peoples has often resulted in Christianity being perceived as an outsider religion, in cultural resistance against the gospel, and in persecution. Westerners must therefore be aware of the Eastern cultural mindset boxes that often prohibit full acceptance and understanding of the gospel by Asians.

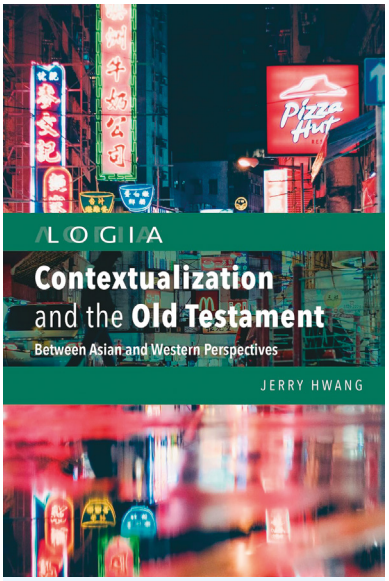
At the beginning of the book, Hwang poses a question that forms one of the main theses of the entire work: can Christian converts from backgrounds such as Hinduism and Buddhism maintain aspects of their culture while still professing faith in Jesus? To answer this question, he does an excellent job of putting into perspective the many differences between Western and Eastern hermeneutics in such realms as views on covenant, honor and shame, official versus popular religion, and more. Interestingly, he demonstrates that in many texts, the views of Ancient Near Eastern peoples are often closer to those of modern-day Eastern peoples.

One of Hwang's most notable achievements is helping the Western reader understand that American/European biblical interpretations are not the only correct way to both read the Bible and evangelize Asian audiences. This preference of Western missionaries to favor Western perspectives leads people who live in the East to conclude that Christianity is a Western religion incompatible with the thinking of those in countries such as China, Japan, and Korea.

Sadly, Western Christianity is also linked with imperialism in the minds of Asian peoples. Hwang succeeds at establishing that while Christianity is often seen as a Western religion tied with colonialism, it does not have to be. He also succeeds in laying a foundation for understanding that the Bible is viewed through the lens of the culture to which it is given and that this is not necessarily a bad thing.

While Hwang's work is a must-read, a couple of minor critiques may be offered. The arguments can be a little slow and hard to follow at times. For instance, in his chapter "Divine Translatability and Term Questions for Deity," in the section addressing whether Yahweh and Allah are the same God, it is not clear how the discussion relates to Eastern perspectives. Furthermore, there also appear to be some inaccuracies in his text regarding the Ancient Near East.

For example, Hwang claims that, like Yahweh, the Ugaritic god El is a transcendent creator. This is incorrect as (a) an Ugaritic cosmogony has not been discovered to discuss El's transcendence and (b) in the texts that we possess, El appears to be a part of an already created universe. Yahweh, on the other hand, is a transcendent creator, as Hwang rightly notes. This may seem like a small detail, but when performing a comparison between the two deities, every detail matters. ■



Contextualization and the Old Testament: Between Asian and Western Perspectives
JERRY HWANG
Langham Global Library, 2022.
264 pages
US$28.99

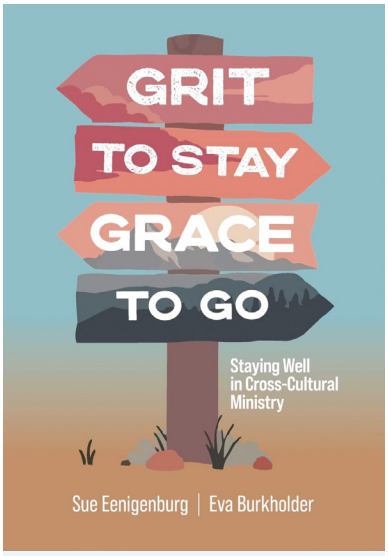
For Further Reading

Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission by Dean Flemming (IVP Academic, 2005).

Scripture and Its Interpretation: A Global, Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible by Michael J. Gorman (Baker Academic, 2017).

Grit to Stay Grace to Go

Reviewed by **L. Lynn Thigpen**, PhD, adjunct professor, Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia, and emeritus IMB missionary to Southeast Asia.



Grit to Stay Grace to Go: Staying Well in Cross-Cultural Ministry
SUE EENIGENBURG AND EVA BURKHOLDER
William Carey, 2023
216 pages
US$17.99

I admit it. A few years ago, I left our mission field (for retirement) kicking and screaming. In my mind, all faithful missionaries stayed till death. My husband developed health issues but were those severe enough to merit leaving the field? Many questions surround going or staying. If I had *Grit to Stay Grace to Go*, written by Sue Eenigenburg and Eva Burkholder, I could have worked through their final section, "Deciding to Stay or Go" and explored fourteen critical questions addressed there. Instead, as soon as I received this valuable resource, I began with Part Three and walked through grace.

Written by missionary veterans, the book has two other parts/sections. The first has ten chapters and explores Angela Duckworth's concept of grit and the challenges of staying on the field when life is difficult. The second section with twelve topics deals with remaining on the field when others leave. Each chapter in Part One contains topical content, lies for which we might fall, truths to remember, reflection questions, response assignments, a prayer, and resources. I especially appreciated the well-crafted reflection questions and the multitude of resources, including URLs and easier-to-use QR codes (despite a few errors found when utilizing them). The listing would have benefited from a bit of explanation of each resource, but I recognize the amount of work involved in creating it. The remaining chapters in parts 2 and 3 keep the same format but omit the discussion of lies and truths.

As an emeritus missionary who goes back to the field periodically, I devoured stories about folks just like me. Those who have not learned a language or lived in a foreign land cannot be expected to fully understand us or grasp what we face. Sue and Eva have "written out loud" what so many of us have thought in our hearts – the struggles, the team issues, the spiritual battles, and the emotional weight of carrying the Great Commission on our shoulders.

Although especially suited for women, *Grit to Stay Grace to Go* should not be shunned by male missionaries. Do not skip Jeff Adams' foreword, as he summarizes the book well, "What cross-cultural workers face is not an issue of geography, personalities, or people groups, but rather a war of cosmic proportions, a spiritual war beyond our full comprehension and for which we mortal humans need grit and grace" (xii). Single and married workers alike will appreciate the honesty and points of discussion and the many additional resources referenced. The advice contained is invaluable, and every new and seasoned missionary alike would benefit from tucking this resource in their already overweight luggage. ■

For Further Reading

Frontline Women: Negotiating Cross-cultural Issues in Ministry by Marguerite G. Kraft (William Carey, 2012).

Encountering Missionary Life and Work: Preparing for Intercultural Ministry by Tom Steffen and Lois McKinney (Baker Academic, 2008).

Have We No Rights? A Frank Discussion of the "Rights" of Missionaries by Mabel Williamson (Moody Press, 1957).

Zhejiang

Reviewed by **Regina Manley**, DEd in curriculum from Boise State University, 39 years of mission experience and currently working with online fellowships in China.

Whatever is said about China is true – *somewhere* in China," according to a popular saying. Paul Hattaway, an expert on the Chinese Church, documents the tenuous beginnings, the frequent persecutions, and the triumphant work of establishing a Christian witness throughout Zhejiang province.

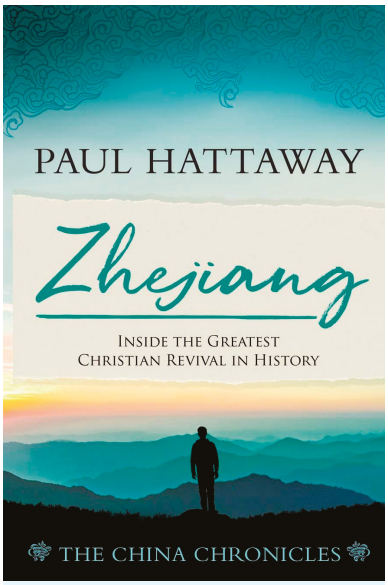
Zhejiang is called "the Jerusalem of China" due to its many churches and the high percentage of believers – one in five are Christians. This reputation was earned through the believers' faith which remained steadfast through multiple, brutal waves of persecution. For example, in the mid-1950s, the capital city of Wenzhou was declared a "religion-free experimental zone." Over four dozen pastors were sent to hard labor camps; only one survived (87). To the Communists' consternation, Christians continued to multiply. Another example of persecution came in 1997. 400 churches were demolished in November and December of that year.

The introduction summarizes the history of Zhejiang province. It is geographically small but with the tenth highest population (63 million). Located on the southeastern coast, its major cities are known as economic powerhouses throughout China.

Chapter 1 describes the work of the Nestorians arriving in 635 and later Catholic missionaries in the 1600s. Chapters 2 through 17 cover the evangelical thrust. With two exceptions, each chapter covers a decade beginning with the 1840s and finishing with the 2010s. Foreign missionaries (McCartee, Russell, Lowrie, Aitchison, John, Taylor, Stott) are prominent in the first 40 years. Their practices provide insight into planting the gospel in a hostile culture. Chinese leaders are highlighted in every decade (Cidu, Nee, Xiang, Zia, Liu, Wang, Zhizhong).

The book is replete with captivating tales of perseverance under persecution. These show how the Chinese church continued to adapt and remain faithful under all circumstances. Surprisingly, several revivals swept through government Three Self churches, Catholic, and house churches alike. These can inform those interested in how the Holy Spirit has renewed the church in the twenty-first century. The final chapter provides personal letters highlighting current dilemmas Christians face and makes insightful predictions about the future of Christianity in Zhejiang. Maps and population statistics in the appendix are comprehensive.

There could have been greater coverage of Catholic history and perspective. Nevertheless, this is a fascinating read which is hard to put down. It is the third publication in *The Chinese Chronicles*, an ambitious project describing the advance of the gospel in every province of China. ■



Zhejiang: Inside the Greatest Christian Revival in History
PAUL HATTAWAY
The China Chronicles
William Carey Publishing
189 pages
US$16.00

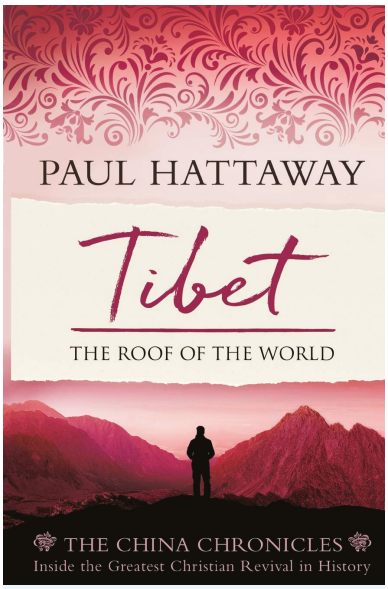
For Further Reading

After Imperialism: Christian Identity in China and the Global Evangelical Movement edited by Richard Cook and David Pao (Pickwick Publications, 2011).

The Coming Chinese Church: How Rising Faith in China is Spilling Over its Boundaries by Paul Golf with Pastor Lee (Monarch, 2013).

Tibet

Reviewed by **Daniel Topf** (PhD, Fuller Theological Seminary), missions coach with World Team in Greendale, Wisconsin.



Tibet: The Roof of the World
PAUL HATTAWAY
William Carey Publishing, 2022
270 pages
US$18.99

For Further Reading

Operation China: Introducing all the Peoples of China by Paul Hattaway (William Carey Publishing, 2003).

Leaving Buddha: A Tibetan Monk's Encounter with the Living God Paperback by Tenzin Lahkpa and Eugene Bach (Whitaker House, 2019).

A Star in the East: The Rise of Christianity in China by Rodney Stark and Xiuhua Wang (Templeton Press, 2016).

Tibet is Paul Hattaway's fourth volume within his The China Chronicles series. The author wrote the book so that readers would be "touched, inspired, and challenged" as they "read the accounts of the many courageous and faith-filled disciples of Christ who have attempted to exalt the name of Jesus Christ in Tibet, against overwhelming odds and in the face of powerful spiritual forces that have done all they can to hinder the advance of the gospel at every step of the way" (15).

Hattaway begins with a historical overview in which the Nestorians and various early Roman Catholic missionaries (especially the Jesuits) are discussed. The focus then switches toward the evangelical world, with various Western missionaries as well as believers from different parts of Asia contributing to the spread of the gospel in Tibet. Individuals like George Parker, Annie Taylor, Albert Shelton, Sundar Singh, and Nyima Chothar all labored while facing extraordinary difficulties. As the venerable Hudson Taylor so aptly put it, "To make converts in Tibet is similar to going into a cave and trying to rob a lioness of her cubs" (14, 71).

The book's subtitle, "Inside the Greatest Christian Revival in History," might be confusing at first, as it refers more to the growth of Christianity in China overall. As a renowned expert on China, Hattaway is keenly aware that Tibet continues to be one of the least reached areas of the world. Despite encouraging church growth in the past few decades, many counties in Tibet have only a few or no known believers, as the maps and detailed tables included in the three appendices reveal.

Just the chapter about the incredible story of the first Tibetan Bible already makes buying the paperback well worth it. This commendable effort, Hattaway reports, began in 1856 and was only concluded after World War II, in 1948. The number of obstacles that had to be overcome to complete this translation of the Bible makes for a fascinating read. The vastness of the Tibetan plateau that had to be crossed, the intense spiritual warfare, and the particular historical circumstances all played a role in delaying the process, and as such this story can be seen as a microcosm of what missions in Tibet have been like in general.

The book is highly informative, covering not only the heartland of Tibet but also the surrounding areas in which Tibetans live. In addition, over one hundred photographs (in black and white) contribute to making *Tibet* a vivid and engaging read. ■

Mission in the Way of Daniel

Reviewed by **Tenny Farnen**, pastor's wife at Chinese Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia.

Providing a unique approach to the prophet Daniel, Edward L. Smither's book examines Daniel's life from five missiological perspectives. First, he focuses on Daniel's cross-cultural displacement, resulting in his participation in God's mission in a new context. Second, he notes Daniel's natural abilities allow him to have a special role in his mission.

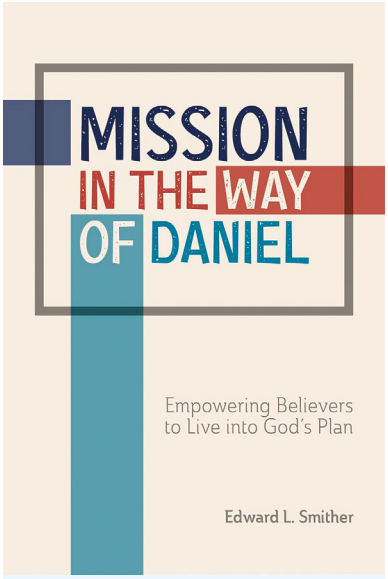
Thirdly, the author highlights Daniel's God-given favor with authorities. Fourthly, he focuses on Daniel's experiences with and demonstration of the power of God. Finally, he describes how Daniel was a bold witness through his prayers and sufferings. Basing his arguments on the life of Daniel, Smither demonstrates how each of these phenomena is relevant to contemporary missions work and is confirmed by the lives of other biblical characters and the history of missions, both distant and recent.

I would say this book can serve as a brief introduction to mission and is very easy for a layperson to read and follow. He cites several missiologists here and there, but this does not make the book difficult to read. For example, in chapter 1, Smither borrows from Christopher Wright's concept of the missional work of God in Scripture and Andrew Wall's theology of migration and then proposes a third category combining (a) Abrahamic response to God's initiative and calling with (b) Adamic plight as the consequence of judgment and punishment and demonstrates its relevance to Daniel's life. He then uses this lens to look at the lives of Joseph in the Bible and Patrick of Ireland in missions history. He then shows how it is relevant to contemporary global migration and forced displacement that God is using to carry out his mission.

Likewise, in chapter 4, when discussing Daniel and God's power, Smither points out how God continues to use this approach throughout Scripture and missions history. He observed that today's missionaries tend to overlook what Paul Hiebert called "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle." With a dualistic worldview grounded in Christianity and the contemporary scientific worldview, they fail to address the realm of what he called the excluded middle of the spiritual, demonic, or magical, which causes them to miss opportunities to bear witness to God's power.

He also describes the two types of encounters proposed by Charles Kraft that missionaries can use. The first is the power encounter, with the goal of freeing people from captivity so that they discover liberty in Jesus. The second is the truth encounter, with the goal of countering error with Christ's truth.

Readers may be disappointed with the book if they are expecting something more academic. As Smither mentions, this book is for lay people. It makes it easy to see God's story in history through the lens of Daniel's life. ■



Mission in the Way of Daniel: Empowering Believers to Live into God's Plan
EDWARD L SMITHER
William Carey Publishing, 2022
108 pages
US$9.99

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Guatemala: An Indigenous woman wears a beautiful hand-woven *Huipil* – woven blouse – which has patterns unique to her home area. More than 40% of Guatemala's population come from Indigenous ethnic communities.

PHOTO BY MARC EWELL, COURTESY OF WGA

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