

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

MISSION "MADE TO TRAVEL" IN A
WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS

SECOND LECTURE

BY

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INTRODUCTION

In our opening lecture we launched this series by drawing attention to the remarkable convergence of *the Wind* and *the Wave*—the two global megatrends, Pentecostalization and globalization. Our summary assessment of the Hogan legacy was directed towards indicating how the Pentecostal mission movement is suitably poised to effectively ride the globalization wave. We observed especially how Pentecostalism's success in holding together the *universal* and the *particular*, resonates with globalization's essential impulses of *universalization* and *localization*. A reasonable theological inference we are able to draw from this discovery is that God is at work in advancing the inherently globalizing Christian missionary movement both *transcendently*, in igniting the revival fires of Pentecost resulting in the spectacular spread of the gospel across the globe, and *immanently*, in orchestrating world events and social processes giving rise to globalization.

There is, however, no room for complacency as Pentecostal missions enters the second Pentecostal century. Movement into the next phase—from the globalization of *Pentecostalism* to the globalization of *Pentecostal missions*—calls for a revitalization of Pentecostalism's global mission strategy in step with the wave of globalization. *What should be the priorities for Pentecostal mission as we follow the Wind of Pentecost and ride the wave of globalization to remain on the cutting edge of missions in the twenty-first century?* We concluded the first phase of our response to this central question in the previous lecture, by identifying some key trends with recommended responses. We will explore these in closer detail in two stages, the first in this lecture, and the second in the next, corresponding to two crucial shifts that need to take place in Pentecostal mission strategy. As a prelude to that task, however, we need to attend to an important preliminary concern. How do Pentecostals understand mission today? While our

primary consideration in these lectures is with mission strategy, the biblical and theological understanding of mission undergirding our discussion needs to be made explicit.

PENTECOSTAL MISSIONS AND MISSION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Where does a Pentecostal theologian begin when trying to understand a concept as essential to biblical faith as mission? The first place to begin is the Bible of course! The obvious difficulty, however, is that neither the term “mission[s]” nor “missionary” is to be found in our English Bible. For the first fifteen centuries of its history, the Church used the Latin term *missio* in theology to refer to the “sending” of the Son by the Father, and the “sending” of the Holy Spirit by the Father and the Son. What we today refer to as “mission[s]” was referred to by phrases such as “preaching of the gospel,” “propagation of the faith,” “extending the reign of Christ,” or “planting the church.” It was only during the colonial era that the Jesuits began to employ the term “mission” to denote the spread of the Christian faith among those outside the Church. From then on “mission[s]” has come to be used to refer to the means by which the Church fulfils Christ’s mission in our world.¹

If the term “mission[s]” is not to be found in the Bible, how may we arrive at a biblically sound understanding of the concept? The difficulty with definition arises not from the lack of adequate biblical terminology as much as the richness and breadth of biblical teaching on the subject, which Christians today have tried to capture in the all-encompassing term “mission[s].” As Bosch observes, while no single overarching term for mission exists in the New Testament, the New Testament uses close to one hundred Greek expressions which have a direct bearing on

¹David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. American Society of Missiology Series. No. 16 (New York: Orbis, 1991), 1.

a biblical understanding of mission.² The Bible is thus the *original* handbook on mission[s], and any attempt to derive a definition of “mission[s]” exclusively from a few select terms, or from one or two preferred scripture texts is bound to lead us to a truncated and deficient understanding of “mission[s].” The theme is too critical, too central to the purpose of God for us to limit the fullness of its biblical scope and vision.

How may we take Bosch’s caution to heart in trying to arrive at a truly biblical understanding of mission? A safe starting point would appear to be the life and ministry of Jesus, assuming that the Church’s mission in the world is to be a continuation of the mission of Jesus. The basis for this is clearly set forth in the fourth Gospel in at least two places: “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world,” and, again, “. . . As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 17:18; 20:21).³ The word “*as*” here has crucial significance, since it suggests that the manner in which the Father sent the Son determines the manner in which the Church is sent by Jesus.⁴ Thus, our understanding of “being sent” should be modeled after Jesus’ manner of “being sent”—His way of mission should determine the way we understand and carry out mission. Jesus, in turn, sends His disciples “as the Father sent him.”

The Gospels clearly indicate that Jesus’ mission on earth was inseparably connected to the Kingdom of God. Jesus’ mission thus consisted essentially in making known and manifesting the reality of the Kingdom of God, and the words and works of Jesus were directed towards a

²Bosch, 16.

³Leslie Newbigin follows John Stott here in gravitating towards the Johannine version of the Great Commission; Stott’s preference is based on its distinct service and incarnational implications, Leslie Newbigin, *Mission in Christ’s Way* (Geneva: WCC Publication, 1987), 23; cf. John Stott, *Christian Mission and the Modern World* (London: Falcon Books, 1975), 23.

⁴Newbigin, 23; cf. Norman Kraus: “We must affirm . . . despite a prevalent and influential dispensationalist interpretation to the contrary, that the witness of the church in direct continuity with the witness of the Christ.” Norman Kraus, *The Authentic Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 20.

clear end and purpose: extending the kingdom-rule of God in the hearts of people.⁵ The concept of the Kingdom is central to a biblical understanding of mission, and the Church's mission can only be rightly understood in the light of the Kingdom of God. Mission is then simply: *God extending His kingdom-rule through the Church by calling all people everywhere to submit their lives to the Lordship of Christ*. Two important implications of this understanding need to be highlighted before we proceed any further.

To begin with, mission is properly *Missio Dei*—regardless of how this is interpreted—mission is about God and God's kingdom. God is bringing His kingdom in, and we are invited to participate in the process. Chris Wright, whose careful application of a *missional* hermeneutic to the message of the Bible as a whole has given us a truly comprehensive *missional* biblical theology, argues strongly for the theological priority of *God's* mission: “Fundamentally, our mission (if it is biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation.”⁶ Wright argues that it is misleading to take our missiological starting point only from the human activities of mission, however biblical, Spirit-directed, and important they may be. *God* is on mission, and all humanly-initiated mission or missions flow from the prior and larger priority of the mission of God.⁷

Mission is thus not primarily a human enterprise; it is the outworking of God's sovereign, eternal purpose and plan for His world. It is important to emphasize this especially in a day and

⁵C. Rene Padilla, *Mission between the Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 186-189.

⁶Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 23.

⁷Most Bible-believing Christians would agree that the Bible provides a basis for mission. Chris Wright believes that there is actually a missional basis for the whole Bible—it is generated by, and is all about, God's mission; Wright, 531.

age when technology, education, media, funding strategy, and marketing seem to have become indispensable to the work of missions.⁸ God's mission must never degenerate into a humanly-engineered, corporate marketing enterprise. From start to finish it must always remain a God-dependent, Spirit-empowered, Christ-glorifying endeavor.

Second, since mission is centered on God's kingdom, and because the Church, the community of God's people, is the *locus* of God's kingdom on earth, mission must be *Church-centred*. In mission, God works to expand His kingdom, to extend His rule in the hearts of men and women, but He seeks to do this through the Church. Christ entrusted the completion of His mission and the commission to make disciples of all nations to His faith-community of followers [the Church], and equipped them for this purpose with the supernatural endowment of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

Pentecostal missions has since its earliest stages, always viewed the Church as being at the center of God's missionary purpose. For instance, this is both reflected in the title, structure, logic, and content of Melvin Hodges' Pentecostal theology of missions and also explicitly stated in his introduction:

Missions refers to the carrying out of the redemptive purpose of God for mankind through human instrumentality . . . missions does not begin with the missionary or evangelist. The missionary is only the instrument. Moreover, he does not stand alone—he is a member of the Church and its representative. Hence, the importance of the study of ecclesiology in the study of missions. . . . The study of missions then becomes the study of the Church. *A weak theology of the Church will produce a weak sense of mission.*⁹

⁸Al Johnson cites evangelical sociologist John Seel's scathing critique of evangelicalism's uncritical accommodation, before adding his own solemn word of caution: "When we scratch beneath the surface of our rhetoric about the leading of the Spirit and spiritual dynamics we find ourselves to be part of a system. . . . Thus, we believe that more money and better technology will solve our problems. . . . As we pursue the efficient production of results based on our market driven indicators of success our agendas supersede all else, while those we purportedly come to serve become the tools that we utilize to achieve our ends; Alan Johnson, *Apostolic Function in 21st Century Missions*. The J. Philip Hogan World Mission Series (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2009), 221.

⁹Melvin Hodges, *A Theology of the Church and its Mission* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1977), 10.

A third crucial element in the above conception of mission is its understanding of kingdom-rule extension. God’s kingdom-rule is extended every time an unbeliever repents and accepts Christ as Lord. But what does this involve? How does God extend His kingdom-rule? A series of processes are involved in taking the gospel of the Kingdom to the various peoples of the world, enabling them to understand it and respond to it meaningfully. The actual task of “mission[s]” today entails recruitment and training of workers; their administrative, financial and pastoral support; research into unreached people groups/mission fields; language acquisition and translation work; evangelistic activity; compassionate ministry/development work that authenticates verbal witness; discipling and nurture; church-planting; and training of workers/ministerial education.

Disagreement and debate sometimes arises over whether “mission[s]” should properly be restricted to all or only some of those aspects referred to above.¹⁰ Thus, in contemporary usage, a distinction has sometimes been made between “mission”—its broader biblical and theological sense, and “missions”—a more restricted reference to the more “apostolic” functions or specifically cross-cultural missionary ventures. In addressing this dilemma, Bosch, on one hand, recalls Stephen Neill’s famous words, “If everything is mission, nothing is mission,” in cautioning against the tendency to define mission too broadly. On the other hand, he warns against “straight-jacketing” what is in reality “a multifaceted ministry” by “any attempt at delineating mission too sharply.”¹¹ Bosch’s wise conclusion reminds us again that the truth in

¹⁰The term “mission[s]” today is thus used in a wide variety of ways. In the opening page of Bosch’s classic work on mission, he lists no less than twelve conventional uses, and in the course of his extended treatment introduces a wide range of contemporary applications of the term, especially focused in his discussion of thirteen paradigms in chapter 12; Bosch, 1, 368-510.

¹¹Ibid., 511-512.

this case, as in many other aspects of biblical precept and practice, lies in the balance between two extremes.

The issue is less about terminology than about biblical integrity and theological consistency. For drawing too deep a distinction between “mission” and “missions” runs the risk of distancing the Church from mission—of separating, and in some cases “legitimizing” the Church’s “non-missional” activities from its “missional” activities, including its cross-cultural mission mandate. A truly Pentecostal ecclesiology, however, always views the Church as the Church-in-mission, and a truly Pentecostal missiology refuses to see the mission apart from the life of the Church. The Church and mission are thus organically related as root to the fruit, and any understanding of one which does not include the other will result in an inadequate view of both.¹² Hence, all that the Church does—its worship, discipleship and church growth, salt and light living, evangelism, church planting, and cross-cultural missions—should be intentionally directed towards extending the Kingdom of God on the earth.¹³

Two important clarifications are necessary. First, the concern that a broader definition of mission runs the risk of the term losing its cutting edge when it is inflated to include everything that the Church does. When the Church *is* the Church as Jesus intended it to be, it should be a Church-in-Mission, and must not engage in any activity that does not in some way further God’s kingdom-mission. The counter argument is that, in actual fact, the Church often does not do what it should, and hence every activity it engages in cannot be called mission. The difficulty with this objection is that it derives legitimacy implicitly from deviant contemporary social expressions and practices of the Church rather than from the biblical vision. A constricted understanding thus

¹²A point stressed in Emil Brunner’s famous saying: “The Church exists by mission as a fire exists by burning”, quoted in Wilbert R. Shenk, *Write the Vision* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1995), 87.

¹³A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 77-79.

poses an even greater danger to “apostolic” mission in that by distancing Church from mission it deepens and legitimizes the divide between the Church’s routine non-missional activity and the specialist “mission” activity.

Second, a broader understanding of mission in no way undermines the strategic priority of cross-cultural mission and church planting among unreached people groups. Rather it seeks to provide theological legitimacy and motivation for broader participation in the Church’s cross-cultural missionary enterprise. Hence, rather than seeing mission as the responsibility of a privileged few with an apostolic calling and gifting, it envisions mission[s] as an enterprise in which the whole body of Christ is actively involved: the researcher whose work assists the church planter; the health or development worker whose motivation is to authenticate the gospel message so that unbelievers will be drawn to Christ; the educator who helps equip missionaries for the mission field; the pastor who nurtures a missions-giving and missions-sending church; and the mission official who administers, mentors, and cares for the needs of missionaries.

To use a military metaphor, the various functions of the Church are to “missions” what the armament factory, corps of engineers, military training camps, and supply lines are to the front-line of the battle. Each have a different function, but all are equally soldiers in the same army, fighting for the same cause, at war with the same enemy. Mission is likewise an enterprise in which the whole Church should be engaged intentionally and instrumentally, and should be the filter that orients and directs every activity of the Church towards the extension of the Kingdom. The present reflection is thus based on the conviction that mission as *God extending His kingdom-rule to people of all nations as the Holy Spirit empowers the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.*

With this clarification of an important guiding premise, we return then to the main flow of our discussion as we continue our evaluation of the impact of globalization on the nature and task of mission in the twenty-first century. We begin with a closer examination of the first three globalization trends and the corresponding responses to each identified in our opening lecture.

Massive Human Migration: *Focus on Urban Centres*

Large-scale migration is the most identifiable feature of contemporary globalization—people everywhere are on the move. Migration movements give rise to “cultures in motion,” for as people move, they carry their ideas, beliefs and religious practices with them.¹⁴ Migration remains a prime factor in the global expansion of religions, especially Islam and Christianity, and will continue to have an even greater impact in the twenty-first century.¹⁵

In his analysis of the migrant movements of the modern period, Hanciles observes that from about 1500 to 1950 international migration was largely dictated by the needs and designs of European colonial expansion and the flow of missionary activity. During the 125 years between 1800 to 1925 an estimated 50-60 million Europeans moved overseas, effectively occupying or settling in over one-third of the inhabited world. From the 1960s, however, the tide has been reversed with the vast majority of migrants coming from the non-Western world to Europe and North America. By 2000 Europe and North America had close to 60% of the 175 million

¹⁴Peter N. Stearns, *Cultures in Motion: Mapping Key Contacts and Their Imprints in World History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 69-72.

¹⁵Jehu J. Hanciles, “Migration and Mission: Some Implications for the Twenty-first Century Church,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 27(4): 146.

international migrants. Reasons for the rising tide of South-North migration include demographic imbalances, the growing economic divide, refugee crises, and increasing global connectivity.¹⁶

The number of international migrants across the globe has increased by over 150% in the last four decades and more than doubled between 1975 and 2005.¹⁷ The largest *diaspora* is Chinese with an estimated 55 million living outside mainland China, followed by 22 million Indians who live outside India.¹⁸ According to United Nations estimates, in 2010 the total number of international migrants in the world is expected to reach 214 million, a projected 10% increase since 2005. The more developed regions will be impacted the most, as they are expected to gain 45 million international migrants between 1990 and 2010, a 55% increase. As a result international migrants will account for 10% of the total population in the more developed regions by 2010.¹⁹

Large-scale migration flows into other trends of globalization in several significant ways, but one of its effects which critically impacts the missionary task is the urban explosion. The movement of more than a billion people to the cities during the last two decades of the twentieth century is the largest population movement in history.²⁰ This massive shift towards urban

¹⁶Jehu J. Hanciles, "Migration and Mission: The Religious Significance of the North-South Divide" in *Mission in the Twenty-first Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Missio*, ed. Andrew F. Walls and Cathy Ross (New York: Orbis, 2008), 119-124.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 118-119.

¹⁸Douglas McConnell, "Changing Demographics: The Impact of Migration, HIV/AIDS, and Children at Risk", in *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends*, eds. Michael Pocock, Gailyn V. Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 48.

¹⁹*Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision*, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2009), http://www.un.org/esa/population/migration/UN_MigStock_2008.pdf (accessed October 1, 2009).

²⁰Roger S. Greenway, "The Challenge of the Cities" in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, eds. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), 553. In the last 200 years the number of cities in the world [over 100,000 people] have grown 100 times, from 40 in AD 1800 to about 4000 in AD 2000; David B. Barrett, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing, "Christian World Communions:

cultures and civilizations is without precedent in history. Between 1950 and 1980, urban growth in Third World mega-cities grew from 275 million to almost one billion.²¹ At the beginning of the twentieth century about 14% of the world's population lived in cities. Today, the figure has grown to over 50%—and this movement has occurred entirely in one century during which time the total population of the world has quadrupled.²² The United Nations, which offers the most conservative growth estimate, projects that by 2025 over 60% of the world's estimated 8.3 billion people will live in urban areas. The growth of urbanization presents both formidable challenges and huge opportunities for mission. Urbanization has produced several giant shifts resulting in profound and permanent changes in many societies. Since it is a global phenomenon, many of the same manifestations are evident around the world, regardless of culture or society.

We find the greatest disparity between the wealthy and poor, as well as extreme cultural and religious diversity in the cities. Urban poverty around the world shares similar problems of lack of adequate housing, limited access to health care, lack of job opportunities, family breakdown, and loss of traditional socio-cultural identity. The majority of migrants to the mega-cities live in slums or squatter areas in absolute poverty, and are generally unable to meet their basic needs of food, clothing and housing. The number of slum dwellers and urban squatters in the world's major cities doubles every decade.²³ The family unit has also come under severe assault in the city, and we see a marked increase in divorces, separations, and a general lack of

Five Overviews of Global Christianity, AD 1800-2025," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 33:1 (January 2009), 25-32.

²¹Viv Grigg, "The Urban Poor: Who Are We?" in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 3rd ed., eds. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 582.

²²Barrett, 32.

²³Grigg, 581-582.

healthy family life. Many cultures which once had a healthy, solid family structure have witnessed serious and rapid erosion of traditional family values in the city.

On the other hand, urban dwellers are generally very open and responsive to the gospel due to rapid change, social dislocation, and alienation. Cities offer tremendous opportunity since they are centers of communication from which ideas spread effectively to rural areas. In today's cities, culturally distant peoples frequently live right next door, and are easily accessible to the gospel.

Timothy Keller, who has experienced remarkable success in urban mission as pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, in Manhattan, New York, makes a strong case for more Christians to locate long-term in cities for strategic and more effective Christian witness. Marshalling convincing historical evidence, he points out that by A.D. 300, the urban populations of the Roman Empire were largely Christian, while the countryside was pagan (the word *pagan* originally meant someone from the countryside). Likewise during the first millennium A.D. in Europe, the cities were Christian, but the broad population across the countryside was pagan. He concludes: "The lesson from both eras is that when cities are Christian, even if the majority of the population is pagan, society is headed on a Christian trajectory. Why? As the city goes, so goes the culture. Cultural trends tend to be generated in the city and flow outward to the rest of society."²⁴

In contrast today, while the general urban population grows, the percentage of Christians in urban areas has been steadily declining, from 69% in 1900 to 46% in 1985 and is projected to

²⁴Timothy Keller, "A New Kind of Urban Christian", *Christianity Today* 50:5 (May 2006), 38. According to Hiebert, "One reason for the rapid spread of early Christianity was its movement through the cities." Paul G. Hiebert, "Social Structure and Church Growth" in Winter and Hawthorne, 428.

shrink further to less than 40% by the middle of the century. Keller issues a twofold challenge to evangelicals:

Reach the city to reach the culture. Protestant (evangelical) Christians are the least urban religious group and thus have the least impact culturally. Three kinds of people here affect the future: a) elites, b) new immigrants, c) the poor. The single most effective way for Christians to ‘reach’ the US would be for 25% of them to move to two or three of the largest cities and stay there for three generations. Reach the city to reach your region and the world. . . . You can’t reach the city from the suburbs, but can reach all the metro area from the city. . . . the cities of the world are now linked more to one another than to their own states and countries. Each major city is a ‘portal’ to the other major cities of the world.²⁵

How should Pentecostal missions respond to the challenges of urbanization? Augustus Cerillo has listed several strengths that Pentecostals are able to bring to the challenge of urban mission.²⁶ He points out that Pentecostalism has had a significant urban heritage and has been immensely successful in cities all over the world prompting the comment that “Pentecostal growth and urbanization seem to go together.”²⁷ Cerillo’s assessment of available data leads him to conclude that “a majority of the world’s Pentecostals and charismatics are urban dwellers.”²⁸ Their supernatural worldview enables Pentecostals to reach out aggressively in helping meet felt needs of people in cities.²⁹

We need hardly say more. It is critically important that Pentecostal mission in the twenty-first century develop a strategic focus on the cities and urban centers. The fact that many cities of

²⁵Timothy Keller, “A Biblical Theology of the City,” *Evangelicals Now*. <http://www.e-n.org.uk/p-1869-A-biblical-theology-of-the-city.htm> (accessed October 2, 2009).

²⁶Augustus Cerillo, “Pentecostals and the City,” in *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, eds. Murray Dempster, Byron Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 98-104.

²⁷Quoted in Cerillo, 99.

²⁸Ibid., 100.

²⁹In our opening lecture we drew attention to Harvey Cox’ implicit affirmation of the effectiveness of Pentecostal spirituality in meeting human needs at their deepest level, although he advances a naturalistic explanation—that it enables millions of people to stay in touch with the “primal” experiential spirituality of their traditional cultures while coping with the pressures of modern life—another reason for Pentecostalism’s distinctive appeal in the urban context.

the world face similar social and spiritual challenges presents us with an opportunity and obligation to work in close global partnership for efficient sharing of information, of human and material resources.³⁰

**The “Deterritorialization” of Culture:
*Radically Rethink our Understanding of “Indigenous” Culture***

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,
does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
till moon shall wax and wane no more.
From north to south the princes meet,
to pay their homage at His feet;
While *Western empires* own their Lord,
and *savage tribes* attend His word.

In his discussion of the great missionary expansion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Jaroslav Pelikan refers to this hymn as a symbol of Christian growth.³¹ This great hymn of Isaac Watts, based on Psalm 72, is deeply cherished as one of the earliest missionary hymns, but sometimes seen by people of the erstwhile “savage tribes” as merging God’s purpose and Great Britain’s ecclesiastical, political, and economic destiny. Given that Watts was known to substitute “Britain” for “Israel” in some of the psalms, it is possible that in the heyday of the colonial era, some British parishioners subconsciously sang: [Britain] shall reign where'er the sun does [her] successive journeys run; [Her] kingdom stretches from shore to shore, till moon shall wax and wane no more.

The text of “Jesus Shall Reign” clearly reflects the culture of its time and a period when the Protestant and Catholic missionary movement which flooded countries like India and China

³⁰This could perhaps take the shape of a global network for coordinating ministry to the cities or even a Center for Urban Missions, which could collect, interpret, and publish demographic data on global urban trends, as well as offer consultancy to church planting efforts nationally and across the globe.

³¹Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 221.

and the African continent aligned with and often supported the goals of imperialism.³² The Western missionary enterprise in the post-Enlightenment period was clearly tainted by cultural imperialism. Several Western nations assumed not only the intrinsic superiority of their national cultures over all other cultures, but viewed themselves as God's instruments for the Christianization of the colonized territories, a conviction variously referred to as "the white man's burden" or "manifest destiny."³³

The twentieth century saw a growing awareness of the naiveté and arrogance implicit in this widespread cultural nationalism, although a full realization of the vital theological distinction between the gospel and culture came only in the wake of the world wars. The rise of the social sciences helped us analyze and understand human behaviour, and the notion of *culture* has been central to their framework of analysis. Mission theology has benefited immensely from the social sciences and found a particularly helpful friend in cultural anthropology. Concepts such as indigenization, inculturation, and contextualization have been introduced into mission discourse to distinguish between the eternal truth of the gospel and its temporal expression in human culture. The impetus for indigenous churches and contextualized expressions of the Christian faith was derived from this discourse and based on a certain notion of culture.

The powerful spatial-temporal processes of globalization have, however, caused many to feel that the notion of culture has been undermined to the point that it needs to be radically revised. For instance, anthropologists Ina and Rosaldo point out that culture is ordinarily associated with a group of people (a nation, tribe, or ethnic group) and is closely linked to the

³²While this is now a common theme in missiological discussion, for a concise but thorough, and honest yet balanced treatment, see Bosch, 291-313.

³³Bosch, 298-302.

particularities of place. The idea of culture traditionally carries with it expectation of roots in the soil and a fixed geographical territory.³⁴

We have thus taken for granted, in the past, that each nation-state embodies its own distinctive culture and society. Today, however, it seems almost anachronistic to think of culture in such localized terms. In support of this argument, Gupta and Ferguson point to several illustrations of how the traditional notion of culture is no longer helpful: as it applies to those who inhabit the border regions of nation states, also immigrants, refugees, exiles and expatriates; and its inadequacy in relation to the phenomena of “multiculturalism” within a locality and the hybrid cultures of postcoloniality. The category also fails to do justice to social and cultural change proceeding freely across hitherto autonomous spaces today due to the interconnectedness we have in a globalized world.³⁵

Globalization has pulled culture apart from place; culture has been uprooted from particular localities, and we now live in a world of “culture in motion.” Anthropologists refer to this weakening of the ties between culture and place as the *detrterritorialization* of culture. This does not thereby imply that culture is free-floating. Rather culture no longer necessarily belongs in or to a particular place—it is always “reterritorialized” in another place or places. The processes that shape it thus simultaneously transcend territorial boundaries and continue to have

³⁴Jonathan X. Inda and Renato Rosaldo, “Introduction: A World in Motion,” *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 10-14. In their exploration of how space and place impact culture and cultural difference, Gupta and Ferguson explicate this further: “The distinctiveness of societies, nations, and cultures is predicated on a seemingly unproblematic division of space, on the fact that they occupy ‘naturally’ discontinuous spaces. . . . For example, the representation of the world as a collection of ‘countries,’ as on most world maps, sees it as an inherently fragmented space, divided by different colours into diverse national societies, each ‘rooted’ in its proper place. . . . It is so taken for granted that each country embodies its own distinctive culture and society that the terms ‘society’ and ‘culture’ are routinely simply appended to the names of nation-states, as when a tourist visits India to understand ‘Indian culture’ and ‘Indian society’ or Thailand to experience ‘Thai culture’ or the United States to get a whiff of ‘American culture.’” Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, “Beyond ‘Culture’: Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference,” *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 65-66.

³⁵Gupta and Ferguson, 66-67.

territorial significance.³⁶ What is of crucial importance to note is that the traditional notion of culture as predicated on geographical boundaries or national borders is a thing of the past.

This anthropological commentary on the impact of globalization on the deterritorialization of culture resonates remarkably with the observations of those who see the powerful transnational currents of economic globalization progressively weakening traditional cultural and national identities. In an article somewhat provocatively entitled “The End of the Nation State,” Kenichi Ohmae points out that nation states which were at one time “independent, powerfully efficient engines of wealth creation” have now become “little more than bit actors . . . remarkably inefficient engines of wealth distribution.”³⁷ Basing his political verdict on incisive, if at times, disconcerting economic analysis, he observes:

So powerful have these currents [of economic globalization] become that they have carved out entirely new channels for themselves—channels that owe nothing to the lines of demarcation on traditional political maps. Put simply, in terms of real flows of economic activity, nation states have *already* lost their role as meaningful units of participation in the global economy of today’s borderless world.³⁸

According to Ohmae, to speak of a nation state like Russia or China as a single economic unit is “nostalgic fiction.” It is also impossible to attach an accurate national label to goods and services produced and traded in today’s economically globalized world when the components assembled in one country may actually be manufactured and sent from various corners of the globe. This “borderless economy” has resulted in the decline of nation states as units of economic activity and may result in cultural, religious, ethnic, and tribal affiliations replacing anaemic notions of nationhood as more stable sources of group identity. According to Ohmae the

³⁶Inda and Rosaldo, 11-12.

³⁷Kenichi Ohmae, “The End of the Nation State,” in *The Globalization Reader*, ed. by Frank J. Lechner and John Boli (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 207; see also Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 56-68.

³⁸Ohmae, 207.

controlling feature of the global culture of the future is the web of shared interest marked by “information-driven participation in the global economy.”³⁹

Our traditional categories of cultural analysis are no longer relevant. For instance, how are we to apply concepts such as “indigenous” or “cultural context” to the Tamil *diaspora* scattered throughout Europe, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, North America, and different parts of India? Is the Chinese American who speaks both Mandarin and English more Chinese or American? Is her cultural affiliation closer to her African-American colleague at work or Cantonese Chinese in Hong Kong or Taiwan? Hanciles using the term “transmigrants” to describe such individuals who reflect multiple cultural affinities. Transmigrants are typically at least bilingual, can lead dual lives, move comfortably between cultures, may maintain homes in two countries, and are active social players in both.⁴⁰

Wilbert Shenk believes that these changing socio-political realities call for a complete revisioning of how mission is to be carried forward.⁴¹ He describes the present movement as an “era of polycentric history” when the centers of power will likely be increasingly dispersed, posing important questions for missiological theory. According to Shenk the theory of the indigenous church emerged to explain and make more efficient a unidirectional movement from West to non-West. Today, however, the locus of power has shifted irreversibly away from its traditional Western base to multiple new centers across the world, where church structures are being developed, local theologies formulated, and mission programs launched. Shenk concludes

³⁹Ibid., 208-210.

⁴⁰Although the traditional western missionary was the ‘classical’ transmigrant who lived simultaneously in two societies, the intensification of global interaction and connectedness in the present era has made the transmigrant lifestyle accessible to a wider spectrum of the world’s population, Hanciles, “Some Implications,” 148.

⁴¹Wilbert Shenk, *Changing Frontiers of Mission*. American Society of Missiology Series, no. 28 (New York: Orbis, 1999), 174-176.

optimistically: “Viewing the world as consisting of multiple centers of resource and initiative will force us to think in new ways about the shape of Christian mission in the twenty-first century.”⁴²

We have yet to see how the notion of “indigenous culture” will be redefined in a polycentric world of “cultures in motion.” Culture is a complex entity comprising not only language, dress, food habits, and social mores, but deeper, subliminal elements—attitudes and values regarding race, gender, ethnic identity, and national allegiance—all of which shape our basic identity. But culture must never become an obstacle to mission. Cultural identity is essential but we must be wary of cultural idolatry—Christ is never the guest of culture; he is the Lord over culture!

Culture Shock and Religion-quake: *Respond Responsibly to Multiculturalism and Religious Plurality*

The rise of globalization at the dawn of the new millennium attended by massive migrations of people and unprecedented global interconnectedness has forced a new experience of cultural and religious pluralism upon people everywhere without parallel in the history of civilization. Our planet has become a web of criss-crossing influences. Air travel, the internet, information technology, television, and the media have brought about a mingling of peoples and cultures that our parents could not have imagined, giving rise to the twin phenomena of multiculturalism and religious plurality.⁴³

⁴²Shenk, 175.

⁴³David Lundy, “Multiculturalism and Pluralization: Kissing Cousins of Globalization” in *One World or Many? The Impact of Globalization on Mission*, Globalization of Mission Series, ed. Richard Tiplady (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2003), 71-76; Harold Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 9-15.

While multiculturalism is sometimes understood as “a deliberate fashioning of society so as to make it culturally/ethnically heterogeneous,”⁴⁴ we use it here in its more passive connotation to refer simply to the fact of plurality, the multicultural environment that characterizes life in the twenty-first century in most regions of the world. The religious landscape, especially of Europe and North America, has undergone rapid and profound changes over the past half century.⁴⁵ The U.S. will have a population with more than 50% non-white by 2050; New York city has more than 350,000 Dominicans, the capital of the Dominican Republic has 225,000 people; Paris has more North Africans than most cities in North Africa; Los Angeles is home to over 100 spoken languages, Toronto has almost 200 languages; 8 million Muslims currently live in the U.S. and that number is increasing at a rate of 200,000 per year, and 2000 mosques and Islamic centres exist across the U.S.

The encounter between cultures can be exhilarating, but also fraught with tension and even violence. For instance, globalization has brought closer the sharp disparities and uneven distribution of economic resources: Nine out of 10 people have never made a phone call; Ninety-nine out of 100 people do not have access to the internet; Tokyo, with 23 million people, has three times as many telephone lines as Africa with 580 million people. The most serious tensions, however, are manifested in the area of religious conflict, intensified by widespread religious revival and global expansion of most of the world religions, including Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and other eastern religions, as well as Christianity. Hanciles indicates this in his study of the impact of human migrations on mission: “It is gradually becoming obvious that the

⁴⁴Lundy, 71.

⁴⁵The illustrated statistics have been gleaned from Lundy, 72-74 and Netland, 9-10, some of which were updated from the internet.

process(es) of globalization . . . is potentially transforming several major faiths into truly global religions, present in nearly every country, even if in culturally distinctive forms.”⁴⁶

This clash of religious cultures produces what Van Rheeenan describes as a “Religionquake”⁴⁷ and Stackhouse calls “the shock of deprovincialization”⁴⁸—anxiety and insecurity in relation to traditional certainties. On one hand, it can sometimes lead to a strong, sometimes violent rejection of the alien “other,” of which 9/11 was an extreme manifestation of the worst kind—why post-9/11 religion is seen as the most powerful source of conflict, and conservative wings of most religions are viewed askance as hate-generating fundamentalisms. Some who document the rise of religious terrorism point out the close connection between religious fundamentalism and terrorist violence, providing chilling insight into the world of fanatics in most of the world’s major religious traditions, including Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, and Sikhism.⁴⁹

The only reasonable alternative appears to be to nurture a culture of tolerance. For most people, however, this tolerance is shaped by the controlling pluralistic ethos which marks our culture, and viewed as implying the relativization of everything through pluralization. The pressure is then to celebrate diversity or differences, in their own right, whether they are cultural or moral or religious. The only absolute is the conviction that there are no absolutes. Every culture and religion is to be respected as equally legitimate and valid. Perhaps the best popular

⁴⁶Hanciles, “Some Implications”, 146.

⁴⁷Gailyn Van Rheeenan, “Religionquake: From World Religions to Multiple Spiritualities,” in *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends*, ed. Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheeenan, and Douglas McConnell (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 79.

⁴⁸Max L. Stackhouse, “The Theological Challenge of Globalization,” Religion Online, http://www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/researchd.dll/showarticle?item_id=60 (accessed September 7, 2003).

⁴⁹Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

expression of this is in the words of Rabbi David Hartman, whom Thomas Friedman quotes in an article written shortly after 9/11:

All faiths that come out of the biblical tradition—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—have the tendency to believe that they have the exclusive truth. . . . The opposite of [this] religious totalitarianism is an ideology of pluralism—an ideology that embraces religious diversity and the idea that my faith can be nurtured without claiming exclusive truth. . . . Can Islam, Christianity and Judaism know that God speaks Arabic on Fridays, Hebrew on Saturdays and Latin on Sundays, and that he welcomes different human beings approaching him through their own history, out of their language and cultural heritage? . . . can we have a multilingual view of God—a notion that God is not exhausted by just one religious path?⁵⁰

Are these then our only two choices when it comes to coping with the other—uncompromising hostility or pluralistic compromise? I believe there is a better way, and the greatest test facing the Christian global witness in the twenty-first century is our ability to discover and pursue it.⁵¹ We can respond to the fact of religious plurality with uncompromising allegiance to the truth of God’s Word and an unyielding commitment to love people of other faiths. The claims of Christ’s unique and universal Lordship are not something Christians have invented—we have received the facts of the gospel as a stewardship, and we are obligated to share it. But we are called to share the truth in love, with gentleness and respect (Eph.4:15; 1 Pet. 3:15).

Paul’s address at Athens provides us with some helpful guidelines for sharing the gospel with people of other faiths. We need to listen before we speak, display sensitivity and confidence, and seek to build bridges rather than walls in communicating with people of other faiths. Paul did not only see the error and darkness in religion—he also saw religion as an expression of a thirst for God which only Christ could satisfy (Acts 17:23). We need to do

⁵⁰Thomas Friedman, “The Real War,” *The New York Times* (Tuesday, November 27, 2001).

⁵¹Van Rhee en expresses the conviction of a wide spectrum of scholars when he says: “In the new climate of the twenty-first century the most significant theological issue is the relationship between Christianity and the other world religions.” “Religionquake”, 81.

likewise, and then freely share our experience of Christ with others as fellow travellers on a common journey rather than as saints who have already arrived at a state of moral or spiritual perfection.

Our stewardship of the gospel and faithfulness to Christ requires that we affirm the decisiveness of God's word and action in the historic Christ-event. However, being a follower of Jesus is no reason to have feelings of religious superiority or cultural arrogance. Our mission is to share the story of the saving love of God in Christ—a story that has transformed millions of lives down through the centuries. We share this story with confidence and enthusiasm, but also with sensitivity and respect for the other person's faith and experience.

Megashift One: Mission from Everywhere to Everywhere

Globalization has given us a world characterized by massive people movements and cultures in motion resulting in a borderless world. What will this mean for Pentecostal missions in the twenty-first century? Our examination of three trends stemming from the globalization wave has helped us to see an interesting convergence of features that indicate the need for a crucial megashift in the way we do missions in the days ahead. Massive migrations of people are making traditional borders of geography and nationality increasingly redundant. Neat categories of cultural identity delineated by space and locality are likewise becoming irrelevant, having to give way to the inexorable movement of trans-local and transnational currents of change. The mission frontiers marked by national and cultural difference, which were hitherto geographically distant, are suddenly appearing next door. We now live in a new world—a world without borders.

These observations obviously have massive socio-political implications of seismic proportions, but may seem remote to the more pressing immediate concerns which some of us

face. It is hard for some of us to conceive of a “world without borders” today, but is it really such a fanciful notion? Perhaps it is easier for me to see it as a Christian minority citizen in a majority Hindu nation, with the added privileged perspective of having observed life in the West. But I think the indicators have been with us for a while.

Cricket is India’s national game and Pakistan is India’s traditional rival. Since my early childhood I have known that every time India loses to Pakistan, fireworks go off in celebration in Muslim areas everywhere in India. What about affluent Hindu American citizens who are more passionate about funding and driving the fundamentalist Hindu agenda back in India than they are about exploring their American identity? Are French Canadians really French or Canadian? There are American Muslims in the U.S. who enjoy Disneyland and KFC, yet hate fellow American Jews and would die for their Muslim brothers and sisters in Egypt or Saudi Arabia.

Let me highlight what I believe is the crucial issue by means of a personal illustration. A few years ago, I was privileged to be part of a panel of two-thirds world Christian leaders at Oxford, being interviewed by representatives of the British Christian Press. At a certain point in our interview, a Malaysian member of the panel asked one of the interviewers why he seemed so reluctant to report cases of persecution against Christians in the developing world. The Christian journalist’s candid response was that he was afraid of antagonizing people of other faiths and disrupting communal harmony in the U.K. My question slipped out as a reflex response: “Then what makes your paper Christian?” I did not intend to embarrass him but the audience exploded with laughter at the incongruity of his position. He was more concerned about not antagonizing people of other faiths in the U.K. than identifying with suffering Christian brothers and sisters in our part of the world.

Traditional borders of culture, ethnicity, and nationhood are becoming increasingly fuzzy with the passage of time. This is a great moment for Christians to rediscover their true identity as those whose only real, enduring citizenship is in heaven (Phil.3:20). A renewed emphasis on the imminent eschatology of the early Pentecostal revival is perhaps what is needed to help us balance even our “this-worldly” dual identities. For we are called to be both loyal citizens, holding active local cultural and national allegiances, while remaining vibrant participants in the forward sweep of a pilgrim faith tradition as members of a global community of Jesus followers. What, then, is the future course of mission in the twenty-first century?

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Christianity was essentially a Western religion. Ninety percent of the world’s Christians lived in Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand; only 10% lived in the south and east. Today 70% of the world’s Christians are to be found in the non-western/majority world. This movement of the center of gravity of Christianity from the north to the south and east is viewed by some as the transformation of Christianity from a territorial (European) faith to a global faith.⁵² In Walls’ oft-quoted study of the expansion of the Christian movement, he is careful to emphasize that Christianity has never had a permanent territorial center. While the missionary movement of the previous era was closely tied to the notion of Christendom, with the growing decline of Christianity in the West, he regards the idea of territorial Christianity as now “irretrievably broken.”⁵³ In summarizing the impact of this

⁵²R. V. Pierard, “Viewing Denominational Histories in Global Terms,” in *A Global Faith: Essays on Evangelicalism and Globalisation*, eds. Mark Hutchinson and Ogbu Kalu (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1998), 143. This is a phenomenon we will be looking at more closely as we continue our assessment of the impact of globalization trends on future mission in our concluding lecture.

⁵³Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (New York: Orbis, 1996), 258; Shenk registers a similar assessment albeit in slightly different language: “Today we can speak only nostalgically about the geographical frontiers. We now require new metaphors to describe the missiological frontier in this space age. We stand at the junction between two eras . . . The new era will be shaped by the vitality of the faith in the newly established centers in the non-Western world and sociopolitical forces quite different from the period dominated by Pax Britannica and Pax Americana.” Shenk, *Changing Frontiers*, 187.

development upon the future course of Christian missions, Walls makes the following perceptive observations, germane to our concluding assessment:

Christian faith is now more diffused than at any previous time in its history; not only in the sense that it is more geographically, ethnically, and culturally widespread than ever before, but in the sense that it is diffused *within* more communities. The territorial “from-to” idea that underlay the older missionary movement has to give way to a concept more like that of Christians within the Roman Empire in the second and third centuries: parallel presences in different circles and at different levels, each seeking to penetrate within and beyond its circle. This does not prevent movement and interchange and enterprise . . . but it forces revision of concepts, images, attitudes, and methods that arose from the presence of a Christendom that no longer exists.⁵⁴

It is hard to add to these wise words of one of the most respected missiologists of our time, but his thesis finds strong affirmation among the finest minds in contemporary scholarship.⁵⁵ The emergence of a world without borders and the rise of a truly global church in this generation means that mission today must become multidirectional. The real mission boundary is no longer between east and west, between western empires and savage tribes, or between “Christian” countries and the mission field, but between faith and unbelief—that is a boundary that runs through every nation and culture, every local community, every street. Mission today is from everywhere to everywhere.⁵⁶ Perhaps no expression of contemporary Christianity is better positioned or prepared to *ride the Wave* of mission “made to travel” in a world without borders than Pentecostalism—a religion “made to travel” that passionately seeks to *follow the Wind!*

⁵⁴Walls, 258-259.

⁵⁵Newbigin, Sanneh, Escobar, and Wright, to mention a few.

⁵⁶Christopher J.H. Wright, “An Upside-Down World” *Christianity Today*, 50, no. 1 (January 2007).

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