



Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

*The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World*

**GLOBALIZATION AND THE GOSPEL:  
RETHINKING MISSION IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD**

**Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 30**

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Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

In Pattaya, Thailand, September 29 to October 5, 2004

***“A New Vision, a New Heart, a Renewed Call”***

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## The context for the production of the Lausanne Occasional Papers

The Lausanne Movement is an international movement committed to energising  
**“the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.”**

With roots going back to the historical conferences in Edinburgh (1910) and Berlin (1966), the Lausanne Movement was born out of the First International Congress on World Evangelization called by evangelist Billy Graham held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in July 1974. The landmark outcome of this Congress was the **Lausanne Covenant** supported by the 2,430 participants from 150 nations. The covenant proclaims the substance of the Christian faith as historically declared in the creeds and adds a clear missional dimension to our faith. Many activities have emerged from the Lausanne Congress and from the second congress held in Manila in 1989. The Covenant (in a number of languages), and details about the many regional events and specialised conferences which have been undertaken in the name of Lausanne, may be examined online at [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org).

The Lausanne International Committee believed it was led by the Holy Spirit to hold another conference which would bring together Christian leaders from around the world. This time the Committee planned to have younger emerging leaders involved and sought funds to enable it to bring a significant contingent from those parts of the world where the church is rapidly growing today. It decided to call the conference a **Forum**. As a Forum its structure would allow people to come and participate if they had something to contribute to one of 31 issues (around which were formed Issue Groups). These issues were chosen through a global research programme seeking to identify the most significant issues in the world today which are of concern in our task to take the *good news* to the world.

This Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) is the report that has emerged from one of these Issue Groups. LOPs have been produced for each of the Issue Groups and information on these and other publications may be obtained online at [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org).

The theme of the Forum for World Evangelization held in 2004 was **“A new vision, a new heart, a renewed call.”** This Forum was held in Pattaya, Thailand from September 29 to October 5, 2004. 1,530 participants came from 130 countries to work in one of the 31 Issue Groups.

The Affirmations at the conclusion of the Forum stated:

“There has been a spirit of working together in serious dialogue and prayerful reflection. Representatives from a wide spectrum of cultures and virtually all parts of the world have come together to learn from one another and to seek new direction from the Holy Spirit for world evangelization. They committed themselves to joint action under divine guidance.

The dramatic change in the political and economic landscape in recent years has raised new challenges in evangelization for the church. The polarization between east and west makes it imperative that the church seek God’s direction for the appropriate responses to the present challenges.

In the 31 Issue Groups these new realities were taken into consideration, including the HIV pandemic, terrorism, globalization, the global role of media, poverty, persecution of Christians, fragmented families, political and religious nationalism, post-modern mind set, oppression of children, urbanization, neglect of the disabled and others.

Great progress was made in these groups as they grappled for solutions to the key challenges of world evangelization. As these groups focused on making specific recommendations, larger strategic themes came to the forefront.

There was affirmation that major efforts of the church must be directed toward those who have no access to the gospel. The commitment to help establish self sustaining churches within 6,000 remaining unreached people groups remains a central priority.

Secondly, the words of our Lord call us to love our neighbour as ourselves. In this we have failed greatly. We renew our commitment to reach out in love and compassion to those who are marginalised because of disabilities or who have different lifestyles and spiritual perspectives. We commit to reach out to children and young people who constitute a majority of the world's population, many of whom are being abused, forced into slavery, armies and child labour.

A third stream of a strategic nature acknowledges that the growth of the church is now accelerating outside of the western world. Through the participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America, we recognise the dynamic nature and rapid growth of the church in the *South*. Church leaders from the *South* are increasingly providing exemplary leadership in world evangelization.

Fourthly, we acknowledge the reality that much of the world is made up of oral learners who understand best when information comes to them by means of stories. A large proportion of the world's populations are either unable to or unwilling to absorb information through written communications. Therefore, a need exists to share the "Good News" and to disciple new Christians in story form and parables.

Fifthly, we call on the church to use media to effectively engage the culture in ways that draw non-believers toward spiritual truth and to proclaim Jesus Christ in culturally relevant ways.

Finally, we affirm the priesthood of all believers and call on the church to equip, encourage and empower women, men and youth to fulfil their calling as witnesses and co-labourers in the world wide task of evangelization.

Transformation was a theme which emerged from the working groups. We acknowledge our own need to be continually transformed, to continue to open ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit, to the challenges of God's word and to grow in Christ together with fellow Christians in ways that result in social and economic transformation. We acknowledge that the scope of the gospel and building the Kingdom of God involves, body, mind, soul and spirit. Therefore we call for increasing integration of service to society and proclamation of the gospel.

We pray for those around the world who are being persecuted for their faith and for those who live in constant fear of their lives. We uphold our brothers and sisters who are suffering. We recognize that the reality of the persecuted church needs to be increasingly on the agenda of the whole Body of Christ. At the same time, we also acknowledge the importance of loving and doing good to our enemies while we fight for the right of freedom of conscience everywhere.

We are deeply moved by the onslaught of the HIV/AIDS pandemic – the greatest human emergency in history. The Lausanne movement calls all churches everywhere to prayer and holistic response to this plague.

"9/11," the war in Iraq, the war on terror and its reprisals compel us to state that we must not allow the gospel or the Christian faith to be captive to any one geo-political entity. We affirm that the Christian faith is above all political entities.

We are concerned and mourn the death and destruction caused by all conflicts, terrorism and war. We call for Christians to pray for peace, to be proactively involved in reconciliation and avoid all attempts to turn any conflict into a religious war. Christian mission in this context lies in becoming peacemakers.

We pray for peace and reconciliation and God's guidance in how to bring about peace through our work of evangelization. We pray for God to work in the affairs of nations

to open doors of opportunity for the gospel. We call on the church to mobilize every believer to focus specific consistent prayer for the evangelization of their communities and the world.

In this Forum we have experienced the partnership of men and women working together. We call on the church around the world to work towards full partnership of men and women in the work of world evangelism by maximising the gifts of all.

We also recognize the need for greater intentionality in developing future leaders. We call on the church to find creative ways to release emerging leaders to serve effectively.”

Numerous practical recommendations for local churches to consider were offered. These will be available on the Lausanne website and in the Lausanne Occasional Papers. It is our prayer that these many case studies and action plans will be used of God to mobilise the church to share a clear and relevant message using a variety of methods to reach the most neglected or resistant groups so that everyone will have the opportunity to hear the gospel message and be able to respond to this good news in faith.

We express our gratitude to the Thai Church which has hosted us and to their welcoming presentation to the Forum. We are profoundly grateful to God for the privilege of being able to gather here from the four corners of the earth. We have developed new partnerships, made new friends and encouraged one another in our various ministries. Not withstanding the resistance to the gospel in many places and the richness of an inherited religious and cultural tradition we here at the Forum have accepted afresh the renewed call to be obedient to the mandate of Christ. We commit ourselves to making His saving love known so that the whole world may have opportunity to accept God’s gift of salvation through Christ.”

These affirmations indicate the response of the participants to the Forum outcomes and their longing that the whole church may be motivated by the outcomes of the Forum to strengthen its determination to be obedient to God’s calling.

May the case studies and the practical suggestions in this and the other LOPs be of great help to you and your church as you seek to find new ways and a renewed call to proclaim the saving love of Jesus Christ

*David Claydon*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Rethinking Gospel, Mission, Church and World

The primary purpose of this paper<sup>1</sup> is to identify the principal opportunities and challenges globalization presents the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the very composition of this paper, one certain but double-edged implication became clear: globalization presents Christians with a rare opportunity (and, the authors believe: mandate) to think afresh how we steward the gospel in light of complex global realities, as well as how we conduct ourselves as members of a genuine global faith. One dark warning confronting all who consider this rethinking is the troubling consequence of not taking appropriate advantage of this opportunity. Indeed if we take seriously the motto of the 2004 Global Forum for World Evangelization — “The Whole Church, Taking the Whole Gospel, to the Whole World,” such rethinking of mission is unavoidable.

In the following pages, we draw on rethinking that has been occurring for some time among missionaries, scholars, and otherwise-engaged Christians across the world. We are especially interested in building on work from two earlier Global Forums, in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974, and in Manila, Philippines in 1989. It is in light of these previous efforts that we intentionally emphasize the *church’s* mission in the world, to avoid narrow construal of mission as either personal evangelization or as the predominant purview of professional missionaries, missiologists, and other missionary practitioners. We will argue that our global context demands this emphasis.

*Gospel and mission*, in this view, is by definition evangelistic, prophetic, holistic, transformative and, ultimately, church-based. This paper does not presume to split these various callings apart, but seeks to hold them in creative tension as context, vocation, and prayerful, biblically-based discernment all demand.

*Gospel*, or *euvangelion*, is understood in its fullest sense as the “good news” that Jesus Christ, the King of Heaven, has come, not only to save individuals from hell, but to restore his kingdom • which is nothing short of the entire world and all of creation. As we shall see, “globalization” leads us to consider anew the words of the Lord’s Prayer: “*Father, thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.*” The *mission* of the church, accordingly, is to be a living sign to the world that its King has indeed come to restore his kingdom. In the words of the New Testament scholar, N. T. Wright, we are to be for the world what Jesus was for Israel — and, we are able to carry out our mission because of what Jesus did for Israel and the world. Understood this way, we are to be the King’s heralds announcing throughout the cities and outposts of the kingdom the “good news” that he has come, he has defeated the rebellious powers of sin and death, and through the power of his Spirit, and he is working through the church to put his world to rights.<sup>2</sup>

Our gospel work, however, will take the distinct shape of the cross. Wherever Christ’s church exists, in whatever circumstance it finds itself, its members discover that

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<sup>1</sup> There are two ways to write a group paper: by committee and by proxy. For reasons logistical and accidental, the Globalization Issue Group chose the latter strategy. While drawing upon the experience and ideas of all the Group’s members (for a complete list of names please see Appendix A), this paper’s primary author is Josh Yates, with substantial input and editorial assistance from George Thomas, Katie Pennock, and Cynthia Yates. Section IV also draws extensively from case studies prepared by group members Naoki Sugioka, Michael Wilkinson, Jehu Hanciles, Michelle Chew, Lawrence Temfwe, Gilberto da Silva, and Marty Shaw. Needless to say, any errors, omissions, and bad judgment are the sole property of the primary author.

<sup>2</sup> Wright develops these themes in a number of books, but see especially [The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus was and Is](#) (Intervarsity Press 1999).

being “kingdom-announcers,” means also being “cross-bearers” — the living sign of Christ’s suffering and redemptive love in a bent and broken world.

*Church* has a host of meanings. In this paper, we use it in at least three ways:

First, by church we mean the community of all believers now alive in the world regardless of denominational affiliation, as in the “church universal.” In this regard, we especially affirm recent calls for equality, inclusivity, and genuine partnership between Western and non-Western Christians. (It happens that our primary audience will be those believers who self-identify as “evangelical” in some fashion.)

Second, church refers both to any particular group of believers gathered for worship, for celebration of the sacraments, or for Christian formation, as well as individuals and groups of Christians “at large” in their communities and societies — whether at work, in service, or perhaps especially as citizens and neighbours. Church in both these senses refers to the local church, but turns on the distinction of the *gathered, worshipping church (on Sunday morning)* and what is sometimes referred to as the *church in the marketplace (the rest of the week)*.

Finally, in all senses of the word, Church (now capitalized) must necessarily refer to the holy mystery of the Body of Christ that exists now and throughout history. Taken together, these various uses should evoke something similar to the confession of the Nicene Creed — “*We believe in One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.*”

*World* is likewise employed in a variety of ways. In its most biblical sense, the world refers to the entire creation or cosmos, which although created good is rebellious and fallen.

World also describes the distinct social contexts in which we live — our particular “life-worlds” into which we are born, which form the primary horizons of experience in which we make sense of ourselves and the purposes of our lives. These contexts differ from place to place and from time to time according to culture, ethnic heritage, language, religion, political and economic arrangements, topography and natural resources and, of course, history.

Lastly, we use world to refer to the entire globe — to planet Earth itself. We maintain that as a consequence of globalization our local “life-worlds” are increasingly and meaningfully interconnected on a planetary scale. Thus, the “local” is increasingly penetrated by the “global,” and vice-versa. The composite picture of globalization and its implications for the gospel (the church’s primary mission in the world) that emerges in the following pages is complexly layered with a multitude of meanings, many of which may be difficult to grasp, or may be contested. If we are correct in our analysis, however, the need for rethinking mission has never been more critical or more opportune.

Before proceeding, we recommend prayerful reflection upon the following scriptural passages. While in no way exhaustive, it offers an outline of the full gospel story — of creation, fall, Israel, Jesus, the church, and restoration — that frames the ideas in this paper.

### ***Gospel Meditation***<sup>3</sup>

#### CREATION: COMMUNION & COMMISION

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Genesis 1:1      | “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”   |
| Genesis 2: 7     | “...then the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being...” |
| Genesis: 1:27-28 | “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed                      |

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<sup>3</sup> The follow passages are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

them, God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth'."

#### FALL: SIN & DISPERSION

Genesis 3: 17 "And to Adam he said, 'Because you listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.'"

Genesis 11: 6 "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, 'Behold they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel..."

#### ISRAEL: COVENANT & EXILE

Genesis 12:1-3 "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves'."

Exodus 29: 45-46 "Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. They will know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them."

Jeremiah 31:31-34 "I will make a covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people....They will know me."

#### JESUS: RESURRECTION & NEW CREATION

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

1 Corinthians 15: 20 "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

Colossians 1:15-20 "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him the fullness of

God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

**THE CHURCH: GOSPEL & (RE)COMMISSION**

John 20:21-23 “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’”

Acts 2: 1-4 “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance.”

Romans 8: 22 “We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now. And not only the creation has been groaning, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit...”

**NEW HEAVENS & NEW EARTH: RESTORATION & RECONCILIATION**

Isaiah 55:12-13 “For you shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off.”

Revelation 7: 9-13 “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude, from every nation, from all number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”

***God and Globalization in many tongues<sup>4</sup>***

|            |           |   |                   |
|------------|-----------|---|-------------------|
| Bemba      | “Lesa”    | & | “umunshi omo”     |
| Portuguese | "Deus "   | & | "globalização"    |
| Urdu       | “Khuda”   | & | “alamgiriāt”      |
| German     | “Gott”    | & | “globalisierung”  |
| Ibo        | “Chukwu”  | & | “nmekota uwanile” |
| Japanese   | “Kami”    | & | “sekaikiboka”     |
| French     | “un dieu” | & | “mondialisation”  |
| Korean     | “Hananim” | & | “seghewha”        |

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<sup>4</sup> These represent the primary languages spoken among the members of the working group responsible for writing the following paper—a foretaste of Revelation 7:9-13!

Spanish  
Hindi  
Chinese

“Dios”  
“Parameshwar”  
“Shirn”

& “globalización”  
& “dhuniyabhar”  
& “chuan cho hua”

## 2. WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

There is a well-known Hindu fable about blind men and an elephant. One version of this fable has each of the blind men reaching out and touching different parts of the elephant, only to come to different conclusions about what it was they were touching. One touched the elephant's ear and believed he was touching the sail of a ship; another touched the trunk and believed he was holding a snake; the third grasped the elephant's tail and thought it was a rope; the fourth grabbed onto the elephant's tusk and supposed he was holding the handle of a spear; and the final man put his arms around the elephant's leg and thought he was hugging the trunk of a large tree. When it comes to comprehending globalization, we are a lot like the blind men in the fable.

### **Popular Snapshots**

- *A man in London calls a product help-line for his IBM computer and gets an operator in Bangalore.*
- *Rwandan Anglicans establish churches in the United States as part of the Anglican Mission in America.*
- *A German protestor in Berlin organizes an anti-globalization demonstration in Brazil with fellow organizers in Taipei, Mexico City, and Seattle, via email.*
- *Filipina maids in Riyad, Saudi Arabia see themselves as missionaries to their wealthy Arab Muslim employers.*
- *A Japanese pilot communicates in English to the Thai air-traffic controllers upon approach to Bangkok.*
- *Rural Nigerians come to faith in Christ by watching The Jesus Film. (Global missions organizations have translated the film into 830 languages.)*
- *Young South Africans perform MTV-style-rap and hip-hop at dance clubs in Cape Town.*
- *A Chinese college student passes the SARS virus to a relative visiting from Hong Kong, who in turn passes it to a friend from Canada. Within in a few days, a SARS outbreak occurs in Toronto.*
- *Researchers at the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia discover a cure for River Blindness in Africa.*
- *Nuclear waste is taken from Japan and reprocessed in Sellafield, England, before being dumped in Australia.*
- *An Australian couple purchases a diamond wedding ring that was originally mined in Sierra Leone where diamond trade fuelled a bloody civil war.*
- *Coffee growers in Guatemala are put out of work as world coffee prices plunge.*
- *Pacific Islanders watch the celebration of the New Year/Millennium across the world's time zones on BBC television.*
- *The persecution of Christians in Sudan and elsewhere sparks concern among Christians to form human rights organizations and to push the U.S. government and the U.N. to make religious freedom a fundamental human right.*
- *Christians in industrial societies face the reality of living in post-Christian cultures. In some English schools Sikh children outnumber Christian children.*
- *Laotian and Nepalese women are forced into prostitution and sent to brothels for the global sex trade in Bangkok, Mumbai, and Los Angeles.*
- *The Gramian Bank development model, the genius of a Bangladeshi economist, is now implemented around the world, not least in the inner-cities of the United States.*
- *A man places his cellular phone next to the Western Wall in Jerusalem so a relative in France can say a prayer at the holy site.*

- *Christian minorities in predominantly Islamic societies suffer reprisals when a prominent Western Christian's inflammatory remarks are reported in the international news.*

Such are the well-known anecdotes of our world. Yet they are not merely anecdotes. These “global urban legends” may appear abstract and distant in the headlines of our local papers or news programs, but they are increasingly the stuff of our daily lives and our collective biographies. Like the blind men, we each experience a mere part of something we dimly perceive to be much bigger. Like the blind men, we can easily mistake the nature of this larger reality. Taken together, these “snapshots” certainly add-up to something close to a fair estimation of contemporary globalization, though few of us have the capacity to comprehend globalization in all its complexity. To be sure, there are helpful summaries. Here is how one group of leading globalization scholars has summarized this story:

Drugs, crime, sex, war, disease, people, ideas, images, news, information, entertainment, pollution, goods, and money now all travel the globe. They are crossing national boundaries and connecting the world on an unprecedented scale and with previously unimaginable speed. The lives of ordinary people everywhere in the world seem increasingly to be shaped by events, decisions, and actions that take place far away from where they live and work. Cultures, economies, and politics appear to merge across the globe through the rapid exchange of information, ideas, and knowledge, and the investment strategies of global corporations.<sup>5</sup>

As this summary suggests, comprehending the full *implication* of this story for our own lives, let alone for Christian mission in the world, is not as easy as telling it; the telling is no simple task. Books and articles on this complicated and often vexing topic (some academic, some popular, a few Christian, most secular) seem to roll off the press as often as the daily paper. Yet, like the blind men and the elephant, many of us have reached an opinion not only about what globalization is, but whether it is to be celebrated or resisted.

### **Common hopes and suspicions**

*“Globalization is a shibboleth.” – Zygmunt Bauman*

Scholars and laypeople invoke “globalization”, almost obsessively, to describe the realities of the post-Cold War world. Its invocation has provoked more questions than answers, leading some to great millennial ambitions, some to dark apocalyptic brooding, and most to resigned ambivalence toward a world they neither fully understand nor hope to control.

In the popular imagination, globalization is often held responsible for much that is good or evil in the world. Many hail it as the champion of a new World Order consisting of expanding markets, the increasing realization of human rights and greater opportunities for people to improve their life conditions — a world characterized by humanitarian triumph, scientific innovation, unprecedented freedom and unheard of material prosperity. There are just as many who blame globalization for economic and technological imperialism, the loss of local cultures, the rise of fundamentalism, and greater general insecurity — a world characterized by global disease, a growing gap between rich and poor, international terrorism, ethnic cleansing and environmental degradation.

#### **(a) Common hopes**

*“The World is 10 Years Old.* It was born when the Wall fell in 1989. It’s no surprise that the world’s youngest economy — the global economy — is still finding its bearings. The intricate checks and balances that

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<sup>5</sup> David Held, *A Globalizing World? Culture, Economics, Politics* (Routledge 2000), 6.

stabilize economies are only incorporated with time. Many world markets are only recently freed, governed for the first time by the emotions of people rather than the fists of the state. From where we sit, none of this diminishes the promise offered a decade ago by the demise of the walled-off world...The spread of free markets and democracy around the world is permitting more people everywhere to turn their aspirations into achievements. And technology, properly harnessed and liberally distributed, has the power to erase not just geographical borders, but also human ones. It seems to us that, for a 10-year old, the world continues to hold great promise. In the meantime, no one ever said growing up was easy.” (Merrill Lynch Advertisement, cited in Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 1999, xiii)

### **(b) Common suspicions**

“Gaps between the rich and poor are widening, decision-making power is concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, local cultures are wiped out, biological diversity is destroyed, regional tensions are increasing and the environment is nearing the point of collapse. That is the sad reality of globalization, an opportunity for human progress whose great potential has been thwarted. Instead we have a global economic system which feeds on itself while marginalizing the fundamental human needs of people and communities” (Wayne Ellwood, *The No Nonsense Guide to Globalization*, 2001, 11).

“The world is beginning to look like an American strip mall, complete with KFC, Pizza Hut, and the Golden Arches.” (Tom Sine, “Branded for Life,” *Sojourners Magazine*, Sept-Oct. 2000)

For Christians, such hopes and suspicions are no less salient. For some, globalization represents nothing less than laying the most recent brick atop an ever growing Tower of Babel; for others it is a sign, not unlike the appearance of a new strand of colour in a rainbow — a sign of God’s plan to reach the entire world with his living Word. As with most catchall concepts, reality often gets lost amid the myriad uses to which they are put.

One thing is certain: the ambiguity of globalization as a concept and the vitriol of the current debate over its putative opportunities and liabilities represent a genuine grasping for understanding, for comprehending the complex realities the term is supposed to describe. Complicating matters, *none of us stands outside these realities*. As we see in the “snapshots,” endless individual stories can be told about “globalization” and the stories we tell depend upon our particular location in the world. That is, each of our perspectives on “globalization” is shaped by *where we live in the world*.

Thus, both the confusion surrounding the term’s meaning and the fact that each of us perceives “it” through a very particular lens, demands that Christians consider globalization carefully and soberly. The first step in this process is surely to move beyond the popular rhetoric of *globalmania* or *globalphobia*, whether of the secular or Christian variety. Such a step requires moving through at least four levels of discourse about globalization. (That is, how we tell the story.) We have already touched upon the first two levels: our everyday experience as expressed in “snapshots” and our moral judgments about whether globalization is, on the whole, good or bad.

Moving beyond these primary conceptions to a third level of discourse, we must get some critical distance from our own experiences and judgments. That is, we need to

engage in a bit of abstract thinking. To help in this process, we will use mountain climbing as a metaphor. Like climbing a mountain, abstract thinking can be a challenging task that may take us out of familiar territories and comfort zones, and onto foreign and difficult terrain, where each step takes thoughtful consideration. Yet we believe our ultimate vantage point will be worth any effort expended.

The fourth level of discourse is that of Christian reflection, a task in some ways more difficult than the other three, and one we will merely begin in this paper.

Through this more comprehensive discourse, this paper aims to take an approach that has too long been neglected. Rather than focus on a particular strand of contemporary globalization —say, economic globalization or technological globalization — and either celebrating or condemning, we warn against the temptation to see globalization as a single manifestation or as an either/or proposition. We suggest that before choosing sides (which we agree is compelling and sometimes unavoidable), it is necessary to consider globalization as a reality with many “parts.” (Remember the elephant!) The parts include and also transcend what is typically held up as “globalization”— namely technologically-enabled, neo-liberal capitalism driven by Western-dominated international financial institutions, multi-national corporations (MNCs) and consumer markets increasingly backed by the U.S. military. This in no way denies the significance of this face of globalization, but suggests it is not the *only* face, nor perhaps is it the most significant in the long run.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, if the reader expects to find here simple affirmation of preconceived opinions —either a heated polemic against globalization or a starry-eyed celebration of its potential in spreading the gospel, this paper is bound to disappoint. For the scholar hoping for an objective, detached, dispassionate analysis, or even the missions practitioner hoping to glean a list of best practices and concrete action steps for “global evangelization,” this paper will also be found wanting.

Ours is at once more modest and more ambitious than such aims. We hope to offer a credible depiction of the contemporary global context and an honest appraisal of some of its implications for those seeking to be faithful witnesses of the light of Jesus Christ in a darkened world. A primary objective of this paper (which is in itself no simple task), is *understanding*. We also wish to encourage and reaffirm a kind of discipleship that we believe to be both prior to, and the necessary grounding for, any prophetic critique, reflective or qualified embrace, and/or best practice we could offer. We believe that what globalization demands most from the church (*the whole church* — not just the Western church or Evangelicals or the African church) is to think afresh about how it incarnates the gospel (*the whole gospel* — not just saving souls or seeking remedies for social injustice) amidst the complex realities of the contemporary world (*the whole world* — not just the First, Third or Two-Thirds world, or even just the human world). It is this rethinking that will ultimately allow us to discern more concrete and direct responses to local situations as much as to our own complicity in global processes. Expanding a well-known book title from E. Stanley Jones, one of the most thoughtful American missionaries of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, we are suggesting a way of inhabiting the whole creation which recognizes that the call of the church is ultimately *to follow Jesus along the global road*.

If we are to address both the benefits and challenges globalization brings to the gospel, then we must, with due diligence and God’s uncommon grace, come to terms with the complexity of our global moment, not least our own relationship to that moment. How we do

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<sup>6</sup> For most people in the world today the three most controversial issues are global capitalism, Islamic fundamentalism and American power. Surprisingly, few include the radical transformation of Christianity from a predominantly Western religion into a genuine world religion. Only time will tell, however, whether Christianity’s global transformation will have a more lasting impact.

so will significantly influence not only how globalization ultimately impacts the gospel, but how, through us, the gospel might impact globalization itself.

***What do you think?***

*Before proceeding, write your definition of globalization and whether you think it is a good thing or a bad thing.*

*Consider: How have you experienced globalization? What do you think globalization means for the gospel? (It might be helpful to return to the gospel meditation outlined above.)*

Our study of globalization begins with conceptual housekeeping. The following section offers crucial analytical distinctions in the conceptualization of globalization and presents a working definition. With these distinctions and working definition in mind, we then move to a summary consideration of how contemporary globalization is transforming the context of mission. We also consider ways in which the church itself has been a globalizing force and raise questions about how the church might confront its past and present contribution to global processes for good and for ill. Once we present a depiction of global realities confronting us, we offer a preliminary response to the central question posed at the start: How the church might rethink its mission in such a world.

### 3. GLOBALIZATION: FOUR NECESSARY DISTINCTIONS

Defining globalization presents a tremendous challenge. As the Hindu fable and the popular snapshots of globalization listed at the start are intended to make clear, the term globalization is invoked summarily to explain an extraordinarily diverse array of what we experience firsthand, watch on TV, read about in papers and are taught to believe about the contemporary world.

Christians believe it is part of their responsibility to properly name things. To do this we must constantly remind ourselves that the relationship between our experience and causal analysis, let alone moral assessment, is NEVER simple. This takes analytical rigor, a great deal of patience, and above all, God's wisdom. *Thus, what follows is no mere academic exercise in semantics.*<sup>7</sup> It is time to begin our climb up the mountain.

#### **Common definitions**

"Globalization can be defined as a set of economic, social, technological, political and cultural structures and processes arising from the changing character of the production, consumption, and trade of goods and assets that comprise the base of the international political economy."  
(UNESCO, see [unesco.org/most/globalisation/Introduction.htm](http://unesco.org/most/globalisation/Introduction.htm))

"...the growing economic interdependence of countries worldwide through the increasing volume and variety of cross-border transactions in goods and services and of international capital flows, and also through the more rapid and widespread diffusion of technology." (International Monetary Fund, "Globalization, Opportunities and Challenges," in World Economic Outlook, May 1997)

"Globalization is the present worldwide drive toward a globalized economic system dominated by supranational corporate trade and banking institutions that are not accountable to democratic processes or national governments." (International Forum on Globalization, global coalition of anti-globalization NGOs, see <http://www.ifg.org/analysis.htm>)

"Cultures, economies, and politics appear to merge across the globe through the rapid exchange of information, ideas, and knowledge, and the investment strategies of global corporations." (David Held, et al., in A Globalizing World? Culture, Economics, and Politics, 6)

#### **Globalization & Globalism**

In spite of obvious differences between the groups listed above, notice the tendency to focus on economic globalization and to reflect something of an economic reductionism. According to such views, other aspects of globalization, including culture and religion, are epiphenomenal, that is, cultural and religious aspects of globalization are not thought to have any influence of their own. With this tendency toward economic reductionism as a backdrop, it is essential to introduce our first important distinction. Specifically, it is crucial

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<sup>7</sup> It is important, furthermore, to recognize that the appearance of the term globalization and its particular cognates, *global*, *globe*, *globality*, *globalism*, etc., are themselves part of the things "out there" in the real world these very terms are trying to describe. Even efforts to "define terms" and "make distinctions" are part of the globalization process, and are therefore contested.

to distinguish two related but quite distinct processes. One is *globalization*, and the other is what we will call *globalism*.

“*Globalization* proper” refers to an ongoing *set of processes* occurring within and across all the domains of human life that are differentiated by social scientists, i.e., economic, political, technological, social, cultural and the like. It is all of the processes by which such things as the telephone, democracy, fireworks, Christianity, Indian food, football fields and bubblegum become globally available. These processes include the development of communications and transportation technologies, the expansion of particular political systems, the integration of markets and political economies, as well as flows of people, goods, images, disease, religion and ideas across the planet. Such processes can be accurately described as *global* when these processes are inter-continental in both their scope (presence) and impact (consequence).<sup>8</sup> One can rightly talk about the globalization of the telephone, democracy, fireworks, Christianity, Indian food, football fields and bubblegum, for instance, because each of these can be found on every inhabited continent on the planet. Some have a greater globalizing impact than others, but all are genuinely “global” as they can be found everywhere to one degree or another. Together, these globally recognizable artefacts reveal the magnitude of contemporary globalization and the processes by which they have become so are aspects of *globalization*. However, as these examples also suggest, *globalization* proper is uneven, many-sided, and often multi-directional.

Since a helpful analogy of *globalization* proper is the ocean, let’s come off our metaphorical mountain for a while and set sail. The oceans’ waters literally cover the earth and its waves, although having regular patterns, are driven by many unseen and unpredictable forces: deep underwater currents, the tidal pull of the moon, the wind, ever-changing surface temperatures and the limits of land. In this analogy, such forces of nature are like the processes of globalization mentioned above. Advanced communications and technologies, the integration of markets and political economies, the flow of people across national borders and the spread of pandemic disease, etc. can mean that globalization is as storm-tossed and threatening (even deadly in the case of riptides, tsunamis or typhoons) as they are useful for travel or leisure or securing a livelihood.

Among the central undercurrents of globalization, however, are global ideological forces, referred to here as *globalism*. As a byword for prominent economic, political, or religious worldviews that have fundamental assumptions about the way the world ought to be ordered, prominent examples of *globalism* would include nineteenth-century colonialism, early twentieth-century internationalism, communism, fascism, and post-colonialism; and to name a few of the more well-known recent forms, types of environmentalism, feminism, and Islamicism. If *globalization* proper is like the ocean, *globalisms* are like the powerful currents and undertows which push people in certain directions. These currents direct how people on shore or afloat make sense of and navigate these expansive bodies of water. For some, these currents are feared because they push those with the least resources (those without seaworthy boats) uncontrollably toward uncharted waters filled with risk and danger (picture old medieval maps warning, “Here be monsters”); for others, these currents are useful because they supply routes for trade, exploration, conquest and escape, along with the promise of a better life.

In this way, *globalization* refers to the broader processes in which, at different moments, particular kinds of *globalism* emerge and vie for the power to determine how we navigate and make sense of the world around us. Few eras exemplified such competition between opposing *globalisms* more than the Cold War, which witnessed worldwide struggle

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<sup>8</sup> We encourage readers who may be unaccustomed to analytical analysis of this kind to read through the more thorough analytical definition of globalization offered in Appendix B.

between Soviet-style Communism and American-inspired Democratic Capitalism. Before the collapse of the Soviet system, these two globalisms fought • to the brink of nuclear annihilation — to control the course of an entire world system. Thus it is important to notice that *globalism*, of whatever kind, is a product of historical forms of globalization proper and a “driver” of its contemporary forms. Though conceptually distinct, *globalization* proper and *globalism* are always reciprocally related to one another.

Undoubtedly, the most powerful form of *globalism* in recent decades has been that of neo-liberal capitalism, the all-controlling set of ideas underpinning a worldwide reorganization of economic institutions and policy following WWII, that gained worldwide currency in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Epitomizing this economic reorganization are the now infamous structural adjustment policies of the World Bank, widespread privatization of nationalized industries, and the liberalization of capital flows which reached their apex in the 1990s.

Very often when people attack *globalization* it is this particular ideological worldview and the practices and institutions it has inspired that they have in mind. Indeed, most of the social movements described (both by themselves and by the media) as anti-globalization movements for the most part are actually anti-*globalism* (or more accurately, *counter-globalism* movements). In reality these movements press not for the end of globalization per se, but the end of unjust, unequal, and oppressive forms of economic policy or global governance and the like. Globalization’s discontents call for a world policy that is more adequate to human and environmental needs than that offered by the *globalism* of neo-liberal capitalism.

It is a vitally important point for Christians to keep the distinction between *globalization* proper and *globalism* in mind. There is a sound reason for this, namely, wherever we go in the world we will likely be judged as to which side of globalization we are on. Accordingly, we should not be surprised to find that our evangelism and missions will be considered as simply one more form of *globalism* seeking to dominate others. While operating out of one form of *globalism* or another is probably inescapable, we can and must confound the politically correct categorizations (whether on the Left or the Right) of the world.

### ***Globalization and Globality***

Another necessary distinction, which is not as immediately obvious as that between globalization and globalism, is that between globalization proper and *globality*. Sometimes called “phenomenological globalization,” *globality* refers minimally to the way people across the planet experience their lives as meaningful, whether consciously or not, in terms of global processes. Maximally, *globality* refers to the way all peoples (the plural here is important)<sup>9</sup> are increasingly (if unevenly) aware of a shared world characterized by a single planetary biosphere (that is, interacting ecosystems), territorially conjoined national states and economically, technologically and otherwise interconnected societies. Thanks especially to the power of global media, the peoples of the world now enjoy an unprecedented capacity to witness far-away events or to know things about places they have neither visited nor are ever likely to visit.<sup>10</sup> *Globality*, at its most extensive, recognizes that the daily lives and collective fates of all humans are now somehow interdependent.

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<sup>9</sup> Think of “all peoples” in the Biblical sense of “all nations.”

<sup>10</sup> As these lines were being written news footage of the tragedy of the Indian Ocean tsunami brought the fates of millions of people on the other side of the world into the living rooms of the West in much the way the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. were watched in the living rooms of today’s tsunami victims.

Once globalization proper reaches a certain critical mass it inscribes into human experience a common significance. Here we need to change metaphors again from the ocean to that of a grand canopy. In this analogy, the stories we collectively tell to make sense of the world around us • our central and most enduring myths, religions, and worldviews • are likened to canopies that cover us, bind us together, and give meaning to our lives. Over time and not without conflict, our once locally distinct canopies have become interwoven into a single world-encompassing canopy. On the underside of this global canopy is an intricately patterned tapestry. By themselves, individual strands of this tapestry (that is, individual strands of globalization) such as the worldwide dispersion of pizza or the radio or cell phones do not produce *globality*. Yet once enough of these single strands become entwined (that is, start to interact with one another), we can begin to discern elaborate patterns and points of reference that are both common and recognizable to us all. If globalization is like such a grand canopy, globality refers to the fact that we are all increasingly looking up at the same tapestry.

To put the matter as succinctly as possible: for the first time in human history, people everywhere have as their outer cognitive and experiential limits the *world-as-a-whole* (i.e., the view of Planet Earth from space), *humanity-as-a-single people* (i.e., the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), and *history-as-a-shared memory* (i.e., celebration of the Millennium). These three globally recognizable points of reference are not only imaginable, but unavoidable contexts for the construction of local/personal meaning, purpose and identity for an increasing portion of the world's population, even in resistance...even when unconscious of global forces responsible for their situation. Importantly, only some of us, and only then some of the time, are consciously aware that this is the case. This last point needs underscoring.

The astute reader will likely counter that most people in the world live either in remote rural areas or in the equally "remote" ghettos, slums and shanty towns of the world's growing mega-cities. Undoubtedly, such people will never likely have heard the term globalization, let alone be aware of or concerned about the powerful global forces that term denotes. These people are too occupied scraping out existence, often in oppressively inhuman conditions, to care about academic distinctions as made here. However, it will take such astute readers a mere cursory glance to discover the manifold ways the daily lives of such people are shot through with forces originating a world a way. *Globality* does not always describe an individual person's awareness of globalization, but it does describe the unavoidable context of his or her life course and life chances. We are, each of us, cosmopolitans now.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Globalization & Glocalization***

A third distinction that is worth making (the flipside of globality) is between globalization proper and the ways global processes become altered as they mix with local realities, whether economic, political, cultural or the like. Scholars have used a number of words to describe this process: indigenization, syncretization, hybridization, vernacular globalization, *mélange*, and so on. We have used the somewhat inelegant and cumbersome word *glocalization* for two reasons. First, it keeps our alliteration intact (i.e., *globalism*, *globality*, *glocalization* just sounds better!) Second, *glocalization* can either refer to the ways people in local settings take, interpret, adapt, and subvert global processes "from below," or alternatively, the way world-level entities customize their products,

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<sup>11</sup> Importantly, while we may all be in some sense "citizens of a single world" today, we are not equally so. The question remains: "citizens" of *which* world, or more precisely, *whose* world? Here Christians have a critical edge — for we are to proclaim in word and deed the Lordship of Christ and announce the Kingdom of God.

strategies, or organizational structures to fit the realities of local circumstances “from above.” *Glocalization* in the former case is perhaps most clearly seen in the way languages or religions become mixed in eclectic and unexpected ways (think of pigeon English or Voodoo); while in the latter case, *glocalization* is most obvious in the efforts of multinational corporations like McDonald’s, which adapt their menus to fit local culinary tastes and cultural norms. So McDonald’s in India does not serve beef, but rather mutton, just as McDonald’s in Israel keeps kosher. It is equally true of international non-governmental organizations which, for instance, adapt their humanitarian actions to circumstances on the ground in any given crisis. Perhaps the paradigm case, however, comes from modern missions itself, from the emphasis on “indigenization” and “contextualization.”<sup>12</sup>

*Glocalization* is inevitable, as diverse peoples and institutions around the world encounter, experience and elaborate global processes in different ways and to different degrees, according to local realities. Moreover, since globalization proper is itself not a single process but a many-sided and multi-directional process, it is responsible for creating diverse and often contradictory consequences around the world. Like *globalism* and *globality*, *glocalization* is also reciprocally related to the processes of globalization proper. Over time, what began as particular embellishments of global processes often start influencing global processes themselves. The most conspicuous examples of this feedback-loop-effect often come in the area of popular culture, in the fusions of various ethnic foods, from Thai tacos to Mexican pizza and in movies and music styles, from the movies of Bollywood to Filipino hip-hop. While we all share a single canopy, we are constantly altering the patterns of the tapestry on its underside; while we all look up at the same, if changing, patterns, we are constantly arguing about what it is that we see, or want to see. In this way, the tapestry is never complete, and always in some sense unfinished (history has not yet ended).

### ***Historical Globalization & Contemporary Globalization***

The final distinction (here we lose our alliteration) is between past and current forms of globalization. *Historical* globalization (or what some might call *proto-globalization*) refers to processes that were rarely global in scope, that is, literally covering or impacting the globe, but global in their trajectory; these processes were moving and pushing outward, expanding beyond the local towards the limits of the globe. It also typically involved only one or a number of “strands” of what we would today call globalization. That is, in any given historical period, specific processes with a globalizing thrust such as economic interest, military conquest, human curiosity, science, evangelistic fervour, technological innovation, disease and famine were predominant forms of historical globalization. Moreover, these single strands were characteristically embodied by principal “carriers” or “agents” such as traders, explorers, soldiers, missionaries, entrepreneurs, slaves, refugees, and the like. Furthermore, in each instance, historic forms of globalization were made meaningful by distinctive symbolic and ideological “packages” or globalisms — once again, sets of ideas, practices, rules, or norms that made sense of the world.

Historic instances of globalization (not surprisingly) were highly particularistic. Nothing illustrates this fact better than the Western missionary movement. The particular ideological “package” (or globalism) of Western Christians fused together a belief in the universality of their faith with their confidence in the superiority of their political, economic, scientific, and social institutions and ways of life. Thus, while they were motivated by the Great Commission mandate, the gospel Western Christians brought to foreign lands under the banner of colonialism often had as much to do with the (rarely) “good news” of Western

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<sup>12</sup> A strategy, it might be worth noting, first debated at Antioch.

Civilization for colonial subjects, as it did with the (eternally) “good news” of Jesus Christ for all humans.

On one reading, *contemporary* globalization is by contrast nothing more than the actual extension of various strands (i.e., economic, political, cultural, etc.) to the limits of the globe. We see this clearly in the spread of Christianity around the world. Today, one can statistically confirm the presence of professing Christians on the six inhabited continents, thus making Christianity an authentically global faith. Similarly, people talk about a worldwide capitalist economy, again something that can be statistically verified.

However, when people use the word globalization today, they often mean something more than this minimal fact. As already discussed, what they have in mind is something more significant: the intertwining of many of the single strands of globalization into an intricate and complex whole which has an impact distinct from that of any individual strand. Globalization in this sense refers to the synergy of interacting strands which is itself pushing humanity across an epochal threshold, much the way people talk about the Greco-Roman Antiquity or the Middle Ages or Modernity.

Contemporary globalization in this grander sense is closely connected to *globality*. It describes the state of the world as becoming more or less a single, interconnected polity characterized by complex interconnectedness via markets, through modes of production and divisions of labour, through mutual dependence upon natural resources, law, services, technological infrastructure, scientific expertise, patterns of stratification, and so on. It is also clear that the daily lives of everyone on the planet are to some degree similarly shaped by universally experienced things called corporations, nation-states, national debt, schools, places of worship, tax codes, highways, and individuals with rights. Even when such things are lacking, weakly present, or reviled, they are quite real to us all.

### ***Why these distinctions matter: six propositions for mission***

By any measure, today’s world is sufficiently “globalized” to invoke “globalization” as an accurate description of our situation. The only genuine debate is over its extent, nature, and consequence. As we shall argue, this is precisely where the church must be fully engaged. Before turning to this urgent task, it is worth taking a moment to consider the composite picture of globalization that emerges from what for some may have seemed an unnecessary and abstract academic exercise.

### **“Globalization:” a composite definition**

We propose defining globalization **as a set of complexly related historical processes by which local situations throughout the world are increasingly interconnected within a single, but often conflicted, social space.**<sup>13</sup> To this basic definition we highlight the following attributes:

- (a) Within this single social space numerous ideologies compete to supply the terms by which the world should be ordered;
- (b) people live out and increasingly make sense of their daily lives and routines in light of this space and vying ideologies;

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<sup>13</sup> Our definition follows from the work of several scholars and observers (see especially Roland Robertson, David Held, Jehu Hanciles, and George Thomas). For example, Roland Robertson states that globalization “refers to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.” It also does not differ greatly from that offered by Richard Tiplady et al.: “Globalization refers to increasing global interconnectedness, so that events and developments in one part of the world are affected by, have to take account of, and also influence in turn, other parts of the world. It also refers to an increasing sense of a single global whole” (World Evangelical Alliance Working Group on Globalization-- in “Introduction,” One World or Many? Globalization and World Mission 2003:2).

(c) and yet, as both the space and its controlling ideologies become unevenly institutionalized around the planet, they are also open to elaboration, alteration, and resistance.

How does such a definition help us? We discern six propositions for Christian mission:

*First, that globalization per se is not new.* While there are many novel features about globalization's *contemporary* shape and significance, not all such features are historically new. Global processes have been occurring for eons — the spread of world religions, trading, empire, exploration, and the like, each contained globalizing impulses and effects.

*Second, that globalization is a many-sided, multi-directional set of processes.* We have seen that throughout human history globalization proper has been a phenomenon with many faces. At its most basic refers to complexly-related processes by which a multitude of things — ideas, peoples, goods, technology, organizations, media, and so on — extend outward to the limits of the world, in either scope or impact. We are able to perceive that historically, moreover, globalization is not a unified, straightforward, or linear process. There have been and continue to be “many globalizations”— many globalisms that have sought to make sense of and order the world-as-a-whole, many experiences of global processes and many local elaborations of these global processes. Similarly, contemporary globalization does not refer to any single strand or homogenous pattern of social interaction. As a result, to talk about globalization in its totality can be unwieldy and, ultimately, unhelpful. It is best thought as a multi-dimensional phenomenon involving diverse domains of activity and interaction, including the economic, political, technological, cultural and environmental. (Importantly, a general account of globalization cannot simply be “read-off” or projected from one domain of activity to another, e.g., the economic or technological.)

*Third, that globalization is today creating a single social context.* Unlike past instances, contemporary globalization manifests an unprecedented intensification and institutionalization of planetary interconnectedness, suggesting some degree of “world order.”<sup>14</sup> In its contemporary setting, the “globalization” label calls our attention to how a number of the single strands of historic (or proto-) globalization have achieved, a level of critical mass and interpenetration across the world, significant enough, perhaps, to herald the birth of a new age.

Yet, we have seen that there are any number of worldviews or *globalisms* vying for power to determine how we make sense of and order this new circumstance. Furthermore, we have considered how, through the process of *glocalization*, contemporary globalization is a reality characterized by varied and dynamic interpretations, alterations and mixings of ideas, people, goods, technology, and other globally available elements “at-large” in the world. Nevertheless, it is essential to remember is how many of globalization's past forms have merged, if not into a unified phenomenon, then certainly into a synergistic one. These discrete, but interacting, forms of globalization now appear to carry humanity across an epochal threshold: *the “global” context is increasingly as significant and salient as the local context for the generation's meaning, identity, and action — whether individual or collective.* The significance of this epochal shift is the transformation of social life into novel forms whose present and future shapes are as yet only dimly perceived.

From these emerge three more propositions about globalization.

*Fourth, that globalization's complexity reflects the nature of human society.* Globalization has outcomes that are simultaneously good *and* bad. For example, it can increase both formal and real liberties at the cost of undermining kinship while

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<sup>14</sup> The development of new international institutions like the 1910 World Missionary Congress, the United Nations, and most recently the World Trade Organization are emblematic here.

simultaneously increasing general productivity and poverty. These contradictions and complexities make simple classification and evaluation difficult; yet at the same time, as we have seen, a reality of globalization is the tendency to divide the world into those who are pro-globalization and those who are anti-globalization. Where then does this leave the church and its mission to preach and incarnate the gospel of Christ? What response should it make to the complex reality of globalization? It is precisely to such questions that we will shortly turn.

*Fifth, that contemporary globalization is neither complete, nor inevitable.* While some aspects seem quite clear (i.e., the impact of global terrorism), many others continue to unfold (i.e., the role and power of nation-states, the spread of Christianity). To the extent that globalization effectively describes the present state of the world, it is neither static nor completed. (The canopy is constantly in the process of being woven and altered.) Again, it is far from clear what kind of world contemporary globalization is creating. The present forms and contents of globalization are neither inevitable nor unchangeable, but (although powerful) they are in fact contingent and, in important ways, limited.

Nothing confirmed this last point more keenly than September 11<sup>th</sup> and the SARS epidemic. These two events injected into the world tremendous anxieties about the very consequences of so-called “globalization”— a seemingly borderless world across which people, information, and ideas flow freely. Today, in the wake of the War on Terror and the fear over contagious disease, the world appears less open, however inter-connected it may remain. Consequently, the full account of globalization has yet to be written.

*The sixth, and most important, proposition is that the fate to which globalization delivers us depends upon the Body of Christ.*

These collective distinctions demonstrate to us that as the Body of Christ we have both analytical and historical (not to mention spiritual) resources to draw from as we seek to understand the nature and consequence of contemporary globalization, and as we prayerfully imagine and work toward a more just, humane, and, ultimately, *redemptive* globalization. The mission of the church in the world demands nothing less than that we who profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of all creation be his standard bearers and his Kingdom announcers to a fallen humanity and to a broken world. We are called, clergy and laity, individually and collectively, globally and locally, to bear witness to his sovereign rule and his unfathomable love.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the working group that produced this paper itself testifies to these possibilities!

## 4. CHRISTIANITY IN A GLOBAL AGE

Thus far, our level of discussion has operated at a fairly high level. Our working definition of globalization provides a general picture, stressing its complexities rather than providing detailed accounts on how it impacts the gospel. So just what can be said beyond the abstract distinctions and propositions we have outlined and about the actual character of contemporary globalization? More concretely, ***what does our composite picture of “globalization” mean for the church and for its mission in the world?***

We have climbed a long way up our metaphorical mountain to gain a better vantage of this subject. It is fitting to stop our climb and take stock of what we are hopefully able to see more clearly “on the ground.” In other words, what are contemporary globalization’s most observable patterns and identifiable characteristics from where we now stand?

### ***Coming & going: global migration’s new face***

Insofar as the impact of globalization on the church, we begin our search for answers in what is arguably the most identifiable characteristic of contemporary globalization: people everywhere are “on the move.” For whatever reason, whether due to forced displacement, work, survival, exploration, tourism, education, or mission — we all seem to be coming and going. The church now finds itself in the midst of especially notable changes in global migration patterns. While typical migrations of the 19th and 20th centuries were in response to wars, famine, or colonial conquest, migrations since the 1960’s have often been characterized by the peaceful movement of people, prompted by complex motives as well as an astounding variety of circumstances (including ecological factors). These complicated motivations require that we rethink our commonplace distinction between *migrants* (those who “choose” to go to another country for primarily economic or personal reasons) and *refugees* (those who are “forced” to leave their countries for primarily political reasons). Such clean categories can prove arbitrary and unhelpful. International migrations are now often marked by intermittent stays rather than permanent settlement in a single area.

More significantly, in recent decades international transfers of population and associated displacements have increased to unprecedented levels. The number of migrants — defined as people who have lived outside their homeland for one year or more — is estimated at 150 million. These international migrants are unevenly spread across the globe, despite excited xenophobic foreboding that Western societies are being overwhelmed by immigrants. Most global migration takes place *within* the non-Western world in the form of South-South migration. Sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated 35 million migrants, has the largest numbers of any continent, followed by Asia and the Middle East. Additionally, most migrants — including the bulk of the world’s 17 million officially registered refugees and asylum seekers — stay in their region of origin. At the same time, there are significant movements of people on-the-move from South to the North. Indeed, it is noteworthy that South-to-North migration accounts for 40 percent of trans-boundary flows.<sup>16</sup> What begin as South-South transfers often end up as South-to-North flows.

How do our distinctions and working definition re-inform our understanding of these global migration patterns? For one thing there is more occurring within the realities of these statistics than just mass relocation of humans around the globe (although that in itself is impressive enough). Coming and going contributes significantly to the intensifying sense of

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<sup>16</sup> Emek M. Uçarer, “The Coming Era of Human Uprootedness: a Global Challenge”, in E. M. Uçarer & D. J. Puchala, eds. *Immigration into Western Societies: Problems and Policies* (Washington: Pinter, 1997), 1-16.

*globality* that marks contemporary globalization. We cannot underestimate the sheer power global migration has on the interdependence of our daily lives and collective fates, creating our larger common horizon of experience. Migration also increases exposure to different *globalisms* and adds to the process of *glocalization*. So what does it mean for these migrations to occur in the era of contemporary globalization, an era where, to return to our definition, *local situations throughout the world are increasingly interconnected within a single, but often conflicted, social space*? The best way to answer this question is to look out from our place atop our metaphorical mountain and recognize that what we left behind was not, in fact, solid ground. Our local contexts, to which and from which we migrate, are now shifting in ways that must reinvent how we think about locality as well as migration. Such recognition puts new light on recent calls to “contextualization.”

For obvious reasons, most people conceive themselves in fixed geographic positions. Conversations of migration evoke the types of maps produced by airline companies, with people travelling from one isolated, fixed point along a neat, arched path, to another fixed point. Yet globalization, as we have suggested, should change the way we *conceive* our own context and human travel. Our true condition, to return briefly to our ocean analogy, is similar to being adrift at sea. In some sense, we inhabit different geographic locations in the sea, yet an accurate description of our local context is no longer fixed. We are not anchored to our context, which is in constant flux around us, we do not control which waves crash into us or how they make us drift (no matter how well we navigate). Neither can we control what the waves will bring with them.

Similarly, though we travel in different vessels and toward different places, we travel in waters constantly in motion. These waters, from which we “depart,” and the new ones to which we head, are agitated and significantly impossible to control or contain. It is not clear where local contexts end and where foreign ones begin. We can draw imaginary lines to suggest the boundaries of certain ocean spaces, but waves and water are not restrained by boundaries. Furthermore, our travels now leave a wake in which others will be caught. While our geographic movements move us into waters others call home, disrupting their spaces rather than linearly passing through them. Therefore local context, through migration, is in constant *fluid* motion, retaining continuity but being incomprehensibly *stirred-up* by our coming and going. It is motion on motion.

Consequently, even those who are geographically stationary are profoundly impacted by migrations, as their local contexts change through the movements of others. These movements, because of globalization, make it impossible for the most insulated lives not to be powerfully affected. Attachment to local context, in contemporary globalization, is like gripping tightly to our gunwales; no matter how tightly we grip our own identity, we cannot prevent the waters from changing or our boats from being rocked. Sometimes contemporary globalization is so pervasive that local context must be completely rethought. Where waters are rough we find our boats overturned, leaving us to reconsider our personal journey, vehicle of movement and skill at navigation.

### ***Three “scenes” of contemporary globalization (and their implications for the gospel)***

*Where is the church in these waters?* Like everything else, it is on the move locally and regionally and globally. What does it mean, then, to find ourselves bearers of the gospel on swelling or rocky seas?

Thus far we have discussed our ocean metaphor in a way that might lead us to worry we are without control or security in the active and sometimes dangerous sea of globalization. Yet we do not despair, because we are disciples of the Lord who calms the storm. However weak-hearted, we know we are not left to be tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind.

In what follows, we will discuss the issue of human migration against certain “scenes” that are readily identifiable as contexts for mission. In particular, we raise three of the most important scenes in the present moment, giving each a label that many will recognize from popular accounts of globalization — *Sans Frontieres, Pluralism & Fundamentalism, and Empire & Power Shift*.

As you read through the following section, think now of the church as an actor in a great play written by the good and saving Author whom we know. The church has *specifically* been chosen by the playwright to act within his drama. The implications of the following scenes vary according to the social location of a particular church or Christian community (as there are many members in the Body, there are individual actors on the stage with different parts to play as the drama unfolds).

We begin each scene with wide-angle descriptions and consider implications each has across the world. We then discuss the church’s involvement in that scene – what part it has to play and what difficulties it encounters. In each scene, the church enters the story at points of tension and is asked to attend to pain that arises from such tensions. You will hear the voice of contributors to this paper as they reflect on tensions they experience. We will further reflect on how the church does (or can) bring the healing love of Christ to bear upon any places of pain and you will be asked to consider questions that direct you toward similar tensions and ultimately, what these scenes mean for you, for your local church, and for the church worldwide.

This section concludes with a brief reflection on how the church has played (or perhaps misplayed) its part in earlier acts of this drama. (Few of us think of the church, whether as a human institution or as the mystical Body of Christ, as a globalizing force like multinational corporations or the United Nations, though surely it is one of the most powerful the world has seen.)

### **Scene #1: *Sans Frontieres***

*Contemporary globalization both generates and is characterized by a constant, but often uneven flow of ideas, goods, images, people and disease across national borders.*

As we saw, coming and going is a much more ubiquitous and complex phenomenon than might be suggested by our images of limited-impact tourism or business trips, or by isolated migrations from Point A to Point B. Beyond human migration, no small amount of ink has been spilt describing the incredible levels of *cross-cultural* exchange – the uncountable waves that have been unleashed upon the world thanks to the spread of information and communication media and the creation of multinational markets. American pop-culture icons such as Mickey Mouse, McDonalds, and MTV have flooded the world; yet, so too have Thai, Mexican, Chinese, and Indian cuisine, Chinese and Indian cinema, Japanese electronics and computer animation, World Cup Football, Eastern “spirituality” such as yoga or feng shui, and religious televangelism of all kinds. For better or for worse, these are well-known symbols of contemporary globalization.

Yet, as a consequence of technological advances, especially in transportation, pop-culture images are not the only things travelling the globe. Today, disease and ecological degradation travel the world as well. The past decade has seen epidemics like the West Nile Virus, AIDS and SARS (to name three) become global in a matter of years, and in some cases, weeks. Alongside environmental issues such as global warming and pollution of the seas and environmental catastrophes such as the nuclear accident at Chernobyl, the people of the world have come to painfully acknowledge we all share the same biosphere. The whole of creation continues to groan under the weight of Adam’s curse.

Consider, again, globalization from a demographic perspective. People now traverse national borders (legally and illegally) at an unprecedented rate — whether as

students, refugees, migrant labourers and guest workers, as diasporic communities with strong connections to their place of origin, as tourists, religious pilgrims, or simply as expatriates. Often these wayfarers come to rest in global mega-cities (where Pentecost is a daily event). The wealthy typically fare well, enjoying amenities cosmopolitan centres offer in education, culture, entertainment and services, while the poor typically fall between cracks (or gaping holes) due to insufficient human service infrastructures, crime and poverty.

Japan serves as a good example of some of the challenges and opportunities faced in this flurry of coming and going. Because of intense impact on business and communication through the information technology of contemporary globalization, the Japanese are simultaneously foreign-travellers and hosts of foreign travellers. Foreign investment into the Japanese market brings foreign business people and their families to settle in Japan. A widespread Japanese interest in learning English and other languages has brought many language teachers to the country as well. In both cities and in the countryside, foreign labourers and tourists can easily be found.

In contrast to what was once sharp geographic distance from foreigners, the Japanese now have more opportunities to know foreigners at a local level. Yet these settled foreigners face difficulties living within the Japanese society. Communication is limited because of language barriers and the non-emotional posture of most Japanese, which leaves many foreigners wondering whether they are welcome. Consequently, while many foreign residents are reluctant to build closer relationships with the Japanese people, many Japanese simultaneously reinforce their negative images of foreign residents. Among other effects, coming and going has caught Japan in a cycle of persistent reciprocal stereotyping (and the ensuing apprehension it creates), resulting in, at least, an inability to form relationships and, at worst, mutual xenophobia and discrimination.

Where is the church *in this scene*? According to Naoki Sugioka, a young Japanese missionary to Thailand, the Japanese church has seen these difficulties as the stage for playing out the missional story. Churches are acting as icebreaker between Japanese and foreigners, providing a trigger for interactions and activities which foster conversation and build relationships. Whether teaching courses on Japanese culture and language, or through the patient work of facilitating conversations between two or three individuals at a time, the church is faithfully and creatively practicing Christian hospitality through the use of its facilities, resources, and members to model a posture of charity, generosity and hospitality to both groups.

The Canadian church has faced similar missional struggles against the background of new patterns of coming and going, particularly as they have been attentive to evangelism. The church in Canada, the second largest immigrant-receiving country after the United States, reflects a diversity of response to new migration patterns and the struggles that transience brings to its population and local cultures. Congregational attitudes have ranged from embrace and celebration of this new diversity to reluctant acceptance or even rejection. Canadian evangelicals, particularly, have often viewed the inflow of new immigrants as a source of church growth and revitalization. Their attitude results in an emphasis on outreach to new migrants and thus significant energy and resources are devoted to reaching those who have no church connection or Christian faith.

Affirmative responses by the Canadian church have sometimes failed to reflect completely the recent changes in migration. (With contemporary globalization, it is not uncommon to find ourselves a few scenes behind, still reciting lines from ten pages ago.) In Canada, the church occasionally missed the new reality that *many migrants are already believers*. This fact is sometimes overlooked by national denomination programs aimed at evangelism of migrants. Studying the situation in Canada and elsewhere, Michael

Wilkinson, a Canadian sociologist, and Jehu Hanciles, a church historian from Sierra Leone, have found that within ethnic congregations the majority were Christians *before* arriving in the West.

Newfound interaction, then, between established Canadian churches and emerging migrant churches has created great hope and great difficulty. Cultural, theological, and organizational variations confront congregations at every turn, which must be worked out with patience and humility. Such urgent and important differences were heretofore separated by vast oceans and geographically defined.

Canadian churches are also learning to be interdependent on the diversity of Christians in *local* spaces. Partnership may play a stronger role than evangelism, as a single congregation cannot hope to meet all the needs of all Christians, especially believers who are so notably transient. Christians are learning how to navigate differences through friendships that acknowledge the unique needs of each local setting as well as the unique gifts of each congregation.

The church is compelled to take into account the local situation, with all its changes, resulting partly in the breakdown of some labels traditionally used for evangelistic programs. "Sending and receiving" become unhelpful categories, as these migrants now offer the possibility of helping their new brothers and sisters in the process of revitalizing Western Christianity and the evangelization of now largely post-Christian societies. It is helpful to remember that contemporary globalization increasingly describes a world in which what is one Christian's "Samaria, Jerusalem, and the World" turns out to be another Christian's in reverse; our own familiar localities are another Christian's "ends of the earth."

Churches in Japan and Canada inhabit cultural waters fraught with great tensions provoked by the stress of an increasingly borderless world. The church, through submersion in contemporary globalization, feels pressure to function as a global unit while remaining faithful to local callings. As its members travel worldwide and as glocalization increasingly strains the categories of local and global (thereby undermining security in familiar locality), the church on the whole, and individuals across society, feel a threatening sense of instability even as new horizons seem exciting. When *everything* in society is in motion, it is increasingly difficult for the church to retain a historically-received relationship to its own doctrine and church structure and to the culture around it. A plot full of instant transactions, uncontainable waves and highly mobile people will be threatening to some and charged with excited hopes for action-packed adventures to others.

One of the major propositions of this paper is that where we find tensions in contemporary globalization we also find places where the world (and the church) is in pain. The church is called to redemptive attention and involvement with the pain of the world around it. Coming and going creates a type of friction (and occasional collision), which signals the world's groaning for redemption. Take, for example, our report on the Japanese church and its current situation. The local church in Japan takes seriously the painful and lonely experience of cultural isolation and discrimination faced by foreigners settling in Japan. The church also takes seriously the pains of Japanese people without romanticizing the position of migrants against a caricature of hostile or arrogant natives. As the local context of Japan changes, it brings fresh anxieties and fears to people deeply rooted in stable cultural traditions. The church here bears the pain of the Japanese people in these anxieties and the pain of relational estrangement felt by new migrants. In Japan, the church becomes a people with a story to live and tell about inclusion in community, the laying down of anxieties, and the restoration of relationships.

***"Where in the world are we and who is our neighbour?"***

Clarifying your relationship to your scene and its tensions is the starting point for mission in the context of contemporary globalization. One way to help clarify this

relationship is to consider questions that seem to be confounding the world and the church — questions from the very heart of the world's pain. Thus, if contemporary globalization both generates and is characterized by a constant, but often uneven flow of ideas, goods, images, people, and disease across national borders, then we must ask, from within that context where do we see pain, conflict, and tensions emerging in the church and the world? One way of accessing these points of pain, conflict, and tension is by asking: Where in the world are we, and who is our neighbour? Answers will vary according to local context, but this question is fundamental to how we think about mission. It is the question of community. Reflect on the following:

- (a) *Where does the reality of “sans frontieres” create pain or opportunity in the world around you?*
- (b) *What community are you in and who is in it with you?*
- (c) *How is our near-borderless world changing the community where you live? (You may even be a new addition to that community.) How do changes affect what people see around you?*
- (d) *After reflection, apply your answers to the question, “Where in the world are we, and who is our neighbour?” What do your answers mean for you, for the mission of your local church and for the church globally?*

## **Scene #2: Pluralism & Fundamentalism**

*Globalization brings together what was once formerly held apart, challenging historic patterns of division (and inequality) while introducing new patterns. Contemporary globalization divides as much as it unites.*

New technologies foster greater opportunities for faster, cheaper and more powerful communication and transportation for greater numbers of people. At the same time, these technologies and the ideas and goods which move around the world give silent witness to an unprecedented movement throughout the world. We find a world “shaken up” — things once particular to one place are now dispersed unexpectedly in other places. People confront difference on all sides. The coming and going of people around the world collides not only cultures but ideologies — different globalisms — that understand the world in philosophically different ways. Moreover, our primary identifying categories of difference — rich and poor, West and Non-West, First World and Third World, Christian and non-Christian — increasingly exist not just between nations, but *within* nations. They are no longer geographically separate, but physically and virtually proximate.

Yet, for all that globalization accomplishes, it neither guarantees greater understanding nor greater solidarity. The most cutting-edge technologies are still primarily available to a minority of the world's people. The net effect of technological globalization has been the injection of alien ways of life and belief — particularly Western images of emancipation, individualism and prosperity — that simultaneously entice, relativize, affront and otherwise challenge the stability of local patterns of life, identity, belief and moral order. For some, especially in the West, globalization has reinforced a postmodern concern with exploring faith and spirituality while denying the possibility of an overarching meta-narrative within which to make sense of human experience and desires. The resultant trends of watered-down “spirituality” reflect the human longing for transcendent reality and typically embody an individualistic “pick and mix” mentality. Across many Western, post-industrial, societies, pluralism has been raised to an ideological mandate to tolerate all differences. This toleration usually conceives religion in private, individualistic terms.

For many others in places around the world, where people lack either the means or the desire to enjoy these new life-styles, the disruption that ensues is often unbearable. In response, many people seek to reassert “old ways” (although typically reconceived in

modern terms). Perhaps nowhere have these tensions been more apparent than in the growth of a global youth culture. Here traditional ideals and practices appear most conspicuously threatened (while at the same time possibly offering new avenues for Christian witness).

Another significant development of the past decade has surely been the growing awareness of religion's centrality in geo-political affairs. One need only read the morning's news headlines reporting about places as diverse as Sudan, India, the Balkans, the Philippines and France to appreciate the role that religion plays in contemporary conflict. The militancy of radical Islam, the brutality of religious reaction, and the persecution that so often follows, all testify to a world awash in religious conflict. There is little to suggest that the severity of religious conflict will diminish any time soon.

**Again, where is the church in all of this?** As Michelle Chew, a Singaporean social anthropologist, reminds us, Christians find themselves increasingly occupying the very fault lines of conflict. In the post-Cold War era, the most potent ideological forces operating in the world today are various forms of "fundamentalism", whether religious, tribal, or ethno-nationalist (here we might also include certain "globalisms" as discussed above). The ideological forces are also "pluralistic", whether political, cultural, or religious. The most deadly forms of conflict in the world are increasingly the clash between these opposing forces, especially where control over vital resources are at stake. The church, needless to say, is often caught in cross-fire.

As the church seeks to model the one true model of unity in diversity, it confronts this enormously painful division in a variety of ways. In some cases, the church finds itself embattled, often suffering repression and open persecution. In others, the church encounters a world where seemingly anything goes — anything except historic Christian orthodoxy. Here, the church languishes quietly amid the cultural despair of a modern world given over to postmodern cynicism and solipsism. The present condition of the Western Church is representative of the latter case, where the experience of extreme pluralism (as both a descriptive fact and as an overriding ideology) forces a confrontation with moral relativism. Far on the "pluralism" end of the fundamentalism/pluralism continuum, Christianity in Western societies faces profound challenges surrounding questions of its authority claims, about its ecclesiastical and institutional structures, and about its symbolic relevance to daily life.

As the Western church has struggled to incorporate the pluralism it finds in society and within itself, the Trinitarian form of unity-in-difference has rarely been achieved. For many mainline Protestant churches, being "open" and "inclusive" has trumped issues of scriptural authority and integrity, as well as that of tradition, to the point of emptying its distinctive Christ-centred witness. In response to the "progressive liberalism" of both the mainline churches and the wider culture, Evangelical churches have often responded with reaffirmation of a strict bible-based orthodoxy, while Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican traditionalists have tried to shield themselves by reaffirming formal "high church" practices. "Truth" and "Tradition," it is believed, speak for themselves and any change to "move with the times" is regarded as fostering confusion in already spiritually ambivalent times. However, while critical of postmodern culture, both the Evangelicals and the Traditionalists fall into other traps. Evangelical churches often embrace quintessentially modern/post-modern advertising techniques to compete in the "spiritual marketplace." In a noisy culture of many competing human stories, the church's reaction is often to simply yell along with everyone else, and to be heard in and over the din, using advertising and worship styles that often mimic popular culture.

These attitudes and actions all represent the church's struggle to navigate the difficulty of being the witness of Christ's one true kingdom in a postmodern culture that privileges

individual definitions of reality out of fear of oppressive meta-narratives. The church's struggle to cope with external and internal diversity reflects tensions inherent in cultural change. Further pain and division arise at those points where the church pushes too far towards either withdrawn cultural opposition or indulgent cultural syncretism. The Iona Community (IC) is one group of Christians that has attempted to navigate these poles *translocally* as an ecumenical, dispersed Christian movement. Started in 1938 by Rev. George MacLeod, a Church of Scotland minister, the IC is a community scattered throughout mainland UK and abroad that is bound together by a five-fold rule: prayer, Bible study, meeting together, accountability for use of time and money and working for justice and peace. The focus of their work is varied, depending on the particular concerns of a member's local context and personal convictions. Adamantly committed to members' involvement in their local church, the IC is not an alternative church. Iona is a gathering of like-minded Christians who feel unease with the current poles in the Western church and yet are unsure themselves about what role the institutional church should play in a post-Christian Western culture. Today, there are approximately 250 Members, 1500 Associates, and over 2000 Friends. Members include clergy and laity, professionals and labourers, mothers and activists, artists and teachers, social workers and the disabled, students and the retired. The IC attempts to provide a safe space (on the Hebridean Isle of Iona, off the coast of Scotland) for members to retreat briefly to learn and to regroup and to then be enabled to return to their individual cultures and vocations, partnering with God in what he is already doing in his world.

The community's emphasis on *movement* is deliberate. While postmodern-flavoured pluralism creates a world characterized by mobility and shallowness, the IC offers an alternative form of community: people on the move, geographically dispersed, can still forge deep, enduring relationships with other like-minded Christians. Thus Christians on the move become ministers to others similarly on the move, adapting to a world that is now as phenomenologically global as it is local, where "them" and "us," "the world" and the "Church" confront each other like never before. They do this as disparate individuals embedded in particular places and church communities, in specific cultural settings and Christian traditions. Where the most powerful arms of the Western church have put down their fist to assert the church's identity against the pressures of pluralism, the Iona Community attempts to stretch out a hospitable hand to those who feel the sting of exclusion from newly-drawn lines. (The church has, surely, created its own new internal divisions and inequalities in response to the challenges of pluralism.)

***"Who are we in relationship to the world around us?"***

It could be said that globalization brings together what was once formerly held apart and challenges historic patterns of division and inequality while introducing new patterns. Does then, globalization divide as much as it unites? This question gives rise to two more questions: "Who are we; and, what is our relationship to the world around us?" These are questions of identity —how we identify ourselves as individual humans, as members of a particular family or tribe, as citizens of a particular nation, and as Christians. Reflect on the following:

- (a) *Where do pluralism and fundamentalism create pain in your world?*
- (b) *Where does the redrawing of identifying lines create new patterns of division and inequality around you?*
- (c) *Who counts as full members of your community and who does not?*
- (d) *When is change necessary for the church?*
- (e) *When is it inappropriate to compromise, and when is compromise needed?*
- (f) *What does unity mean?*
- (g) *How does your community handle difference.*

Once you have considered these questions, what do your answers to the question “Who are we and what is our relationship to the world around us?” mean for you, for the mission of your local church, and for the church globally?

### **Scene #3: Empire & Power Shift**

*Contemporary globalization both intensifies and transforms power.*

Although people, images, ideas, goods, and disease come and go across national borders, *how* they come and go are largely determined by the structures of power in our world. “Empire” will always be a reality in the world and many of the processes of globalization have only bolstered its power — coercive and structural. We see it in a number of ways: in the surveillance capabilities of satellites and computers; in the far-reaching power of aircraft carriers and smart-bombs; in lopsided trade agreements and corporate externalizations. Some will argue that the U.S. today is an imperial power, whether in terms of the scope and reach of its military and economic power, or its current foreign policy. Others will point to the more indirect “Empire” of ideology and wealth embodied by the so-called advanced industrial countries of the North, and acutely witnessed in the incredible economic and social disparities between those belonging to what is referred to as the global South. (It has been written that globalization is the new caste system.) Still others will point to more than “Empire’s” geo-political and economic dimensions. “Empire” can also be seen eradicating local culture and ways of life in favour of a single global monoculture — again, American cultural images like McDonalds and MTV are emblematic here. Less discussed are issues surrounding the disappearance of local languages and the global dominance of English. There are also credible concerns in the area of agricultural production (not just economic concerns). With the emergence of genetically modified food as part of a family of biotechnological power now wielded by some, we watch as human beings • often with the most humanitarian of intentions • alter the basic genetic structure of our world, of our nourishment, of our selves.

Globalization has also been transforming the makeup of power in the world. Consider the case of the nation-state, which for nearly three centuries has been the primary wielder of power in the world. Though in some sense, globalization seems to augment state power, in most others it seems to be a weakening factor. For many problems in the world today, the nation-state is either too big, too small, or simply too absent to help its citizens. Even the U.S., with its technological capability and infrastructure, was powerless at the hands of a handful of terrorists with box-cutters and four stolen passenger planes.

In the economic sphere, as state economies de-nationalize and open themselves to the whims of regional and global markets (and as some communities are either unable or unwilling to do so) and as public welfare systems are dismantled in many societies, issues of growing inequality *and* growing wealth will need to be addressed. Without doubt, as local and regional economies change, so too will the structure of work and labour.

It is important to stress that such issues are not merely the reality of the Global South. Many regions of so-called advanced industrial nations are as vulnerable to market whims. One need only visit old industrial centres of the U.S. or the UK to get a sense of the power of shifting market forces.

Another dimension of transformation of power stems from the spread of communication technologies which have enabled individuals and associations of individuals — what is commonly referred to as “civil society” • to evade the control of the state. As a result of communication technologies such as personal computers, the Internet, personal video cameras and cell phones, people have been able to band together for any reason imaginable — for hobbies, social and political activism, terrorism, or missions. This capability has tilted the balance of power in the direction of networks of individuals

considerably (although by no means completely), whether in terms of benign civil society or of a more menacing, subversive sort.

One complicated but frequently-discussed finance and employment power shift brought by contemporary globalization has been widespread “brain drain,” in which highly educated, skilled workers and future leaders from Asia, Africa and Latin America leave their country of origin for jobs in commercial and political centres of the West. The causes of brain drain are complex. African elites, for instance, may leave because they cannot find work in home governments that either suppress dissenting opinion or display nepotism. Economically, there are often simply not enough jobs for elites in their native countries (or not enough that pay comparably to Western salaries). Because many of these men and women are trained at European-style universities, they have become culturally adapted to Western models of business or work environments. Surely some are seduced by the allure of worldly power, leaving behind their impoverished homelands to become servants of “Empire.” Yet many leave not from a sense of entitlement or of self-seeking desire for upward mobility, but due to a genuine lack of institutional outlet for their knowledge and skills. Some leave due to concern for the well-being of their families.

Those left to chart the difficult futures of these nations sapped by brain drain are often of three categories: 1) members of the ruling class and those who hold considerable political influence; 2) opportunists who hope to seize positions left available by the power vacuum created by brain drain and political regime transitions; and finally, 3) those of the “faith class” – Christians who are sincerely invested in sacrificial, grassroots work towards long-term solutions for a better country. These three groups, the bearers of power in their societies, lead countries whose majority population is the poorest of the poor, the voiceless people who often have little hope.

*Where is the church in this scene?* According to Lawrence Temfwe, director of a Christian leadership development organization in Zambia and Gilberto da Silva, a Brazilian seminary professor, the church finds itself in an ambiguous situation. On one hand, the local church is among those left to suffer within nations of the Global South deeply hurt by brain drain; on the other hand, the church of the Global South is experiencing profound empowerment in relation to their Northern brothers and sisters. Missionally, brain drain is a bit of a conundrum for the church, producing a variety of effects.

The church has been critical of the effects of brain drain, as it calls to Christian elites to remain and to experience suffering, sacrifice, and self-denial for the good of countries that are struggling with hopelessness. Churches remaining in countries abandoned by potential leaders are struggling to speak a word of hope, dignity, and peace into a local context of despair, isolation, and unrest.

The church has also recognized great missional opportunities afforded by the combination of Empire and of power shift through such reasons as brain drain. As Christianity explodes in the South (the countries sending elites [and non-elites] to cultural and economic centres of a post-Christian West), the church enjoys unprecedented opportunity for witness and must take seriously its responsibility to prepare those *leaving* as much as those staying, that they might bring the gospel into the heart of Empire. In their work or social capacity as significant men and women within the structures of Empire, these Christians are empowered to speak a gospel of humble gratitude demonstrating that while power is not the church’s goal, it irresistibly flows from people working for the redemption of all things.

Beyond the ubiquitous outward issues of “Empire” and power shift is another even ultimately more important development. Christians have recently spoken of power shifts *within* the church in an excited and eager tone, for just as contemporary globalization empowers individuals and networks, so too it empowers Christian individuals and networks.

Indeed, one of the most discussed facts of globalization's impact on Christianity is the growing awareness and significance of the Non-Western face of the church. It has been widely remarked that the heartlands of Christianity are shifting away from the West to the East and South, to lands where even a century ago Christianity, however ancient, existed marginally. Here think of the myriad Christian networks that criss-cross the globe and which increasingly have undertaken the cause of the "global South." This demographic transformation has been especially spectacular in the worldwide growth of Evangelical and Pentecostal Protestantism. In Africa, for example, professing Christians exploded from 10 million in 1900 to 360 million by 2000. In 1500, 1.6 percent of the world's 81 million Christians lived in Africa. Currently Africa's 360 million Christians constitute 18 percent of the world's 2 billion Christians, making it the third largest Christian-bearing continent. By 2025, Africa is projected to have 633 million Christians, or 24.3 percent of Christians worldwide. Similar trends are found in Latin America and Asia.<sup>17</sup>

While this transformation has no doubt been occurring for some time, it has only recently occasioned the beginnings of serious reflection within the church. Increasingly, calls for "new paradigms" of "partnership" and "internationalization" are the standard agendas for mission agencies, conferences, and publications. Closely related to such developments is how globalization has influenced thinking about what should constitute partnerships between Western and non-Western Christians. Reflecting on missions in the face of global poverty, economic disparity, disease and violence (and systems that both underwrite and alleviate these realities), scholars and practitioners have been forced to see important connections between Christian proclamation and action. Here "holistic," "integral," and "transformational" mission — the integration of evangelization with humanitarian and social justice concerns — are among the most popular mottos. Curiously, while contemporary globalization may be characterized by the controlling influence of the West in economic and political matters, the church may be manifesting itself in the unseating of the West's control in theological and missional matters.

Such is the paradox of "Empire" and power shift when it comes to the church. The tensions they present us should open the eyes of the church. These eyes in each local situation are filled with the tearful vision of overflowing pain, of oppression, suffering, inequality, violence and illiberal powers. The church's global eyes observe, paradoxically, systems that boost human rights, growing economic development and most significantly, the empowerment of the non-Western church. This emergence of a truly global Christianity and the growing empowerment of its non-Western adherents is already having profound impact on the world. Even the most remote and humble church finds itself a member of one of the world's most powerful institutions. Through its various networks, institutions, and movements, the church is capable of challenging and countering the misuses of other powers, such as when the state (or the international system, or economy or the world economic system) is oppressive, when it is abrogating its rightful authority, or when a particular state is powerless to provide for the common welfare of its citizens. This paradoxical reality describes the church — at once human and mystical; at once powerful and powerless.

***"What compels us to act?"***

If contemporary globalization both intensifies and transforms power, what does the gospel message mean for the church's use of, and confrontation with, power? Reflect on the following:

(a) *Where do you see the pain and tension caused by "Empire" and power shift?*

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<sup>17</sup> For a popular presentation of this transformation see Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford University Press: 2002).

- (b) *Where in the world are you led?*
- (c) *What forces push you or motivate you to engagement with your neighbours and the world?*
- (d) *What power have you been given and how do you use it?*
- (e) *On whose authority do you go out into the world?*
- (f) *How have you seen power dynamics change in your lifetime?*
- (g) *Who do you observe being empowered? Disempowered?*

Once you have considered these questions, what do your answers to the question “What compels me?” mean for you, for the mission of your local church, and for the church globally?

***Retelling the story anew: the church as “globalizer”***

*Contemporary globalization has attended the expansion of Christianity into a genuine world religion, but the church has always been a globalizing force in the world.*

In the world characterized by *Sans Frontieres, Pluralism & Fundamentalism, and Empire and Power Shift*, the church finds itself asking many fundamental questions anew: Where are God’s people currently at work in the world? Who are our neighbours and how should we love them? What is going on in our world and how should it affect the way we share the gospel with our cultures? What compels us to action?

What is rarely contemplated is that the church itself is and always has been a globalizing force in the world, a force as significant as global capitalism or geo-political power. Taken as a whole the church has incredible resources, organizations, manpower and institutional apparatus and in different moments in its history it has played significant roles in the making of history.<sup>18</sup>

Consider the recent explosion of international mission and humanitarian organizations. While Christian missionary boards and agencies have existed for a long time, modern para-church, humanitarian and mission networks/organizations have mushroomed in past years. Reliable statistics are hard to find, but a cursory glance reveals that the potential impact of these organizations is immense. Organizations such as Campus Crusade for Christ, Youth with a Mission, World Vision, Focus on the Family, Compassion International, the Fuller School of World Mission and the Christian Broadcasters Network are some of the largest and most visible of American Evangelical organizations. From Campus Crusade for Christ’s over 20,000 full-time staff in 150 countries and Youth with a Mission’s 10,000 predominantly-volunteer staff in 130 countries to the \$460 million annual budget of World Vision, the Body of Christ exerts international power by any political, economic, or social standard. What makes this organizational explosion even more compelling is that for every big Western organization, there are an emerging cadre of smaller (but no less significant) local non-Western movements and organizations.

Yet the power of the church is not merely its planetary reach or resources, although it possesses this and more. The source of its real power is in its reality-defining capacity – its capacity to shape and make sense of the unified social space that contemporary globalization has created.

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<sup>18</sup> Recent studies have estimated the total annual income of Christians worldwide at more than \$10 trillion (U.S. dollars); this is one quarter of the total world income. The total Gross Domestic Product of the U.S. in 1998 was only \$7.9 trillion, while the total revenues of the top 350 multinational corporations equals \$10 trillion. See Ron Sider, “Take the Pledge: A Practical Strategy for Loving the Poor,” *Christianity Today* (September 1998), 84; See also Larry Reed, “A Ten-Trillion-Dollar Stewardship,” in Bob Goudzwaard’s *Globalization and the Kingdom of God* (The Center for Public Justice and Baker Books: 2001)

If it is anything, *the church is a community whose way of life tells a particular story about reality*. It is this story that answers life's most fundamental questions: What does it mean to be human? Why is there suffering and evil? What is the meaning of history? What comes after death? Like Israel, the church is a people whose primary identity is to embody this story —the story of creation and fall, of covenant and redemption, of life and death and life after death, of new heavens and new earth. We exist to embody and implement redemption by participating in this story which centres on Jesus Christ.

Storytelling has profoundly formative power. The story the church embodies shapes the listeners, namely the world as well as the tellers (i.e. the church itself). The story we live has the power (and authority) to structure the entirety of individual and communal human life. Embodying this story impels us to mission and therefore *how* we embody (and have embodied) the story has a tremendous impact upon the world, for better and for worse. Has the church been faithful in speaking and acting the story *in the manner of Christ* – as kingdom-announcers and as cross-bearers?

There can be no doubt that Christian monotheism and its fruit — missionary movements, acts of charity and concern for the welfare of the entire creation, etc.— have been a primary driver of globalization throughout history.<sup>19</sup> Of course, sin has spoiled this fruit when the church became complicit in any evil or suffering in the world. At the least, the church has at times accommodated an idolatrous subservience to fallen powers. At the worst, the church has at times operated as a fallen power itself, guilty of grand self-service that has led to acts of destruction, oppression and denial of our Lord. (In this way, one might ask to what extent contemporary globalization is the prodigal son of Christianity?)

All of this raises questions and urgency about responsibility for our programs and strategies, past and present. When the church has acted as a fallen power, it has done so through the misuse and abuse of its institutional resources. This necessarily means its storytelling has also been defective; where the institutional church has been a fallen power, it has failed to coherently embody the Kingdom story. Let us now ask another question — what are the stories the church has been telling the world? What is the gospel message it has been announcing?

### ***“What story of the world do we tell? “***

This is the essential pre-missiological question for the mission of the church in the world. As we have seen, this question is as essential today as contemporary globalization has attended the expansion of Christianity into a genuine world religion, as it has always been for the church which has always been a globalizing force in the world. Are we telling (and living) the right story? We must constantly ask ourselves this question which also reminds us of who the author of our story is: the Lord and author of all creation. Answering this question, moreover, allows us to answer properly the three questions previously raised: Who is our neighbour? Who are we? What compels us to act in our world? When we understand contemporary globalization's most observable patterns and identifiable characteristics and know the story, then we can answer the basic missiological questions prompted by the scenes we've investigated.

If we answer these missiological questions correctly, it will make others ask questions of us. As Leslie Newbigin observes, *“What really needs to be said is that where the church is faithful to its Lord, there the powers of the kingdom are present and people*

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<sup>19</sup> We might even point out that humans were originally commanded: “Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it” (*Genesis 1:28 NIV*); just as Christians were later told to “...go and make disciples of all nations...” (*Matthew 28:19*). In short, as humans, we cannot help but be globalizers —either by nature or by obedience. The problem is how we humans, Christians or not, have gone about this.

*begin to ask the question to which the gospel is the answer*" ("The Logic of Mission," in The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, 1989, 119).

It is indisputable that fifteenth-century Jesuits and Dominicans were harbingers not just of Catholic Christianity, but of European Christendom and its Conquistadors and that nineteenth-century Protestant missionaries did not just take up their Bibles, but also their pith helmets as they travelled to far reaches of the earth under the shadow of the Union Jack. The Christian story has been mixed with other stories and sometimes appropriated for fallen purposes. We must consider the possibility of mixed messages and false stories we may be sending the world today. One might ask the present generation, for instance, about the nature of the gospel message being communicated in widely-touted films depicting the gospel story of Jesus. It is cause for celebration that these films are reaching more people with the gospel than ever before and in word-for-word gospel translations into local languages. We must also reflect on the fact that the technology and technique that make such multimedia gospel experiences possible are also part of the story being communicated. When reliance on technology and technique are linked, as they usually are, with what Samuel Escobar has called "managerial missiology," the story we tell can quickly become distorted, leading to what he calls a "depersonalization" of people into "unreached targets" in order to be able to report statistically significant "decisions for Christ" to funding agencies. Perhaps the real underlying danger is that while we proclaim one gospel story, we may very well be living another and those to whom we witness cannot always tell the difference between them. As Escobar reminds us,

"A great challenge to Christian missionaries in the coming years will be how to remain first and foremost messengers of Jesus Christ and not just harbingers of the new globalization process. They will have to use the facilities of the system without being caught by the spirit of the system. This is a question not only for missionaries from affluent societies but also for those from poorer societies who are tempted sometimes to rely mainly on the economic facilities and the technical instruments available to them."<sup>20</sup>

Past distortions have not been limited to the stories we have told the world, but have been repeated in the stories we tell ourselves. Perhaps nothing has been more damaging than the influence of dualism. Dualism takes different shapes in different places and is, admittedly, a greater problem in some quarters than others. What dualism's forms typically share is a distorting distinction between things "spiritual" and things "worldly," with "worldly" things considered less worthy of our efforts and concern as Christians. This distortion has profoundly short-circuited the full scope of the church's mission through the privileging of the work of fulltime professional Christian ministry over other kinds of work, say, being a farmer or a policy maker, or a labourer, or an economist, or public health worker, or a mother. We have often lost sight of the fact that our story is a story for the *whole* church, where every member of the Body plays a necessary part.

In the context of globalization and its reorganization of locality, ideology and power, this temptation toward dualism, whatever its form, must be avoided, for much of the dark side of globalization is a product of the church not resisting dualism. One reason globalization is often associated with unjust and inequitable political and economic forces is that Christians (esp. in the West) have abandoned their posts as *Christian* workers in global centres of power. Often believing that the extent of Christian relevance in these spheres is as Christian witness to co-workers, the church has failed to tell a story in which redemption extends globally through Christian laity at work in a myriad of vocations and spheres of

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<sup>20</sup> Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel From Everywhere to Everyone* (InterVarsity Press: 2003, 63).

power. Where the world is critical of contemporary globalization, how much is it recognizing the results of the *absence* of Christians in places where the church could have been telling the world the true story?

Happily, the issue of dualism has been raised by Christians, most especially since the mid-1960s, in recurrent calls for “holistic” or “transformational” Christian missions in post-colonial, developing societies. Recall the words of the Grand Rapids Report: “*For the gospel is the root of which both evangelism and social responsibility are the fruits. As good news of love in Christ, the gospel demands both to be preached and to be lived.*”<sup>21</sup> That such calls have been largely heard and taken seriously is a testament to the fact that retelling the story is already in process and that this retelling is being done by a global church — not just a Western church or a Southern church. Of course, the devil is in the detail. (Although not only there!) Just how to practice “holistic” or “transformational” missions is a vexing question, especially in the context of globalization. To work together in this retelling takes patient listening and mutual submitting, both which can be downright painful. Additionally, for all that is being accomplished with common calls to a more full-bodied understanding of missions, there is more to consider: In spite of those who work for a missiology that combines evangelism and social justice as two sides of the same coin, creational matters tend to be ignored. This leaves the arts and the natural sciences, for instance, to fend for themselves — creation is still left groaning.

#### ***Four-fifths and 360° mission***

This full-bodied understanding of missions is more fully elaborated in an important essay by Marty Shaw, Jr., entitled *The Future of Kingdom Work in a Globalizing World*. The essay in its entirety can be found in Appendix C. Shaw’s work identifies two parts to a holistic process:

1. How the evangelical church will encourage and empower the church of the four-fifths world to be an equal player in globalized missions.
2. How the evangelical church can develop a holistic approach to mission that leads to integration of the Gospel in all aspects of the life and work of a society and of the world.

It is through such sober-minded and honest appraisal that we must consider the significance of the church as a globalizing force in the world — not only in terms of the past, but more crucially in terms of the present and future. However, the “scenes” of contemporary globalization tempt us to take sides too quickly, or they paralyze us before we determine how to act. The enormity of issues mentioned in this paper can be overwhelming and disorienting. We now turn to some concluding reflections on where these issues.

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<sup>21</sup> The Grand Rapids Report on Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Commitment, in John R. Stott, ed. *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989*, (Eerdmans, Paternoster, 1996), 185.

## 5. WHERE TO GO FROM “HERE”: FOLLOWING JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES ON THE GLOBAL ROAD

*“When the church is faithful to the Lord and to the Gospel in its nature and life, the global and the local meet in the new creation!”—Samuel Escobar*

In 1925, E. Stanley Jones wrote a widely read book entitled, *The Jesus of the Indian Road*. In this book, Jones provides one of the most moving and profound appeals for indigenizing the gospel ever written. In the Indian context, Jones argued, Jesus was to be understood in Indian terms, not terms imported and imposed from afar.<sup>22</sup> Jones articulated what many then and since have always known: the various gospels of Western Civilization, global capitalism, technological advance, democracy and now human rights are *not* the good news of Jesus Christ. The temptation today, of course, is to congratulate ourselves for believing we have learned this lesson. To be sure, calls to “contextualization” and “indigenization” are squarely on the agenda of most missionaries. Though the sad truth is that we continue to confuse the true living gospel with the gospels of the world, there is another issue at stake: loosing sight how these indigenous Christianities fit together.

Our task today is to both affirm and multiply Jones’ idea. We must affirm his basic insight that Jesus is found on many indigenous roads and we must take this insight further, to the place these many roads lead: *to Jesus on the global road*. What is this “global road?” Is it a one-size fits all, top-down imposition of one group’s version of Christianity on all the others? To this we must say a collective and firm, “NO!” Rather, a global road suggests we take into account how indigenous “roads” are interconnected because of the processes we have been examining. (Recall our composite definition of globalization as “a set of complexly-related historical processes by which local situations throughout the world are increasingly interconnected within a single, but often conflicted, social space.”) If this is true, the church must increasingly reconsider its mission in light of the fact that we are all on the same global road, even if we occupy different places, move by different modes of travel, or engage in different ways of life. Some of us go as “vagabonds,” some as “pilgrims,” and some as “tourists” — yet all go as followers of the risen Christ. This means that mission is not only possible, but essential from “above” and “below” in the sense of being faithful to where God has placed us in the world. Consequently, we must be diligent in identifying present “global road conditions,” what we have referred to as the “scenes” in which we find ourselves confronting anew crucial missiological questions — “Where in the world are we and who is our neighbour?” “Who are we in relation to the world around us?” “What compels us to act?” We historically neglected these questions because they seemed self-apparent, because we believed we inhabited a world whose contours were given and that we could take both our starting points and our local contexts for mission at face value. In light of *Sans Frontieres*, *Pluralism & Fundamentalism*, and *Empire & Power Shift* we find ourselves increasingly unable to take such things for granted.

We have seen, furthermore, that to answer these questions depends on a fundamental, pre-missiological question — “whose story of the world do we tell?” It is the answer to this question that properly orients us individually and collectively and allows us to make sense of our world and our mission in it. This question also alerts us to how we may have misunderstood or misrepresented this story and confused both ourselves and the world as to our true mission, our true calling. Rethinking mission in light of our past and in

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<sup>22</sup> Lamin Sanneh makes a similar point in *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West* (Eerdmans 2002—see pp. 18-19). He argues that Christianity has expanded almost exclusively to those places where missionaries of the colonial era kept the indigenous name for God.

terms of the tensions that confront us today begins at the feet of the One who is the author and sustainer of our story.

Very well. Story-telling is fine and good, but how will it inform the hard, practical questions confronting missionaries and pastors and the church? How will it help the Brazilian pastor who is asked by a congregant if he should take part in an anti-globalization rally? How will it help Korean missionaries be more effective in reaching “unreached peoples” in the “10-40 window?” How will it aid the American missionary trying to determine whether her missionary agency should transition from a sending organization to a support organization for indigenous missionaries? How will it assist Indian missionaries to plant churches in rural villages among people who have never heard the word “globalization?” It would be presumptuous for anyone to provide universal answers to such questions and we will not attempt to do so here. Even if we desired to do so, we simply have no global formula to offer our not-so-hypothetical brothers and sisters. What we can do is suggest humbly where they (and we) can begin the process of corporate discernment necessary to answer these practical questions of daily ministry. The first step is the hard work of *understanding*, a work barely begun here. The second step is *discipleship*, for by living the true gospel story in symbol and word, in sacrament and community, in worship and work, we are not simply “informed” but actually “formed” for mission. It is to this second step we now turn by way of conclusion.

### ***Back to basics: Mission and Discipleship***

If globalization describes a situation in which we are all in one respect or another cosmopolitans, that is, citizens of a globalizing world, but also citizens of God’s Kingdom — then the church finds itself with the task of forming its members to be biblically-grounded cosmopolitans. Happily, the full depth of the gospel story possesses the necessary resources for this task, and we have been given God’s Spirit to aid us in our effort.

Again recall the gospel mediation outlined at the start of the paper: From the beginning of *Genesis*, we are told that God created the heavens and the earth and humankind to be its stewards. All this was created originally good. To humans God gave the kingly mandate to go into all the earth and to fill it and to have dominion over it (a command echoed in Matthew 28: 19-20 and John 20: 21-23 in a fresh way). This calling quickly became distorted, as did all of creation, by our rebellion and fall. In the early chapters of Scripture the episodes of our rebellion are repeated over and over again and each time we see the further alienation of humans from God, from creation, from each other and from themselves. The archetypal symbol of this endless rebellion is found in the Tower of Babel. The consequence of our then global assertion of independence from God’s intentions was a confusion of tongues and the dispersal of the human race, a consequence whose effects were made manifest in the story of Israel (God’s covenant people) and is still felt today; humanity, like creation, continues to groan under the weight of Adam’s curse, awaiting the end of exile and captivity.

Here is the good news. Through Christ humanity and creation are both reconciled and will one day be fully restored. So we see hints of the coming restoration in Pentecost, in the first struggles between Jews and Gentiles at Antioch and in the visions of John where all nations and tongues are gathered to give praise to the creator and redeemer God. We are sent his Holy Spirit to guide our efforts and to encourage our calling to be for the world what Jesus was for Israel —Kingdom announcers and cross-bearers. Although we have no abiding city, we are told not only to go into all the world, but also to serve the city we are in.

Taken together, these brief allusions to the full gospel story remind us of our calling. We are, after all, to be a kingdom of priests, a royal priesthood for the whole earth. Such a calling, it is essential to note, is *not* a new program, formula, paradigm, or action plan for world missions — whether universally advised “from above” or more radically injected “from

below.” It is rather a disposition, an attitude, or posture towards the world; it is, fundamentally, a mark of a certain kind of discipleship, which can only come from being formed within a specific community of faith that has at its heart the story of Jesus Christ and the radical hope of reconciliation. It is, then, a response of genuine incarnational Christianity to the global situation in which all of us increasingly find ourselves. The mark of this kind of discipleship is responding to Christ’s call to follow him into the very heart of the world’s darkness and pain as a sign of his inaugurated reconciliation.

As we have seen, globalization is an exceedingly complex and highly contested reality which often eludes our attempts to understand it. We have also seen that it is full of unavoidable tensions: rich and poor, West and non-West, unity and diversity, individual and community, freedom and authority, the universal and the particular, domination and resistance, exile and homecoming and, (in eschatological terms) the beginning of the End of times and the end of the End of times. These are the tensions and paradoxes we all inhabit just by being human, no matter who we are or where we live. Globalization intensifies these tensions that plague our human condition, adding to them the additional strain of the global with the local.

Caught as we are in the middle of these tensions, we are tempted to take sides, as the powers of the world push us to one side or the other and we are confronted with an imperative to be for or against globalization. In this paper, we suggest that the spirit of a Christian response to globalization is to decline this imperative, choosing instead the way of reconciliation, the way that calls us to live at the heart of the tensions. No doubt this is a way that must begin with repentance, with groaning in the Spirit and lament, but also with a blessed hope. We begin where we are, in our particular moment in time and our peculiar location in space, but we also begin where we are with respect to our own societies (our class, ethnicity, gender, etc.). Christians are called to embody the true Israel, the true Humanity found only in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In this new Humanity there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor freeman, male nor female, only the full, complete, Body of Christ in its glorious diversity, one in the Spirit of God. This is the Christ-centred imperative behind a biblically-grounded cosmopolitanism.

We have already raised three missiological questions that we believe will help Christians fulfil their mission to live as reconcilers amidst the tensions of the globalizing world around them. Let us raise two more. To the questions “Where in the world are we and who is our neighbour?” “Who are we in relationship to the world around us?” and “What compels us to act?” we add “*Who* should do *what* in the world?” and “*Where* in the world do we begin?”

The first new question — “Who should do what?” is a vocational question. Having all-encompassing and inclusive mottos such as “The Whole Church, Taking the Whole Gospel, to the Whole World” is a fine sentiment, but unhelpful as a strategy for mission. In fact, what is at issue may not actually be a question of mission per se, but a question of *commission*. This is to say, that just as there are many members in the Body of Christ, so there are many gifts and talents which are meant to serve the Body. Raising this question makes us reflect how we should be forming and encouraging one another with regard to our unique gifts and talents, roles and offices. It also raises important questions about collaboration and partnership.

In the language of Jeremiah 28:4-7, raising this question is in essence a call to “serve the city.” This is a call that challenges the over-reliance (at least in the West) on professional missionaries, where 2% of Christians are commissioned to do 80% of the work. The church must reaffirm the role of the laity, equipping all Christians not simply for workplace evangelism but to work out what Jesus’ lordship means in every realm of human existence. It happens that most of the non-Western missionary movement today consists of

lay people who are on the move — of women and children, labourers, refugees, students and diasporic communities. As many are right to remind us, the book of *Acts* continues to be lived out in nearly every city on the planet.

One of the most desperately needed aspects of this call to serve the city is the commissioning of Christian professionals (by definition, elites) who will work out the implications of the whole gospel story in realms of economics, politics, science and engineering, the arts, medicine, and the like. It is a fact of our world-historical moment that humanity increasingly relies on such powers in the ordering of its affairs. It is also a fact that these powers have become the reigning idols of the age. Part of the church's task in serving the city is surely to work for the redemption of these powers, but in the process this will likely mean reminding the world that Jesus is Lord — neither Mammon nor Caesar nor Nature are Lord. Again, this will mean being able to live in the tensions of the world, where the world is in exile. Formation and discipleship at the level of the local church is in this way fundamental to the church's mission in the world. Its job is to form people, in the words of N. T. Wright, into the kind of Christians capable of holding in one hand the love of God and in the other the pain of the world. The shape of reconciliation is always cross-shaped — whether we are professional missionaries or businessmen, engineers or pastors, wage-labourers or CEOs.

The second question — “Where in the world do we begin?” is a question of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity is perhaps less familiar to us than vocation, but just as important. To put it simply, subsidiarity refers to the levels at which decisions are made. At issue is the question of authority: who gets to decide what counts as orthodox Christianity? In a world characterized by globalization — of *Pluralism and Fundamentalism, of Empire & Power Shift*, debates on authority are complex. We are seeing this in terms of the explosion of non-Western Christianity and the implications that explosion has for who gets to tell the authorized story of Christianity. In a more direct way, subsidiarity also refers to responsibility. None of us is responsible for the entire world, but we are responsible for being faithful to our calling wherever God has put us. In this sense, mission begins wherever God has placed you and wherever vocation takes you. We are to serve the city *we are in*. Indeed, globalization challenges the long-standing captivity of the idea that missions is something that happens somewhere else in the world, an idea still constrained by Western notions of geography (especially geography divided artificially by the modern nation-state system).

As globalization liberates us from this captivity we find that the emphasis of the question shifts to “*Where* in the world do we begin?” (and back to the question of “who” should do what). The “we” question brings us against one of the most significant issues of the day: the issue of unity. This is what many missiologists are struggling to come to terms with when they write so passionately about “partnership” and “internationalization.” Indeed, globalization adds rocket fuel to a fire that has always burned in the history of the church. This fire refers to the ever-present tension between unity and diversity. In its global dimensions, this tension points to the central paradox of Christian faith — in Andrew Walls words, “*the utter Jewishness of Jesus and the wonderful universality of the son of God. There is one Church (and thus, one authentic humanity) and yet the church is incredibly diverse (and thus, so is humanity.) Only in Christ can this paradox be reconciled.*”<sup>23</sup> Here emphasis on the local church with unity on essentials, liberty on non-essentials and in all things charity is a helpful guide. In the end, our unity-diversity will be the witness the world longs for, just as it will be our disunity that will be cause for the light of the gospel to be hid as it were under a bushel.

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted from a lecture Professor Walls delivered as part of “The Future of the Church in a Globalized World” (April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2004 in Charlottesville, Virginia).

Let us return to the Hindu fable with which we began and consider again the question we set out to address: what is the impact of globalization on the gospel? The blind men and the elephant analogy captures the diversity of experience and perception that describes the contemporary church. We each come from particular places in the world, from different cultures, languages, histories and so on. None of us, therefore, has the complete picture of globalization. With important qualifications, what is true of globalization can also be said of the gospel. As Lamin Sanneh puts it, “*Christianity is not a garment made to specifications of a bygone golden age, nor is it an add-on whimsical patchwork rigged up without regard to the overall design. Rather, Christianity is a multicoloured fabric where each new thread, chosen and refined at the Designer’s hand, adds lustre and strength to the whole.*”<sup>24</sup> We need to listen and learn from one another in order to piece it all together, to get a fuller understanding of the story we all know, but which can only be contemplated in its full glory within the context of the whole church. As we have seen, globalization presents us an opportunity for getting all proverbial blind men into the same room (ultimately a throne room) to share what they perceive and to work out together what the larger reality is and what it means for the church’s mission. Indeed, this is nothing short of the promise of both Pentecost and Revelation and it is being made possible by contemporary globalization. This is the sense in which we need to rethink missions — globalization not only provides the opportunity to do so, it demands it.

If we are correct, we find ourselves following Jesus, each at different places on what amounts to a single, global road. Along with us on the road is the rest of humanity, desperately trying to determine where in the world the road is leading them. It is our great mission in the world to announce the answer which is found in the gospel message we carry: all roads lead to the cross and then on to “Zion!” The church, local and global, gathered and dispersed, Western and Non-Western, rich and poor, male and female, Jew and Gentile is to be a living parable, a human icon reflecting the light of this gospel. We are to bear the good news that the global road leads to that final vision in *Revelation* where the kings of the earth bring their glory to the new Jerusalem and there, together, every tongue and nation will unite before the throne of God in worship and adoration.

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<sup>24</sup> Sanneh, 2003: 56.

## 6. APPENDICES

### A. SOCIO-ANALYTICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION

*“Globalization is a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions—assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity, and impact—generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power.”<sup>25</sup>*

This is among the best analytical definition of globalization available as well as the most abstract. To put it as simply as possible, globalization according to this definition is a process or set of processes which can be seen in a transformation of how humans relate to one another in space and time. Thus, we can measure the **scope**, **intensity**, **velocity**, and **impact** of various “drivers.” In addition to these spatio-temporal dimensions which sketch the broad shape of globalization, we can also add four additional dimensions which map its specific organizational profile: **infrastructure**, **institutionalization**, **stratification**, and **modes of interaction**.

As abstract as it first sounds, this way of looking at globalization offers a number of conceptual strengths. It allows us to measure global processes in quite specific ways within discrete sectors of modern life—whether in terms of the single strands of politics, economics, culture, technology, and the like. Consider the technological sector. We can measure the extent (or **scope**) of internet technology across the globe in terms of the number of computers with Internet access that exist in the world; we can measure the rate (or **velocity**) at which the spread of this technology has occurred; we can measure the level of penetration and distribution (or **intensity**) within various regions/countries; and we can measure the influence (or **impact**) of this technology on individuals or whole societies.

Moreover, by such measures we can then distinguish genuine “globalization” from say, “regionalization,” or we can compare various historical periods, that is, different “historical forms of globalization.” For instance, we might compare the level and form of one strand of 19<sup>th</sup> century technological globalization with that of the present by considering the globalizing scope, velocity, intensity, and impact of the telegraph (known anachronistically as the “Victorian Internet”) as compared to the computerized Internet of today.

Another strength of this analytical definition is that it highlights the carriers of globalization (i.e. **infrastructure**). Again, taking the Internet as our example, we are able to think about the various media that make it possible—satellites, electricity, multinational computer corporations, international trade agreements, as well as UN, World Bank, and private foundation initiatives designed to spread Internet technology to the most isolated areas of the world, and so on. Likewise, it shows the way Internet technology has increasingly become not only a normal way of communicating around the world for many people, but how it is arguably the primary way we communicate globally (i.e., **institutionalization**).

Also among the strengths this socio-analytical definition offers is that it allows us to consider the patterns of inequality (i.e., **stratification**) that a particular set of globalizing processes fosters. To continue with the case of the Internet, it helps us confront among other things the issue of access—the ability of different groups of people to access the Internet. Finally, by looking at the increasing predominance of the Internet in our daily

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<sup>25</sup> This definition comes from David Held et al. in “Rethinking Globalization,” *The Global Transformations Reader*, (2000: 55).

routines, and especially in particular settings, it illustrates how mediated our communication has become (i.e., **dominant modes of interaction**).

For all its conceptual strengths this socio-analytical definition does have weaknesses. It doesn't tell us about *what* drives globalization, either in a given historical instance, or within a specific sphere of life. Also missing from the definition is any discussion about the substance or content of globalization—issues of meaning and moral order that are inscribed into the dominant institutional carriers of global processes, what we might call its “symbolic packages”—put simply, its cultural dimensions. Perhaps most problematic of all, however, this definition says nothing about the theological dimensions of globalization.

## B. THE FUTURE OF KINGDOM WORK IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD

By Marty Shaw, Jr.

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*A fundamental question for global mission is not only a geographical matter, encompassing the whole world, but also a matter of content. The issue is a holistic gospel for a holistic mission.<sup>26</sup>*

Globalization is not limited to the political or economic spheres of influences. There are multiple disciplines that are globalized or globalizing that exert influence on the worldview of cultures and societies around the world. Religion, although not always included as a major player in globalization discussions, is in fact one area of global society that has great influence on the worldview of any given culture. A large challenge for evangelical Christianity in the future is how to integrate the influence of the Gospel with the other influence carriers in the globalization process. If this can be achieved then the Gospel will have a greater impact on society than it has in recent history. This would be a holistic mission.

I see two key parts to this process. The first deals with how the evangelical church will encourage and empower the church of the four-fifths world to be an equal player in globalized missions. The second issue is how the evangelical church can develop a holistic approach to mission that leads to integration of the Gospel in all aspects of the life and work of a society and of the world.

### **Missions from Everywhere to Everywhere**

The growth of missions by churches outside of the traditional Western sending nations is well documented. Since 1989 Western agencies have become more aware of what has been taking place and have sought to respond to it. For most groups this has meant internationalization of their agency. For some groups this has been a good move, but not all have followed this pattern. There are indigenous missions that have emerged within their own cultural setting and have developed unique approaches. As the four-fifths world church continues to mature and grow in this area it is likely that this trend will continue.

Globalization does not need to mean that everything is the same and in fact globalization can often be a current whose influence flows in both directions. As four-fifths world churches become involved in global missions they must be freed up to develop structures and approaches that build upon their strengths and their own cultural uniqueness.

As the four-fifths world church actively involves itself in global mission activity they can begin by looking for a model to follow on how to do missions. For most this means that they will look at the one pattern of missions that they have seen from the West, the professional missionary. If the assumption is too quickly made that if they are to be involved in missions this is the way they must do it, they limit themselves from the start. The current dominant model of missions as done by the Western churches is based upon a model that developed in the colonial era and is dependent on a high level of affluence within the sending church. We no longer live in a colonial era and very few, if any, of four-fifths world churches possess a significant level of affluence. When this model of missions is

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<sup>26</sup> Snyder, Howard A., Global Good News: Mission in a New Context, Abingdon Press, 2001, 62.

intentionally or unintentionally presented as *the* model of missions we artificially limit these churches from the very beginning.

If these churches as well as the Western churches are to overcome these limitations multiple models of missions must be developed and in some cases redeveloped. The last two thousand years of church history is full of various models of doing missions. The following, while not intended to be exhaustive, is a list of historical models that have been used to spread the Kingdom.

- ✳ Church/societies financed individuals
- ✳ Military
- ✳ Development
- ✳ Business/trade and Education as Mission
- ✳ Voluntary and involuntary migration
- ✳ Christian Communities
- ✳ Martyrdom

There are undoubtedly more that could be listed and some that have yet to be discovered. In a globalizing world each church in its cultural setting should be encouraged and allowed to develop their own approaches to involvement in missions.

Internationalization of missions while presenting certain short-term advantages, also has some potentially negative side effects as well. In too many cases internationalizing a Western agency maintains Western organizational styles and thinking. The organization may be international in personnel, but Western in organization and structures. This runs the risk of continued Western dominance and in worse case scenarios neo-colonial or neo-paternalistic. It can unintentionally say that we want one to be involved in missions and we have figured out how it can best be done so come work within our structures. A recent study points out not only the differences, but how internationalized Western agencies can unwittingly create a Western mindset for non-Western missionaries in their organization.

When asked about the best way to evaluate the effectiveness of Japanese missionaries, an interesting trend developed. With two exceptions, the Japanese missionaries who served under non-Japanese, international sending agencies responded with results or a product, such as having established a church. The missionaries who were sent from Japanese sending agencies tended to speak of relationships, who while the missionary had developed a relationship with the people. This is most likely a result of the kinds of expectations the missionaries had been given by their respective sending agencies.<sup>27</sup>

### **360° Missions**

Several years ago two mission leaders were together and discussed who helped to shape the worldview of any culture or society. The discussion resulted in a list that YWAM calls the “Seven mind-moulders.” They are: Arts, Business, Religion (church), Media, Education, Family and Government. There may in fact be more, but these are at least the seven main ones. Rather than a linear approach, I like to see each of these areas as a piece of a circle that fits together and thus a 360 degree approach to missions.

The idea is that the combined thinking of these groups in a society will influence how that society looks at the world. In very recent history missions has pretty much limited itself to working in the arena of religion through evangelism, church planting and leadership

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<sup>27</sup> Dupree, Stephen Wesley. “Discovering a Contextualized Model for Training Japanese for Cross-cultural Ministry” Ph.D. dissertation at the E. Stanley Jones School of World Missions and Evangelism Asbury Theological Seminary. May 2004, 182.

development. If this is how we approach missions we will have far less influence in a society because we only have an impact on one aspect of the mechanism that influences the thinking in that society. Worse we may encourage syncretism among the new believers. A new believer is taught well about church and Christianity, but very little about how faith is to be lived out in the world. As one Asian church leader shared, "We know how to be Christians on Sunday, but we don't know how to be Christians the rest of the week." So the new believer leaves the church and returns to his/her occupation with little or no concept of how their faith is to be lived out in that arena and can fall back to old practices that develop from the old worldview. In a globalized world that is linked in so many different ways, Christian missions must find a way to integrate its activity in all seven areas listed above. That will mean both professional Christians and Christian professionals will need to strategically work together to model what it means to be a Christian in all areas of life.

I would say that there is a majority of Christians in the world who would never see themselves as professional Christians, as traditional missionaries. They should not be limited to that route to involvement in global missions. Every aspect of globalization offers an opportunity for Christians to share and demonstrate the Gospel. There are non-Western businessmen who are starting factories as an intentional and effective means of doing missions. There are artists and educators who do not see themselves as missionaries, but rather as Christians who are living out their faith and influencing the thinking of their discipline and thus a society. I met with the pastor of a large urban church in central Africa and asked him about how their church might be involved in cross-cultural missions. He said that a small number of his members travel globally in business or as lawyers. More still travel on the continent and still others travel to near neighbour countries. He felt that they needed to do more to help these professionals be "missionaries" by living out their faith in a consistent manner and sharing the Gospel in the areas that God has called them to.

Christian business people and educators, artist and government officials are already doing this in growing numbers. It will be a challenge for traditional missions to adapt to the new possibilities brought on by the realities of globalization and to seek to jointly develop integrative strategies with Christian professionals that will bring the impact of the Gospel to all aspects of a society.

Globalization is affecting all aspects of societies today. Missions in this reality must seek to intentionally model the Gospel in all areas, not just the religious. The idea of the Gospel going from everywhere to everywhere should not be just a geographical issue, but one that involves all aspects of culture and society, that is a holistic gospel for a holistic mission.

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