

## 25 B ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON MISSIONS

### Foundational truths

1. God created and cares for all of humanity.
2. People are separated from God due to sin and risk separation forever.
3. No religion or lifestyle can make us right with God, but Jesus died to rescue all who would trust in Him.
4. This message changes not only individual lives but whole communities and nations.
5. The task of the church is to insure that everyone has a chance to respond to God's Good News.

### Objectives

The objectives of Christ being sent to earth-in addition to being the perfect Sacrifice and destroying the works of the devil, according to Luke 4:18, were

1. To proclaim good news to the poor;
2. To heal the brokenhearted;
3. To proclaim freedom for the prisoners;
4. To restore the sight of the blind;
5. To set free those who are downtrodden; and
6. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

These are Biblical items for missions to consider.

### Motivations for evangelism in the early church: [1]

1. A Sense of Gratitude: Early Christians shared Jesus because of an overwhelming experience of the love of God and the life of Jesus.
2. A Sense of Responsibility: Early Christians understood that their lives were lived under the eye of God and that they ought to please God in everything that they did because God is a Sovereign Judge.
3. A Sense of Concern: Early Christians had great concern for the unevangelized because of the concept of evil permeating all of humanity and Jesus was the sole answer to the problem of evil. Only through Jesus could an individual find God and escape the dangerous traps of evil.
4. A Sense of Urgency: The eschatological expectation of an imminent return of Jesus influenced Christians to spread the gospel quickly. The Holy Spirit was seen as an eschatological gift, a foretaste of God's future, and what equipped Christians for world mission. Since God is sovereign, bringing in the Kingdom in God's way and time, and is the Creator and Redeemer of the whole world, early Christians were convinced that they ought to spread the gospel to Jews and Gentiles.

## Bible Translation

Dedicated software packages for translation

**Paratext** [2] is a key Bible translation software package, currently used to translate Scripture into local languages. Paratext is used at major stages in the translation process:

- Study
- Draft
- Revise
- Check
- Publish

**TBTA** (The Bible Translator's Assistant) is valuable for grammar analysis and early drafts.

**Scripture Forge** is for online community Scripture checking.

**Render** assists oral learners without Scripture.

**Wave Surfer** and **SIL Speech Analyzer** are useful for speech analysis.

**SALT** is Systematic Analysis of Language Translation.

## Limits of translation

Much of translation work can be done by matching words and phrases in English translations or Greek manuscripts to the equivalent wording in the target language. The difficulty arises when there is no existing equivalent word or when the concept is totally foreign to the local speaker.

The idea that our sins can be made “whiter than snow” completely misses tribal people in coastal Papua New Guinea who have never seen snow and have no concept what the phrase is conveying. “Whiter than the inside of a coconut” may be the best way to convey the idea.

In a culture where “stand at the door and knock” is typically what a robber would do, “stand at the door and cough” may convey the idea of Rev. 3:20.

## Missiology

WBT and similar groups- Goal is that every person or “people group” has *access* to God's word in their language.

Unreached people groups are not invisible or unknown, but rather have virtually no access to hearing the Gospel.

From Jacob Loewen, summarizing Ralph Winter: [3]

*The task of evangelism on the basis of the differing cultural distances to be bridged between the myriad of tribes and peoples in the world, can be classified into three categories: E-1: E-2: E-3:*

*E1: evangelism within homogeneous groups;*

*E2: evangelism of geographically close and culturally or linguistically related groups;*

*E3: evangelism of culturally distant groups in which the evangelist is separated from the people to be evangelized by monumental (Winter's own term) cultural distances.*

### Missions Strategy –Encuentro de Dios

One of the most successful mission strategies of the past century has been the Encuentro de Dios (Encounter with God) movement for South America. Encuentro began in Lima in 1973. It has grown to over 100 churches and tens of thousands of believers in major cities. “Transform cities to transform a nation.”

*In Latin America, upwards of 70% of the population of every nation lives in urban areas. And, in most case, one-third of the population of each nation resides in the capital city of those nations...If you want ...to reach most of the population... in the quickest, most efficient way, in most cases you will go the capital city... Most importantly, it is scriptural to do so...[In Acts we see that] Jerusalem, city of influence and resources and personnel, was saturated first.*

*Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, Thessalonica-Capital cities, trade centers, cities of great influence...Urban evangelism, then, is not new...It was the original strategy of our Lord and His followers for world evangelization.*

*For too long the bulk of our evangelical work in Latin America has been among the jungle and poor people...But with very few exceptions, they will not provide the leadership or financial resources [to reach the rest of the nation]. The middle class...when won to Christ and properly challenged, have the ability to reach both up and down through all classes and areas of their nation in order to win their nation for Christ. [4]*

Encuentro is based on a set of principles based on the book of Acts:

- Prayer- One full year of dedicated prayer precedes every outreach activity.
- Team ministry –Each church is pastored by a team of leaders.
- Location –“Go where the people are.” Begin with professionals in large urban centers. Build churches in the city. Provide proximity, visibility, relevance.
- Buildings –functional, aesthetically pleasing-will attract all classes of people
- Dependence on God’s Spirit
- Creative evangelism –Reaching people through crafts, language classes, finance seminars, addiction recovery...
- Discipleship-Each new believer agrees to a three year program of weekly discipleship.
- Building (spiritually) healthy families
- Building healthy churches
- Uniting the churches
- Leadership development –Those believers with gifts of teaching receive in-depth Bible education.

- Multiplication –When a church reaches 1,000 believers it agrees to spin off a “daughter church,” using 100 members and a prepared pastoral staff.

## Technology and Missions

### Radio

HCJB, TransWorld Radio, and FEBC have made it possible for anyone with a shortwave radio in target countries to have access to Gospel programming. Most centers are able to follow up those who respond and write in.

Radio also made possible communication with distant translation bases and with mission aircraft.

### Aviation

Aviation was a game-changer for world missions. MAF began in the mid-1940s, and JAARS was founded as an arm of Wycliffe Bible Translators in 1948. With many pilots trained in the military during WW2 planes were made available to transport translators, transport supplies and medical equipment, and evacuate medical emergencies. Travel that previously 21 days between walking, boats, and trucks, was reduced to a matter of hours. Pilots received specialized training for mountain flying, rugged terrain, and short landing strips. The goal became to reduce barriers and to increase safety of the workers. [5]

### Computers

Once the simplest computers were linked overseas, communication by email was possible, replacing overseas phone calls that ran five dollars per minute.

Computers have been used for parts inventory, ordering, personnel records, bookkeeping, and assistance in translation.

### Technical Missions

Among technical mission groups, Son Set Solutions has recently been working in the following areas:

- Son Set radios-
- Transmitter construction
- Purchase, test, and ship broadcast equipment
- Transmitter repair
- Antenna tower construction
- SonSet Link Water monitoring systems and software
- Vehicle location monitoring (Republic of Congo)
- FM translators- receive and rebroadcast radio signals

- Solar ministry toolkits, consisting of cell-phone charger, loudspeaker, audio amplifiers, audio Bible, solar-powered player with the *Jesus* film
- Power fluctuation stabilizers
- Mobile media solutions
- Remote monitoring linked to satellite modems
- Custom designed antennas
- Construction assistance

## Tentmakers

Teachers and engineers are typically among the most desired workers overseas, particularly for “creative access” (formerly “closed) countries.

The tentmaker, as “foreign expert,” must provide a valuable service.

*The advantages of being a tentmaker are obvious:*

- *The particular trade or profession could provide stability and change of pace;*
- *The tentmaker costs little or nothing financially to the home church;*
- *The tentmaker avoids the stigma associated with clergy;*
- *Tentmaking provides access to a strata in society often unavailable to clergy.* [6]

Special qualifications for tentmakers: [7]

1. A tentmaker must have spiritual preparation.
2. A tentmaker needs more than an average working knowledge of the Word of God, and must be able to apply it without the use of a theological library, helps, or aids.
3. A tentmaker must lead a life grounded in prayer.
4. A tentmaker should be able to disciple, as well as to evangelize.
5. A tentmaker needs some cross-cultural background.
6. Ideally, a tentmaker will spend time with families from the area where he or she will be working.
7. A tentmaker should learn the language and study apologetics.
8. A tentmaker should know what young people study in that nation.
9. A tentmaker must be a humble learner.

## Trends

Current trends impacting missions: [8]

- Globalization
- Partnerships
- Short-term mission activities
- Individual churches sending out their own missionaries
- Financing missions in new ways

- Missionaries sent abroad from Korea, China, Africa, and Latin America
- Spiritual warfare
- Impact of technology on developing nations' cultures

## Paradigm Shifts

Luis Bush (AD2000) notes these paradigm shifts in reaching the 10-40 window: [9]

- Revitalized structures (YWAM, OM)
- Empowering the next generation
- Flexible leadership
- Indigenous missions
- Strategic alliance
- Two-thirds world leadership
- Radio-television evangelism
- Use of the Jesus film where literacy is low

Recent activity impacting missions:

- The COVID-19 pandemic
- Massive population movement
- Immigration onto America

How might modern technology impact missions?

## Drones

- Drones could be used to drop supplies and medicines to remote mission bases (even without an airstrip).
- Individuals who smuggle Bibles into the most restricted countries often risk their lives to do so. Balloons have been used in the past to fly God's Word in to believers. Drones may be the next approach.
- Drones are useful for visual inspection of hard-to-reach places before sending a team in.
- Disaster relief efforts, such as earthquake relief, may use drones for search and rescue operations.

## Robotics

While robots are not substitutes for humans in evangelism tasks, they may certainly be useful in clearing airstrips and assisting in disaster relief.

## AI

AI is certainly valuable for translation assistance and for discovering linkages between languages.

## Future

Probably the biggest issue facing mission boards today is the issue of not getting outdated and irrelevant with approaches, technology, or personnel as the world changes rapidly. (At the same time, the message of the Gospel and the Great Commission are unchanged.) Experts report that any organization that doesn't re-evaluate and update within 50-75 years of its founding will soon die. In addition, mission groups must be actively preparing the next generation to assume leadership.

## Preparation for Missions

Some areas to study:

- Scriptural Basis for Missions
- History of World Missions
- Missiology
- Missions Sending
- Missions Going
- Language Acquisition
- Cross-Cultural Preparation
- Current Issues and Trends

## Conclusions

*Missions is bringing this world under the acknowledged rule of Jesus Christ. It is bringing obedience to Him. The outcome is absolutely certain because Jesus' death on the cross was the decisive battle...Mission agencies are God's regular army, but we need guerrilla forces that can enter closed countries and infiltrate every structure of society. ..We must make creative use of every possible avenue God puts at our disposal. [10]*

While the look of missions is changing greatly, the fundamental goal is unchanged: "God's purpose for us is that we will bless the nations by making His name known, revealing His glories, and establishing His kingdom among them." [11]

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