

# **The Future of Globalizing Missions: What the Literature Suggests**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

A great deal of change has and continues to take place in the world of missions even within the few short years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One of those areas of change is the reality that missions no longer emanates from a few centers of the west, but truly is a global effort. While churches of the four-fifths world have been sending missionaries for many years, the study and attempt to understand and deal with reality has only come to the forefront of western mission literature in the last thirty years. During the three periods listed below, there have been at least two identifiable themes, i.e. the discovery and integration of emerging missions.

#### 1.1 The First Period (1970s – 1989) – “discovery of emerging missions”

The first period is from the middle 1970s through 1989 and can be labeled the “discovery of emerging missions.” While missions activity by churches outside of the traditional sending churches of the northern hemisphere have existed for sometime, they began to gain momentum and to be given greater notice by the missions community in the west during this first period.

#### 1.2 The second period (1990-1999)

The second period is from 1990 through 1999 and the literature of this time builds on the reality of four-fifths world missions by focusing on the appropriate response of western agencies. Even in this period there is very little written from four-fifths world perspective, at least in English, on what they are doing and how they are going about it. While there are various journal articles and a few books, the bulk of the literature of this period is to be found in dissertations and internal mission documents and position papers.

### 1.3 The third period (2000-2004) – “integration”

The third and final period is that of the twenty-first century, 2000 – 2004. This period seems to be developing as one of integration, where missions thinking are attempting to be more integrative in reacting to the trends of the time. This paper will give a quick overview of the above two periods and then look at the direction the literature and thinking is heading in since the turn of the century.

## II. FITTING MISSIONS INTO THE LARGER PICTURE

Getting a handle on what is meant by “the globalizing of missions” is a difficult but crucial task. In the last ten years there has been an explosion in the quantity of material being published to discuss what globalization in general means. Each side comes with their own understanding and position. Missions in general have not been as splintered, and yet at the same time they have not been all that clear as to what exactly was meant by “the globalizing of the church and missions.”

Part of the problem has been in the changing choice of words that have been used to convey the concepts and ideas of what was happening. Up until the publication of David Lundy’s book, *We are the World*, the word “internationalization” was more commonly utilized.<sup>i[1]</sup> In the early 1990s “internationalization” began to be more narrowly defined as the “internationalization of the missionary force.” While “globalization,” at least in reference to the world of missions came to be understood as the “internationalization of the missionary force.” The former then refers to what was happening in some mission agencies, while the later referred to what was happening in the world at large. The term “globalization” has taken on an even broader meaning since the above was discussed so we will attempt to suggest a more concise definition later on in the paper.

With that in mind a definition of “globalization” should set the foundation for an understanding of what is happening in missions in the world. The problem with the term is that it has been used so widely and in so many contexts in the last fifteen years in the literature that has caused much confusion and at risk of becoming meaningless. In order to avoid that trap, we would like to point to two seminal articles that will set the stage for our proposed definition for the term “globalization.”

As one wades into the world of literature on “globalization,” immediately he/she is confronted with the overwhelming volume. Confounding the problem is the fact that each discipline tends to use the word from its own perspective and with very little regard as to how others might be using it. Current literature on globalization can be divided into three major categories:

### 2.1 Economic globalization

It is arguable that this is where the globalization discussion began. With the fall of the “iron curtain” and the decades old division between the Marxist position on economics

and that of capitalism, businesses began to expand in many ways that they were not able to do in the past. This is not to suggest that businesses had not been global previously, just that with the fall of the Soviet Union businesses found a world that was much more favorable to global economic activity. Economic globalization developed out of this business expansion, and with it the spread of capitalistic thinking on how to do business. Consequently, the western capitalistic approach to economic activity began to dominate. With the limitations imposed by the Communist block now disappearing businesses were now able to expand and spread this thinking in ways unthinkable since the beginning of World War I.

## 2.2 Political globalization

As the world began to interact and draw from each other on the economic side, it was not too long before “political globalization” began to find a foothold. Francis Fukuyama wrote early after the “fall” of communism and enthusiastically that man had reached the end of seeking to find the ultimate form of government, and had found it in the triumph of democracy.<sup>ii[2]</sup> Others such as Kenichi Ohmae wrote of the borderless world in 1990 to describe the new opportunities following the collapse of the “iron curtain.”

## 2.3 Cultural globalization

It was Samuel Huntington whose article “the Clash of Civilizations” broadened the whole discussion.<sup>iii[3]</sup> While being controversial and generating a great deal of discussion that continues to this day, he made everyone aware that the only issue at hand was not economics. In his book that followed he stated, “The fundamental source of conflict in this New World will not be primarily ideological or economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural.”<sup>iv[4]</sup> With economics and culture as elements it was logical as the next step for politics to become part of the globalization conversation.

While Huntington continues to be widely debated, the three main recognized areas of globalization today are economic, political and cultural. These are debated and written about from every side. As the literature increases, gaining a handle on what is going on becomes more and more difficult. Finding some kind of objectivity in order to translate what is taking place has proven very complex as each side presents themselves as the authority and the correct perspective. Dave Held and Anthony McGrew have put together a very helpful reader in “The Global Transformations Reader.”<sup>v[5]</sup> In this reader they identify two positions in the debate: the hyper-globalists and the skeptics.<sup>vi[6]</sup>

In general the hyper-globalists are positive in their outlook towards what is taking place in globalization. Their position is that the world is changing in basic ways that in the end will bring good to all. Markets in particular are moving towards or are close to integration. Economics is a driving force that is and will continue to bring the world together. Nationalism is and will continue to breakdown in the face of developing globalization.

On the other hand, the skeptics argue that globalization has not progressed as far as some think, and should it do so the results will only be positive for some.<sup>vii[7]</sup> Specifically, this group sees a resurgence of nationalism and regionalism. What some take for internationalism is in reality only greater regional activity, and these regional links will grow stronger, but true globalization is not happening. While the hyper-globalist sees the world moving closer together, the skeptics see regional divisions growing stronger.

The authors of the above work do suggest a more middle-of-the-road approach. This approach argues that while globalization has taken place historically it has done so at different rates and levels in the societies in which it was present.<sup>viii[8]</sup> Globalization is after all a process and an unequal process depending on the local society where it is taking place.

While the debate over globalization covers economics, politics and culture, what is glaringly absent is a discussion on where religion fits into the picture. In most all books on the topic one will find at best only limited discussions on either the globalization of religion or the role of religion in the globalization process. While that may be the general trend, there are exceptions, and religion does find itself to be part of the conversation.

## 2.4 Religious globalization

While there is a lack of discussion concerning religion as an active ingredient in the globalization process there have been some recent publications that may be changing that. Peter Berger wrote an influential article looking at four different aspects of global culture.<sup>ix[9]</sup> In the article he identifies evangelical Protestantism as one of the four key aspects of global culture. While the growth of Islam has captured the news in the past several years, it was Philip Jenkins' book, *The Next Christendom*, which brought the discussion of the global role of Christianity to the forefront. Jenkins' book looks beyond merely the number of Christians in the world to what their numbers indicate. He confirms the shift of Christianity's center, at least in terms of numbers to the churches of the southern hemisphere, but more than that he points out that this is not just a numbers issues, but one of influence as well. This shift indicates that there are changes coming not only in the world in general, but for the church and missions.

Christianity has a global presence and does have the potential for a great deal of influence, but from an overview of the secular literature it is apparent that religion in general and Christianity specifically, is not a major part of the discussion. This is not just an issue of secular writers ignoring the religious. As we shall see later, missions in particular are doing very little to address the issues outside of their discipline.

## III. PROPOSED DEFINITIONS

Many terms have been used to describe the lands and people outside of the historical western world. Each of those has historical roots in the time when they gained popularity.

### 3.1 "Four-fifths world"

For the purposes of this paper we have chosen to use the term four-fifths world to describe as a group Asia, Africa and Central and South America. It is in these regions that today four-fifths of the world's population reside. A clear majority, but more than that the term also conveys overwhelming size of the population in these regions. The west with its technical edge and affluence often appear to dominate, but the sheer size of the world outside of the west along with the forces of globalization suggests that momentum, if it has not already, has the potential to soon be changing. This fact alone will have a great impact on the future direction of missions.

“One can be sure that virtually every one of the 2822 academic papers on globalisation written in 1998 included its own definition, as would each of the 589 new books on the subject published in that year.”<sup>x[10]</sup>

For any meaningful discussion to take place a definition is required. Rather than presenting even a representative sampling of the definitions out there I propose looking for common threads that run through not only the available definitions, but also those that would be common to the three forms of globalization mentioned above.

### 3.2 “Globalization”

The early work of Pate and Keyes of counting and identifying what has happened globally in mission activity caused others to look at the ramifications for their own organizations. David Hicks in an early study defined “globalization” as “the process by which organizations move beyond merely operating on the field from a single or dominant national base to operating transnationally.”<sup>xi[11]</sup> While this definition described what Hicks' organization, OM was thinking and moving towards and was reflecting the thinking of other interdenominational missions, it is too narrow in scope. Globalization, even within missions, is about more than just the operational side of organizations.

Today most would agree that globalization is a process and not a goal.<sup>xii[12]</sup> Additionally, it builds itself strongly around the concept of interrelatedness. The globalized world is an interrelated one, whether you are talking about economics, politics, social or even religious issues. It is this interrelatedness that normally causes former barriers to recede or even disappear.<sup>xiii[13]</sup> Some would include people being aware that globalization is happening as a crucial component of a definition of globalization.<sup>xiv[14]</sup> These four components are fundamental to a working definition of globalization.

Very few of the authors attempted to put forth a definition of what globalization means. The World Evangelical Association's book on the topic attempted to do that for the missions community. The book presented it as: “Globalisation 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 global whole.”<sup>xv[15]</sup> While not mentioning church or missions specifically it covers each of the above four components in a way that is helpful to understanding what is taking place in the world today.

Mission work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is becoming more and more interconnected. Korean missionaries interacting with North Americans and Brazilians in North Africa would be a classic example. As this interaction takes place each group will have an impact upon the other. Ultimately this will even have an impact on the churches in each of the missionaries' home countries. An American mission agency may well have to add to their list of questions prior to entering into a new country, "Is it really necessary to enter that country if our partners from Brazil and the Philippines are already sending missionaries there?" Ultimately this should drive each of us to seeing ourselves as being part of the great Kingdom work. This paper will utilize the word "globalized" and "globalizing" to describe what has happened and what is happening in order to further describe this as a process.

### 3.3 "Emerging missions"

In the same sense that globalization is a process so too is global missions. For that reason we have chosen to describe what is happening as emerging missions. Whether one is describing churches in Africa banding together for the first time to send out their own missionary, or the established mission agency in North America attempting to reposition itself to be able to fit into the new realities of the global missions, both are emerging. One is emerging for the first time and developing in unique ways. The other is emerging from their past into the new realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **IV. DISCOVERY OF EMERGING MISSIONS: 1975-1989**

The first such period runs from 1975 through 1989. It is during this period that several studies were carried out that identified and began to quantify what was happening in missions outside of the traditional sending countries. While there were several different authors that touched on the emerging mission facts, it was Larry Pate and Lawrence Keyes who were the most prolific in publishing concerning this newly identified movement. While they have continued to publish off and on their work in this area found its greatest influence in an article that not only identified what was happening in the area of emerging missions, but also went on to make predictions about the growth of this movement.<sup>xvi[16]</sup> It was these predictions that have had the greatest influence on mission thinking about what was occurring in missions outside of the traditional sending countries up until the present. Even though they were predictions based on what was happening in the late 1980s the article was heavily quoted in mission literature in the 1990s and even after the year 2000. In essence they said that if the growth rate of the 1980s continued among "third world churches" missionaries from these churches would outnumber the missionaries being sent from the traditional sending churches in the west. Almost all publications since then have referred to this work when discussing not only what was happening in third world missions, in spite of the fact that their study is now almost fifteen years old.

If the 1970s and 1980s was the time when western missions discovered missions in the four-fifths world, it appears that churches and missions were not sure what to do with the information. It was due in part to at least two factors. One seemed to be the uncertainty of how to respond. It had not been that long before that some churches had been calling

for a moratorium on missions and missionaries. Now to discover that churches in the south and east were sending out their own missionaries took sometime to deal with. Secondly, western missions were seemingly locked in old structural paradigms that allowed for little flexibility in response to new challenges. It was the fall of communism in Russia and Eastern Europe that brought about great changes that for the most part had only been hinted at previously.<sup>xvii[17]</sup>

## **V. GLOBALIZING: RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT**

### **5.1 Discovery of emerging missions: 1975-1989**

Several studies were carried out during the period, from 1975-1989, that identified and began to quantify what was happening in missions outside of the traditional sending countries. While there were several different authors that touched on the facts of emerging missions, it was Larry Pate and Lawrence Keyes whose prolific publications described the newly identified movement. They, in an influential article, not only identified what was happening in the area of emerging missions, but made predictions about the growth of this movement.<sup>xviii[18]</sup> It was these predictions that have had the greatest influence on mission thinking about what was occurring in missions outside of the traditional sending countries up until the present. Though their predictions were based on what happened in the late 1980s, their article was heavily quoted in mission literature in the 1990s till the present. In essence they said that if the growth rate of the 1980s continued among churches in “third world churches,” missionaries from these churches would outnumber the missionaries being sent from the traditional sending churches in the west. Their study is now almost fifteen years old; yet almost all publications since then have referred to this work whenever a discussion is dealing with what was happening in third world missions.

If the 1970s and 1980s was the time when Western missions discovered “missions in the four-fifths world,” it appears that churches and missions were not sure what to do with the information. It was due in part to at least two factors. One seemed to be the uncertainty of how to respond. It had not been that long before that some churches had been calling for a moratorium on missions and missionaries. Now to discover that churches in South and East were sending out their own missionaries took sometime to deal with. Secondly, Western missions were seemingly locked in old structural paradigms that allowed for little flexibility in response to new challenges. It was the fall of communism in Russia and Eastern Europe that brought about great changes that for the most part had only been hinted at previously.

### **5.2 Response to emerging missions: 1990-1999**

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought about opportunities for missions that had not been seen since the end of World War II. Western missions and missiologists responded to these new opportunities in multiple ways. Although their response to the reality of non-Western missions was slow at first, it grew rapidly during the last decade of the twentieth century.

If Pate and Keyes had brought missions in the four-fifths world to the attention of the church, it was new players who began to wrestle with what this was going to mean. Like Keyes, whose initial work started from doctoral studies focusing on what was happening in the world, several others in the 1990s did similar research on how their mission organizations should respond to the new realities. Two, Hicks and Lundy, found their way into publication, while the others were limited to in-house studies.

David Hicks of OM was the first to set an excellent way of responding to the new reality that others were to follow. He drew from Kenichi Ohmae's work, *Borderless World*.<sup>xix[19]</sup> While not the first to write on internationalizing of a mission organization, Hicks was the first to develop the concept for a Western organization in the "post cold war era." While his work had limited circulation and was significantly edited down from the original academic work, it did set a pattern that many other mission organizations in the 1990s were to follow.<sup>xx[20]</sup>

Samuel Escobar presented a paper at the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies in 1991, published in the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* the following year. In the article, Escobar laid out some parameters for how Western agencies should respond to the new opportunities.<sup>xxi[21]</sup> In particular, Escobar warned of a new kind of paternalism that could develop if Western agencies did not carefully approach the mission efforts of their four-fifths world brethren. He reiterated the fact of the existence of missions in regions that had only previously been acknowledged as mission fields. Then he went on to state, "Internationalization has become necessary because it is in partnership with those young churches that mission will take place in years to come."<sup>xxii[22]</sup> At this point, "partnership" was a growing concept within the mission community and one that was to become a major theme within mission organizations right up to the present. Escobar further explained:

"In other words, internationalization does not mean that North American churches (or parachurch agencies) are saying to churches in other parts of the world, 'Come join us in our task; come and learn the way we have devised it.'

I'd rather hear North American churches saying, 'Let us find out what God is doing in other parts of the world, especially in the frontiers of missions, and how he is doing it, and let us join him with our brothers and sisters in order to finish the unfinished task.'" Every church, old and new, rich and poor, has something to contribute to mission in the global village of tomorrow. That is true internationalization."<sup>xxiii[23]</sup>

With the majority of missionaries and mission funding still coming from Western churches, there was a real danger in established agencies doing exactly what Escobar warned against. It remains to be seen how well Western agencies heeded the warnings of over ten years ago. Churches and the mission activity of the four-fifths world even today do not publish studies or reports of their work in great numbers in the public domain.

The article went on to be widely quoted over the next ten years. One point that is of interest is that Escobar used the term ‘internationalization’ rather than ‘globalization’ in his article. While ‘globalization’ was not a new word, ‘internationalization’ was much more common in the literature. Within a few years ‘internationalization’, at least within mission circles, referred to personnel and make-up of a mission agencies, while ‘globalization’ described the interconnectedness of the church and mission work. While a small shift, it indicated a growth in the thinking within mission as they more narrowly defined their terms.

David Lundy’s work brings together the thinking of global missions of the 1990s in the most succinct manner.<sup>xxiv[24]</sup> He defined terms and laid out a proposed direction for Western mission agencies to take. Having worked with OM in India, his focus was on an interdenominational mission agency and his response reflected the culture and potential of such an organization.

Lundy’s greatest contribution was in exploring and promoting a model for Western mission agencies that gave one answer on how to incorporate the global church in mission activity. Since no one has proposed in such a thorough way alternative approaches for the Western agency until very recently, Lundy’s work continues to have a great impact on Western agency thinking about how to reposition their organizations for effectiveness at a global scale while partnering with churches around the world.

Back in 1986 Keyes and Pate stated, “Generally speaking, internationalization seems to be most effective in interdenominational missions that have established nurture or service roles as their primary activity.”<sup>xxv[25]</sup> Thus it was the interdenominational missions, such as OM, that moved towards this organizational model in response to the globalization of missions. Again in the word of Keyes and Pate,

“Due to the nationalistic character of autonomous national churches around the world, and because existing internationalized teams have established few church-planting models, internationalization is not seen as a viable option among most denominational missions.”<sup>xxvi[26]</sup>

Thus it has been the case that even up until the present, denominational missions have not followed the internationalization model. Lundy seemed to recognize this in some of his later writings as he focused more on the possibilities for interdenominational entities.<sup>xxvii[27]</sup>

The concept of internationalizing an agency led to the development of team approaches to missions. Teams per se were not new to missions, but bringing individuals from

multiple cultures together for ministry brought new challenges. There were a number of articles discussing the issue, but Lianne Roembke's book set the standard and continues to this day to be the basic work referenced in this area.<sup>xxviii[28]</sup>

Whether a mission agency sought to internationalize or not, all agencies seem to explore partnership as a means of operating in a globalized world. Partnership thinking spawned books, conferences and at least one organization, Interdev.<sup>xxix[29]</sup> Partnerships provided a way for the church around the world to work together by contributing in a way best suited to each of the partners. The thinking that "we can do it better together" seemed to dominate. While missions were still working out internationalization of agencies and international teams, partnership, even with its various glitches seemed to provide the easiest answer to having the church around the world work together in Kingdom building.

If there was a hot topic that created tension in missions in the 1990s it was the support of national missionaries. Internationalization of the western agency allowed the organization to expand and continue in many ways as it had in the past. At the same time missionary support had risen and the Western mind always looking to cut cost and improve effectiveness saw the direct support of national missionaries as a way of addressing the above concerns as well as offering an alternative model within the globalization of missions.

### 5.3 2000 to the present

Ten years after moving into a globalized world, the church and mission agency still continue to learn what it means to operate in this environment. After a brief review, henceforth the focus will be on literature published in the new millennium, particularly books, for projection of globalized missions. Being only a little over four years into the new century the amount of literature is still limited, but there is enough being written to give strong hints of some directions.

#### 5.3.1 Writing from outside the world of missions

Arguably one of the most influential books of the twenty-first century on missions is Phillip Jenkins' book, *The Next Christendom*. His quantitative information was not all that new. Others had already brought the growth of the church in the south and east to the attention of at least the missions world. What was unique was that Jenkins was an outsider to the missions world, and secondly were the ramifications for the growth that he pointed out.

It is of interest that Jenkins was not the only outsider to write a book about global Christianity that had missiological implications. More recently David Aikman, the former Beijing Bureau Chief for Time magazine, wrote on Christianity in China. Both Jenkins and Aikman have made significant points about not only Christianity but missions as well. He points out that Christians in China will have an impact on the global church and that they are planning their own mission movement. As the world becomes

more interconnected there will be much to learn from those traditionally on the outside of mission circles. The question is whether or not those on the inside will listen.

### 5.3.2 Writings from the Four-fifths world Mission

Along the above same lines, the twenty-first century is also beginning to see some more writing and thinking about mission. Not all of the material being produced is being done so in English, but then whether the material is in English or not should not be the judge of how much material is out there. Korean students have been doing a great deal of study in the west and produced dissertations that look at what Korean missions are thinking and doing.

Journals such as Dharma Deepika from India have produced academic level insights into church and mission work there.<sup>xxx[30]</sup> In the past a large portion of the literature coming out of India focused on what foreign missions had accomplished. Recently Indians are writing about their own mission activities.<sup>xxxi[31]</sup> It is an encouraging sign to see Indians evaluating their own mission activity. It is unfortunate that some of their works do not have a wider readership. As we progress further into the twenty-first century and a further interconnected world the mission enterprise will be further enhanced by the contributions that four-fifths world missiologists will make through their writings.

The World Evangelical Association's Mission Commission has published at least two books and started a new journal in the first four years of this century. What is most encouraging is that they have not relied on western missiologists to do all of the writing. In fact rather the opposite, for they have been intentional in inviting individuals from the four-fifths world to write. The only caution would be that most of the writers had been educated in the west and/or were residing in the west at the time of writing.

### 5.3.3 Four-fifths World Mission Initiatives

In the 1970s and 80s Pate and Keyes were challenged about the emerging missions. Was this truly something emerging or was it something that had been going on all along and the west was only then learning about and quantifying?<sup>xxxii[32]</sup> That may be the case again as the west begins to learn what more of what the church of the four-fifths world is thinking and doing in the area of missions.

While there is not a great deal of literature detailing what is happening, the recent book "Back to Jerusalem" caught many by surprise. Probably more than the fact that churches in China were thinking of actively participating in missions was the size of the vision. In the book the church leaders speak of sending 100,000 missionaries out.<sup>xxxiii[33]</sup> In the minds of many westerners China is still a land to send missionaries to, so the idea that they have a vision as large as this comes as a real surprise.

The church in China is not alone in a great vision for missions. Jenkins in his book reports the following from Africa.

“It is our goal to make heaven. It is our goal to take as many people as possible with us...In order to take as many people with us as possible, we will plant churches within five minutes walking distance in every city and town of developing countries; and with five minutes driving distance in every city and town of developed countries. At last count, there are at least about four thousand parishes of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria.”<sup>xxxiv[34]</sup>

This extent of this vision from a church in Africa also comes as a great surprise. It is apparent that some churches while new to missions are not going to be limited by that in finding their role in global missions. The further we go into the twenty-first century the more the church in the west should be challenge by the reports of what four-fifths world churches are doing.

#### 5.3.4 The Future of the Mission Agency

At this point it appears that most agencies that are going to follow the internationalization model have already done so.<sup>xxxv[35]</sup> Direct support for national missionaries is still a topic of controversy. Some denominational missions have developed or are developing global fellowships as a way of addressing globalized missions. Many new entities from the four-fifths world are following the model they have seen practiced by Western agencies. Still the future of the mission agency is undecided. If anything can be said it is that there will be a variety of models in place adaptable to divergent circumstances and varied contexts, the fact of multiple realities.

Western cultures are rapidly changing. Europe is no longer a bastion of Christianity. Modern thought has moved to post-modernist thinking in the West. Fewer governments find it advantageous to offer visas for the purpose of religious activities within their borders conducted by foreigners. The result is that some are asking whether mission agencies, at least as we know them, have a future at all.<sup>xxxvi[36]</sup> In a book with little exposure outside of the United Kingdom, David Smith argued well that mission entities must change. This change needs to come not just as a result of a growing missions movement from churches outside of the West, but also because of the philosophical change that has taken place in the world. Change was driven in the 1990s by a more open world and the desire to incorporate the full body in mission work. While these factors will continue to play a role into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there are now newer and potentially more powerful factors at work that will shape the future of mission activity and thus the future of mission agencies.

The opportunities that came at the end of the cold war were not just for mission agencies, but for local churches as well. During the 1990s, local churches could participate directly in mission activity and thus served as a direct threat to mission agencies.<sup>xxxvii[37]</sup> How this will bear out in the future is difficult to tell. Some may feel that a move in this direction is long overdue and that churches are just now retaking their rightful place in proclamation.<sup>xxxviii[38]</sup> Mission agencies still have a great deal of experience and knowledge to offer, but not if it is to be packaged in the old structures.<sup>xxxix[39]</sup>

There is a theme that runs throughout the literature concerning the need for a new paradigm for missions and thus mission agencies.<sup>xl[40]</sup> Not one that is a reworking of the old, but a truly new approach based on a new approach to missiology that is relevant to the current realities.<sup>xli[41]</sup>

Western mission agencies in the 1990's responded to the challenge of working with the growing missionary movement in the church of the four-fifths world by internationalizing their organizations. This is not to say that national mission entities did not continue to come into being, but that western agencies sought to make adjustments by absorption. Lundy seems to suggest that many non-westerners were attracted by this approach.<sup>xlii[42]</sup>

He does not delineate the reasons for this and more study needs to be put into the motivational factors that make an internationalized mission attractive. In fact, it appears that a few are beginning to do just that.

Richard Tiplady, as a mission consultant and new author, has put forth rather new and creative ideas related to the future of the mission agency. Internationalization may prove to be only one solution among many. The literature of the 1990's focused almost exclusively upon internationalization as a solution. As we moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century questions were still being asked about the future of the mission agency.<sup>xliii[43]</sup> Internationalizing the mission agency appears to have solved one issue facing mission agencies, but was not a comprehensive response to all the issues developing at the time. It will remain to be seen whether internationalization of the agency was in fact the best route to go.

Tiplady's work suggests that networks will be the organization of the future.<sup>xliv[44]</sup> He demonstrates that the organization of the future will need to respond to not only local realities but the subtleties of the global context as well. These subtleties include such factors as the growing church in the south and eastern hemispheres, the desires of the church to be directly involved in missions, and the post-modern setting of the west.<sup>xlv[45]</sup>

What has been written from the 1990's up to the present in dealing with mission agencies reflects the need for change in western agencies. What the entity of the four-fifths world will need to look like has yet to be fully explored. Unfortunately it seems that many four-fifths world missions are simply copying the structures that they have seen in western entities.<sup>xlvi[46]</sup> As they grow and mature and develop their own forms of missions it is hopeful that they too will develop their own organizational structures to get the job done.<sup>xlvii[47]</sup> At least one study has taken a look at the factors involved in four-fifths

world missions development.<sup>xlviii[48]</sup> Further work in this area will help to identify specific issues related to how missions develop outside of the western world and potential effective structures.

Missions from the west are highly influenced by business practices in their countries. Samuel Escobar highlighted this in his paper at the World Evangelical Association Missions Commission meeting in Iguassu, Brazil. It was there that he raised the issue of managerial missions.<sup>xlix[49]</sup> This issue raised two fundamental questions. The first asked whether the western mission approach is acceptable theologically. The second asked how cross-culturally appropriate some western missions are. The debate has continued to some extent between missiologists in Pasadena, California and Escobar, but has not gained further input from missiologists in the four-fifths world.<sup>l[50]</sup> Part of the reason for this is that missions from the four-fifths world appear to be more interested in doing missions than in writing about it. Missions in the future need to be able to objectively critique themselves in such a way that all sides can learn and benefit from each other. If Escobar is correct about both the existence and dangers of managerial missions, then major changes will be needed in western agencies' practices if we hope to partner with the growing mission movement in the rest of the world.

Along with internationalization of western missions in the 1990s came a move towards partnerships. Finding some way to work together to reach the last of the unreached was a driving force in missions. When the partnership is between multiple western agencies it is not always easy, but the real challenge in partnership is when it takes places between western agencies and churches and/or missions of the four-fifths world. The concept of "equal partnership" has been popular recently, but what does it really mean? Is it possible to have an equal partnership when one side comes to the table with vast resources and the other side comes with a vision and people?<sup>li[51]</sup>

While partnership is still spoken of within western circles it appears that other terms may be slowly replacing it. Interdev was an organization that formed to help establish partnerships to aid in the expanding work of the Kingdom. In spite of more work to be done, in 2003 this organization closed its doors. This received only minimal coverage to-date in the evangelical press. The close of the main organization promoting partnership may note a change in emphasis for the future of missions.

If the above is to be the case, what are the other options? Tiplady is not the only one using the term 'network'. In a recent article David Ruiz presented networking as a model for future missions.<sup>lii[52]</sup> Partnership as a concept has its modern roots in the business world and thus fits well with the western mindset. Partnership brings material resources like finances and technology. The churches of the four-fifths world do not have access to such, but they do value relationships.<sup>liii[53]</sup> Ruiz believes that one of the important contributions four-fifths world churches can make to global missions is the "development of a relational philosophy of networks."<sup>liv[54]</sup> It is doubtful that partnerships will disappear from global missions, but it may be that a significant portion of the world will add networking to their toolbox as it fits their culture and context better.<sup>lv[55]</sup>

### 5.3.5 New Models of Mission

While missionary work over the past two hundred years have been in large part responsible for initiating the work that result in the shift south and eastwards of Christendom the question remains as to where this will go. Jenkins speaks of the emergence of a new Christendom in his book. Others question whether this will be the reality of the twenty-first century and partly due to how the church expanded in the last two centuries. Timothy Shah makes a point about evangelical politics that is relevant to the issue of mission work when he states:

It is that Third World evangelicals are constitutionally incapable of creating the kinds of strong aggregative institutions that the establishment of a “new Christendom” would require. Evangelicals are good at creating strong local institutions and associations, usually centered around a small local church, and hence are effective in generating social capital. But they are poor at creating strong national or international institutions which effectively unify and mobilize the evangelical population, much less non-evangelical Christians.<sup>1vi[56]</sup>

Thus Christian work has done a good job of working with the local but it remains in question what level of influence the church can really have on a global scale. This is due in part to the fact that evangelical missions work has focused on church work and less on the larger network. In a private conversation an Asian church leader once remarked to me that “We know how to be Christians on Sunday, but we don’t know how to be Christians the rest of the week.”

Missions in the new century will become more holistic as it incorporates not just the professional Christian worker, but also Christians from all walks of life. As it moves this way it will teach not only about church life and leadership, but how to live out one’s faith in the larger world in which they live. The result will be that whether or not a new Christendom ever evolves the influence of Christianity will pervade societies and worldviews in more holistic manners. It is part of the interconnectedness of globalization, that will move business, art, church, education to work and learn from each other in the process of expanding the kingdom.

Churches in the four-fifths world do not have the financial resources that the church in the west has relied upon to send out a large missionary force. Their desire to be involved in missions is driving them to look again at historical models of missions as well as developing their own models. With global economic forces driving globalization it seems natural for the Christian businesspersons around the world to explore what they have to offer the Kingdom.

Since the turn of the century at least three books have been published, numerous organizations started and multiple conferences have taken place on the theme of “Business as Mission.” This concept looks at business as a means of spreading the Gospel, alleviating poverty and the creation of wealth. Micro-economic development and loans are now well established works of Christians around the globe.

There are pitfalls to moving this way. Tetsunao Yamamori has identified three different levels of doing business as mission.

1. *Cases of Strong Business and Weak Ministry.* On the extreme left of a continuum are Christian entrepreneurs who have successfully built their businesses, but whose ministry, for various reasons, has lagged behind. Building a business, especially in a cross-cultural setting, demands concentration and focus. It is not easy to survive and thrive in the business world. While a business may grow strong, ministry often remains weak.<sup>lvii[57]</sup>

For some time this has been the unspoken expectation of the church. Simply that business people should do business and let the missionaries handle the specialized work of missions. Business people simply did not have the training and expertise to be effective workers. Thus when individuals went out like the above they were just fulfilling expectations.

2. *Cases of Strong Ministry and Weak Business.* On the extreme opposite end of the continuum are Christian entrepreneurs who have entered a restricted-access country on a business visa. While the ministry is well under way, the business does not receive much attention.<sup>lviii[58]</sup>

This model has all too often been the model of missions interested in finding a way to enter countries that are not open to missionaries. Not all but some tentmakers would fall into this category. This might be why missions seem to be moving from the tentmaker, part business and part supported missionary, to the business model.

3. *Cases of Strong Business and Strong Ministry.* In the middle of the Continuum are Christian entrepreneurs who do not lose sight of their original calling to do ministry through business – making disciples while making a profit through genuine business.<sup>lix[59]</sup>

This last model is the one that the literature is pointing towards as the way to do business as mission.<sup>lx[60]</sup> There are multiple examples of the above model, but each is seeking to use the advantage of economics to spread the Gospel.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Economic forces in the form of capitalism are driving the post-Cold War move towards a globalized world. How soon that will happen and what it will look like is still unknown. For the mission movements of the world globalization has brought many new opportunities for taking the Gospel to the peoples of the world. It is also becoming clear that old organizational structures will not be effective in this new world. Realization that the balance of the Christendom has shifted south and east is being accepted. Missions is no longer from “the west to the rest” but now truly “from everywhere to everywhere.”

The danger of internationalization was that it could become a new form of paternalism. The western agencies were up and running and combining that with financial advantages and experience it did make some sense to move to some form of internationalization.

The question to ask is “How far is that from bringing western church structures and practices into church planting in non-western countries?” Is it not just a subtle way of saying we have something that works, so just come join us? Even a decentralization process and bringing new nationalities into mission offices does not guarantee that fundamental changes have taken place. No organization is culturally neutral and mission agencies are no exception. It may be early yet in the process but most organizations still have a strong western orientation to them. While we may not want to “re-invent the wheel” at every new development in the world, it is doubtful that churches and missions have fully explored all of the ramifications to the organizational choices that have been made in the last fifteen years.

The real issue for the mission agency of the future is one of contextualization. If such organizations continue to exist and in whatever form they do, they will have to wrestle with how to fit into a world that is growing more interconnected all the time. Whether the organization chooses to internationalize or not it still must fit in a globalized world.

If business as missions is finding its place as a tool for outreach, it cannot be too long before the arts, media and educational disciplines will also once again find their niche in global Kingdom work. Intentional emigration has been a widely used and effective model for the dissemination of the Gospel in the last 2000 years. It may well be that in churches without financial resources will once again turn to this and other similar models.

Missions have come a long way in the last 20 years, from identifying global mission activity, to internationalization and partnerships, to the multiple models and further restructuring of the agency itself. The literature points to further dialogue and thinking in all of the areas with the greatest encouragement coming from the wider involvement of four-fifth mission leaders in each area. Globalization is about interconnectedness with influence flowing from all areas to all areas. If this continues to be true the church of tomorrow will be richer for the cross-pollination that looks to only grow in intensity.

**Send comments to:** [editor@globalmissiology.net](mailto:editor@globalmissiology.net)

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** One additional article that the authors found very helpful is located on the web.

“[Is Globalization Christian?](#)” by Jeremy Lott

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