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MISSIONS IN A SUFFERING WORLD

The world is in a state of pain and chaos due to the COVID-19 pandemic. And we are living in unprecedented circumstances while missionary works are to be carried on under the new normal. The 70th issue of Asian Missions Advance contains articles that deals with missions in a suffering world.

Dr. Marvin Newell of the Alliance for the Unreached, wrote about "Missions, Opposition and Persecution During the Global Covid 19 Pandemic," and tells us that globally, persecution of Christians has increased during the present coronavirus pandemic (p. 2) and that it "is costly to serve as a cross-cultural messenger of Jesus."

Dr. Teng Yang Tan of the Navigators Malaysia, wrote about "International Students and Covid-19 Pandemic." In this article Tan tells us that "One of the most vulnerable population groups ignored is international students and that to alleviate the negative impact on these students, he offers practical suggestions of how to serve the international students who are suffering the Covid-19 pandemic away from their homes.

Dr. Juno Wang in her article, "The Moravian Missional Approach for Today's Missions" introduces the Moravian theories and practices of mission to us so that local churches may learn from the Moravians for today's mission.

Mats Tunehag in his article, "The Corona Pandemic & Business As Mission." tells us that "Many businesses are facing challenges with cashflow, lockdowns, sales, having to let staff go, supply chain disruptions, bankruptcies, et cetera." These are areas for action as it relates to BAM businesses and the global BAM community. (pp. 20-21)

John Edmiston of the Antioch Internet Bible International and its partner organizations, in his article, "Covid-19, Technology and Missions," tells us how technology can enable ministry continuity during the Covid-19 pandemic and similar situations and how some of these technologies may become a permanent feature of Christian ministry. Lastly, Dr. Pervaiz

Sultan of Pakistan wrote about "Pandemic Covid-19: A Missional Challenge for Christians in Pakistan." and tells us of the effects COVID-19 in Pakistan and calls for Christians to take actions to help the needy.

Although we are uncertain about what is going on, our God is in control of everything. God will turn the unprecedented situation to good. We, God's missionary people, must heed the work of the Holy Spirit and follow His guidance. May God give us wisdom and insight as we read the articles on our 70th issue. May His kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

- Timothy K. Park, Editor

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MISSIONS, OPPOSITION AND PERSECUTION, DURING THE GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Marvin Newell

"I know enough about Satan to realize that he will have all his weapons ready for determined opposition. He would be a missionary simpleton who expected plain sailing in any work of God."

- James O. Fraser

Globally, persecution against Christians has increased during the present coronavirus pandemic. After COVID-19 first emerged with a few cases in China, it spread globally through government mismanagement, mass travel, poverty, inadequate health support systems, and a myriad of unpredictable factors to become the pandemic of the century. As of this writing there has been over 57 million cases worldwide, with 1.3 million deaths.¹ Besides the grief of losing loved ones, many have lost jobs, income and financial stability. As this article goes to print, my oldest son, who for the past six years has been lead pastor of an international church in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, has regretfully packed up his family and is flying away permanently from his place of service as a direct consequence of the virus. All hope has been dashed to be able to remain in the country. This has become the fate of many international workers, whether in ministry or secular employ.

In many places in the world Christians have become the scapegoat for the virus. Open Doors, a charity that reveals the plight of persecuted Christians around the world, has reported that the pandemic has created more opportunities for persecutors to attack believers. Fear, self-preservation and bigotry have caused non-believers to react irrationally and sometimes violently in civil unrest against their Christian neighbors. This, by extension, has brought negative consequences to how we engage in missions.

Less the reader think this is an over statement and exaggeration of the current state of affairs, consider the following. The Union of Catholic Asian News recently reported that for authoritarian governments, which already limit religious freedom, the pandemic has become a pretext to step up persecution against Christians. They cite Release International, which has reported that in many developing countries Christians are denied basic food and pandemic-related health care assistance and support systems.²

In China churches are being demolished and Christians arrested for holding online prayer meetings. Online church services are "totally prohibited," and

the participants and their leaders are rounded up for preaching and distributing facemasks at public places.³

The plight of Christians in other parts of the world is similar. In Eritrea, Christians who are fleeing persecution are barred from accessing shelter camps and other UN support systems.⁴ As for Egyptian Christians, Voice of the Martyrs has reported on Mission Network News that believers face systemic persecution for their faith, and it's only worse now during the COVID-19 pandemic, since Christians often do not have access to the same medical care and sanitation as other citizens.⁵

COUNTING THE COST

In the current pandemic environment, those who engage in missions must consider opposition and hostility as a foregone conclusion. After all, one of the main reasons unreached people are still unreached is because they are located in some of the most hostile areas of the world to Christianity. Message-bearers must count the cost to their wellbeing as they contemplate their part in taking the gospel to those with no or little access to the good news of Jesus.

History has proven that it can be costly to serve as one of Jesus' messengers.⁶ For some it can be very costly. The Gospel of Jesus is so counter-cultural that it stands as a threat to the prevailing worldview of every culture it encounters. In return, gatekeepers of those cultures threaten back as it makes inroads into their area of influence. They instigate backlashes and resistance that are manifested in acts of opposition, persecution and at times even in the taking of lives.

British missiologist Andrew Walls reminds us that Jesus took for granted that there would be rubs and friction accompanying our witness - not from the adoption of a different culture that the Gospel can bring, but from the transformation of the mind of those who believe in Christ. Accordingly, the follower of Jesus inherits "the pilgrim principle, which whispers to him that he has no abiding city and warns him that to be faithful to Christ will put him out of step with his society; for that society never existed, in East or West, ancient time or modern, which could

3. *ibid.*

4. *ibid.*

5. <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/oppression-of-egyptian-christians-worsens-during-covid-19/>

6. Much of the following was written by the author and originally appeared in *Sorrow and Blood: Christian Missions in Contexts of Suffering, Persecution, and Martyrdom*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2012.

1. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>
2. <https://www.ucanews.com/news/christian-persecution-increased-globally-after-covid-19/89174#>

absorb the word of Christ painlessly into its system.”⁷ If that be the case in general, how much more for messenger-bearers who are willing to minister cross-culturally.

With this perspective in mind, when it came to sending his disciples out into this fallen and hostile world, Jesus made three things perfectly clear: 1) he would not send them out with carelessness, 2) he would not send them out comfortless and, 3) he would not send them out clueless about the types and depths of opposition they would encounter.

Opposition and persecution was something which Jesus had much to say, because he knew his messengers would experience it while on mission for him. He knew that in every age his ambassadors would encounter opposition as they engaged the world. His mission would be conducted in the context of confrontation. Engaging the hearts of mankind would demand engaging an even greater power in the sphere of spiritual warfare. And there are always casualties in warfare. It is always costly for those who participate in it.

JESUS ON PERSECUTION IN MATTHEW 10

The discourse of Jesus found in Matthew 10 is a benchmark for understanding opposition, persecution and martyrdom in the context of world evangelization. By it Jesus candidly covers the topic rather exhaustively. Why did he so painstakingly focus on this topic? Because he wanted to make sure that the disciples who first heard it, and all his messengers who would follow after them, would know what they would face as they went forth. Consequently, this pointed instruction serves as a template on opposition for gospel-bearing messengers of all ages and from all countries.

In Matthew 10 we see Jesus for the first time sending his disciples out on a mission – albeit a short-term assignment. This would serve as a “trial run” or “warm up” mission to the greater worldwide mission they would initiate after his ascension into heaven. Notice all that he says about the resistance they would encounter.

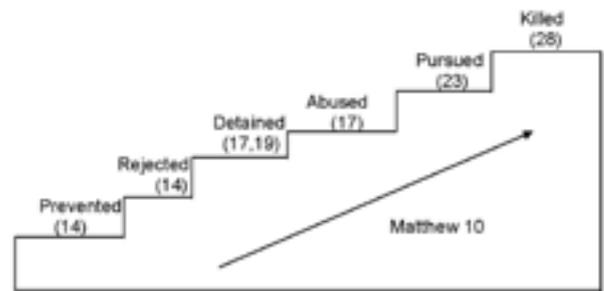
REALITIES OF PERSECUTION

Degrees of Persecution

First, Jesus informs his followers that not all persecution is equally intense nor carries equal consequences. Believers experience various degrees of resistance, with martyrdom as the ultimate possibility. As he was sending them out, he explicitly cautioned that they could face up to six degrees of opposition.

Jesus used six phrases to describe the increasingly intense hostilities that opposition can take. He begins with the least severe form of hostility then

progresses in ascending order to the ultimate experience. Christ shows that his messengers could expect to be: prevented outright from proclaiming the gospel, (“does not receive you,” v.14); rejected if given opportunity (“nor heed your words,” v.14); detained (“deliver you up,” (vv. 17,19); physically abused (“scourge you,” v.17); pursued with intent to harm (“persecute you,” v.23); and finally martyred (“kill the body,” v.28). When viewed graphically, the incremental progression becomes clear:



Notice that losing one’s life as a result of human hostility in a situation of witness is the ultimate hostile experience. Less one be tempted to shy away from service because of the possibility of experiencing this ultimate trial – martyrdom – a word on this most severe form of opposition is needful.

You may recall the story of John Allen Chau, American missionary of the mission agency All Nations, who at age twenty-seven, died at the hands of the Sentinelese peoples of the Andaman archipelago (India) in November 2018. The Sentinelese tribe that John had a passion to reach remains one of the most isolated, unengaged and unreached people groups in the world. When he set foot on their beach, they brutally killed him with spear and arrow. John had prepared himself for years to reach them, and even admitted that he felt contacting them might bring about his death. But he went anyway.

Martyrdom is not something a person usually anticipates or to which one readily aspires. It is an experience that God in his providence bestows on select individuals for purposes ultimately known only to him. Yet, the premature death of a follower of Christ as a result of human hostility has an enduring impact on observant believers. It causes most to pause and ponder anew the extreme cost of discipleship. It forces many to question whether they themselves measure up to the highest standard of devotion to Christ and his Cause. It motivates still others to abandon selfish plans and ambitions and turn to serve Christ in hard and difficult places. It creates a baseline for the Church from which to measure its worth - whether its activities are meaningful and truly important in light of death and eternity. We need to be cognizant of the fact that martyrdom has multiple values.

⁷ Andrew Walls. *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2005. Page 8.

Lessons from Missionary Martyrdom

A few years ago, I did a study of missionary martyrs, all whom were graduates of a premier missions training school in America, the Moody Bible Institute. At the time I was a member of the faculty and interested in discovering whom of the school's 8000 alumni who have served in missions, died as martyrs. In my research I discovered there were twenty-one of them, and I discovered a few facts about them that are helpful in understanding martyrdom.⁸

Martyrdom is not something a person usually anticipates or to which one readily aspires. It is an experience that God in his providence bestows on select individuals for purposes ultimately known only to Him. Yet, the premature death of a follower of Christ as a result of human hostility has an enduring impact on observant believers. It causes most to pause and ponder anew the extreme cost of discipleship.

These martyrs were killed in a vast array of historical settings. From the little known "Hut Tax War" in Sierra Leone (1898), to the Boxer Rebellion in China (1900), through the bloody years of unsettled China and congruently the pioneering efforts in the Amazon basin in the 1930's, right through World War II, to the Vietnam War and Simba Rebellion of the 1960's, to present day unrest in the Middle East. They served as bush pilots, Bible translators, medical doctors, nurses, teachers, professors, social workers, pioneer church planters and field administrators. They were ordinary people performing ordinary mission tasks, who became caught up in extra-ordinary situations.

Reflecting on their lives of service, I discovered several compelling lessons that are important to us today. Notice the following.

1. There seems to be no specific personal qualification for one to enter the ranks of martyrdom. While these men and women were students in training at Moody, none of them planned or expected to die as a martyr. Martyrdom is not something a person anticipates or to which one readily aspires. It is a trial that God in His providence bestows on select individuals for purposes ultimately known only

8. This research is contained in the book: Marvin J. Newell. *A Martyr's Grace: 21 Moody Bible Institute Alumni Who Gave Their Lives for Christ*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2006.

to Him. He is not capricious in a matter as heart wrenching as this. God's selection of those who so die may appear arbitrary at times. However we can say with confidence that His plans are sure and purposeful in each one of these deaths. The truth of Romans 8:28-30 gives perspective in this regard.

2. Great gains are realized in martyrdom. Paul states that for the believer "to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Gains at death are especially true for the Christian martyr. Over and over stories recount gains that are achieved when the life of a servant of God is taken on account of service for Him. Gains achieved in martyrdom are best understood from three perspectives.

- *Gains in relation to the martyr:* Ultimately the martyr whose life has been sacrificed has reached a glorious new existence! The martyr is now in the untainted glorious presence of his Master, where "fullness of joy" and "eternal pleasures" abound (Psalm 16:11). That person now has become and enjoys all that God had intended for mankind from the very beginning. Unimagined benefits are experienced. But beyond that, martyrs rightfully receive a special recognition that will be noticed by all throughout eternity! A "crown of life" is a special emblem of honor, rewarding them for faithfulness until death (Revelation 2:10).

- *Gains in relation to the work:* Many times ministries initially experience a setback and even devastating loss immediately following the death of a martyr. Besides life being taken, property often is destroyed, followers scattered and the work left in disarray. However, once the impact of the death is felt around the broader Christian community, it is not long before greater gains are realized. In most instances more funds are given, more initiatives started and more volunteers come forward as the impact of the martyr's death makes its mark. Following the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 (when two Moody graduates died), the number of Protestants in China more than doubled over the following six years. Powerful soul-cleansing revivals surged across North China, and wave after wave of new missionaries along with millions of dollars for evangelization and education were sent from the West.⁹ Over and over this same kind of response has been repeated where martyrs' blood has been spilt.

- *Gains in relation to God:* God always gains when His followers lay down their lives for Him! Satan attempts to make God look bad, weak and defeated by those deaths. But God has His way of showing otherwise. God gains

9. James & Marti Hefley. *By Their Blood: Christian Martyrs of the Twentieth Century*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1979. Pages 44-46.

by showing the world the cost of the cross – demonstrating anew through His martyrs the suffering of Christ himself. He gains when Christians so moved by the martyr's example rededicate themselves to Him and to His Cause. He gains when ministries expand, bringing forth crops of new believers. But more precious, He gains when His beloved martyr is welcomed into His presence to enjoy Him forever. "Precious in the sight of God is the death of his saint" (Psalm 116:15) is especially true when God welcomes home one whose life was taken because of His Cause.

3. Much pain is experienced in martyrdom. We tend to romanticize the experience of martyrdom, believing that there is nothing but triumphant victory derived from the experience. The reality of the matter is that there is a flip side to be soberly considered as well: pain and hurt.

- ***Pain in relation to the martyr.*** To lose one's life prematurely by human hostile action is in every instance a physically painful experience. Moody martyrs were beheaded, stabbed, choked, shot, speared, and stoned. There are times when martyr deaths are so glamorized that the gruesomeness is too often minimized. We need to be reminded that these people suffered pain as they spilled their blood. Some, as they went through a prolonged death experience, were traumatized through the course of it. Betty Stam, waiting her turn as she witnessed the beheading of her husband, appears to be a prime example. Others were taken quite suddenly, with but an instant of suffering. All experienced painful deaths.
- ***Pain in relation to loved ones left behind.*** Wives, husbands, children and extended family members forever feel the pain of losing their martyred loved one. Some do recover from the ordeal and use it as a means of grace and growth. Others do not and for a lifetime bear the hurt, scars, heartache and consequences of having their beloved taken. It was discovered in interviews with surviving spouses of recent Moody martyrs that their children have not fared well since the death of their parent. Disillusionment, deep spiritual struggles, broken marriages and heartache plague many surviving family members, especially children.

4. A special "grace" seems to be extended to martyrs. For those martyrs who have time to contemplate what is happening and see their death coming, God seems to grant a special "grace" to endure the impending ordeal. In many cases God grants a surreal, tranquil spirit, a serenity of heart and mind that transcends understanding. That spirit of peace leads to a genuine surrender that is derived from an

overarching perspective on eternal life. An unshakable faith in something better in store for them helped many martyrs to calmly bear their ordeal.

The great evangelist D.L. Moody was once asked if he had grace to die as a martyr. "No," he replied, "I have not. But if God wanted me to be one, He would give me a martyr's grace."¹⁰ Several of the Moody martyrs exhibited that kind of grace. In the instance of the John and Betty Stam (in China), although there is no written record, by their example of humble surrender as they knelt to take the executioner's sword exhibiting a martyr's grace. Another martyr, Mary Baker in the Congo, while held captive by the Simba rebels awaiting her death could say, "...with me it was settled long ago, 'by life or by death' and there it rests!" As Esther Nordlund in central China stood next to the bodies of her two slain colleagues, she could calmly say to her executors, "Yes, you may kill me too."

5. In martyrdom "justice" is never served. Reflecting on the twenty-one Moody martyrs, in every instance not one perpetrator of the crime was ever brought to "justice." Actually none were ever apprehended and therefore were neither jailed, tried, convicted, nor punished for their deed. Perhaps this is what qualifies their deaths as martyrdom – that the sacrifice is accepted as a non-punishable crime. After all, these individuals were proclaiming Jesus, the ultimate Forgiver, who at the event of his martyrdom could plead, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." The highest priority of missions is to engage the lost by proclaiming a forgiving Jesus, not to seek justice. I believe every one of these martyrs would have been appalled to see justice sought for their deaths in this life, and that is probably why none of their mission agencies pursued such a course of action.

Ultimately, in His time and in His way, it will be God who avenges the blood of His martyrs: "When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the alter the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, 'How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?' Then they were given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed." (Rev. 6:9-12)

6. Seeking after martyrdom is an unchristian thing to do. Martyr's motives need examination. In a day of mind-twisted "suicide bombers" who glorify

10. Howard F. Taylor. *These Forty Years: A Short History of the China Inland Mission*. Philadelphia: Pepper Publishing Company, 1903. Page 395.

and justify the destruction of innocent lives as an act of martyrdom, it is right to question motives. It can be categorically demonstrated from Scripture that for one to seek after martyrdom is a very unchristian thing to do. The intentional destruction of one's own life, by putting one's self in harms way with the intent of being killed, cloaked in excuse that it is for the cause of Christ, is selfish, self-serving, and sinful. Those who would attempt this course of action are out for self-glory to make a name for themselves. It is their hope that others would applaud them for their action and thus bring a degree of admiration to themselves posthumously that they could not have achieved otherwise in life.

Every instance of martyrdom in Scripture and the history of Moody is just the opposite. Rather than self-seeking, men and women were self-abasing as they served in the work of God when their lives were taken. They stood boldly, but not recklessly, for Christ when called to do so. Rather than realizing a name for themselves, they realized the glorification of God through their sacrifice. Rather than intentionally putting themselves in harms way, they were caught, dragged and forced to the place of harm. Rather than elevated as heroes and heroines, most martyrs of Moody were relegated to the annals of obscurity. That is why so many were forgotten.

7. The martyr cannot be dishonored. Martyrs for the cause of Christ are appropriately given their due share of respect. Instead of being discredited, they are immortalized. One reason this study was conducted was to resurrect the memory and bring honor to those whose lives and deaths brought glory to Christ through their ultimate sacrifice. But that goal was not to be an end in and of itself. Rather the higher goal was to use these stories to encourage Christian workers in dangerous areas and hard places to continue to persevere in their callings, even though they are serving in life-threatening situations. To honor martyrs for providing this incentive is the right thing to do.

Over 180 years ago, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote about "compensation" in this regard. He stated that the history of persecution is a history of endeavors to cheat the natural order of things. Throughout the history of the Church, those who took a martyr's life always thought they were discrediting both the person and the cause for which he was killed. However, to the contrary, the opposite became true. Emerson insightfully stated: "The martyr cannot be dishonored. Every lash inflicted is a tongue of fame; every prison a more illustrious abode; every burned book or house enlightens the world; every suppressed or expunged word reverberates through the earth from side to side. The mind of men are at last aroused, reason looks out and justifies her own

and malice finds all her work in vain. It is the whipper who is whipped and the tyrant who is undone."¹¹

Ever since the crucifixion of Christ, it has been common for the Christian martyr to be jeered, ridiculed, mocked, scorned, lambasted, and shamed as his life is being taken. This strategy is employed by the killers to make the martyr feel useless, worthless, wrong and his death seem senseless and useless. However we know, in fact, that in the cause of Christ these martyrs can never be dishonored.

8. Martyrdom as a strategy of evangelism. Karen White has stated, in the EMS series article, "Overcoming Resistance Through Martyrdom," that it is a revolutionary thought that martyrdom might be an intentional strategy of God to bring the world to Himself.¹² A couple of decades ago a major mission strategy was to take the Gospel to the least resistant peoples of "ripe" fields. In recent years the strategy has been flipped-flopped. The focus is now on reaching the least reached peoples found mostly in resistant places. White suggests that we can expect more missionary martyrs as staunchly held Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist areas are penetrated. White reminds us that martyrdom has two sides to it. One is what humans do to God's servants. The other is what God intends to accomplish through it.¹³ No martyrdom is an accident. God is never caught off guard by the death of any of His servants. He has purposes and plans by the calling of some to die while in His service. It is for the advancement of world evangelization, not the curtailing of it.
9. Martyrdom as example to local believers. When compared to the number of missionaries that have gone overseas from Moody through the years, the number that has experienced martyrdom is minuscule. Less than one hundredth of one percent so died. By coldly reviewing raw statistics (much more needs to be considered), it could be argued that the cost has not been really that great. At least so it seems. However, the impact of those deaths on local believers in the locales where those deaths took place is immeasurable. In many instances not only has the work expanded and adherents increased, but the resolve of local followers to remain loyal to Christ is brazened. Resolve on their part to bear up under persecution is enhanced. By example of the missionary martyr, local believers have a model to follow and a death to emulate as they in turn stand against the oppression that comes with

11. Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Essays: Compensation." www.bartleby.com/5/105.html.

12. White, Karen L. "Overcoming Resistance through Martyrdom." *Reaching the Resistant: Barriers and Bridges for Missions*. J. Dudley Woodbury. Evangelical Missiological Society Series #6. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1998. Page 159.

13. *ibid.*

their commitment to Christ. For many, they will die as martyrs too, and their deaths will be more numerous than the missionaries who brought the gospel to them. Frequent communiqués from watch groups like Voice of the Martyrs constantly remind us of this sober reality.

SOURCES OF PERSECUTION

Returning to the text of Matthew 10 we note that Jesus did not want his messengers to be either surprised or naïve about the sources from which opposition would come. He delineates four specific sources that messengers need to beware of and consider with guarded prudence. He cautioned that opposition would spring from the community (“Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over...,” v.17); the state (“you will be brought before governors and kings,” v.18); religious leaders (“hand you over to local councils and flog you in their synagogues,” v.17) and even from those most dear to them - members of their own family (“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child...,” v.21). In his foreknowledge of the global context of world evangelism, Jesus informs us that in reality there is no safe haven or refuge within a society and no level of authority within a community that should not be considered a potential oppressor.

ATTITUDE BEHIND PERSECUTION

What is the underlying attitude that drives nonbelievers to oppose and oppress God’s messengers? Jesus sums it up in one word - hatred (“All men will hate you because of me...” v. 22). The form of the verb “hate” used shows this hatred to be ongoing, and can better read, “you will continually be hated because of me.” Unqualified hatred has been the harden heart’s emotional response to Jesus through the ages. Why is this? Because his message is a threat to preferred lifestyles and orientations. Mankind hates the light (John 3:20), and the source of light (John 15:20). Thus, their on-going disdain for bearers of the light.

Later, in a more sober setting, Jesus painted a fuller picture of this Satan-generated hatred. Fast forward to the evening before his crucifixion. Jesus declared that the world’s hatred of his emissaries was intricately tied to its hatred of him. In John 15 Jesus declared:

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: “No servant is greater than his master.” If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also... They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me... He who hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to

fulfill what is written in their Law: “They hated me without reason.” (vv. 19-25)

RESPONSE OF THE MESSENGER TO PERSECUTION

With these three realities clarified, how should Christ’s messengers conduct themselves as they go forth heralding his message? Again in Matthew 10, Jesus mentions three appropriate responses.

Prudence

A messenger must exercise prudence in the context of opposition. Jesus warns his disciples to “be on your guard” (v. 17). He likely means that they should not naïvely entrust their wellbeing to anyone. Friends can quickly become foes, authorities become antagonists, and peaceful neighbors turn violent. Another prudent response is to “flee to another place” (v.23). There are times when getting out of harms way is the most appropriate course of action.

Courage

Fear is a natural response to persecution, and Jesus was well aware of that. Three times in this passage he tells his disciples not to be afraid. He reminds them to look at the bigger picture. First, he reminds them that ultimately truth will prevail: “there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known” (v. 26). In the end, God will correct that which has brought harm and injustice to his messengers.

Secondly, he reminds them that no judgment which others may inflict upon a messenger can compare with the ultimate fate of those who do the inflicting: “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (v. 28). While it may be true that persecutors can kill a person’s physical body, only God can condemn a man to the eternal death of his soul. That’s even worse.

Thirdly, God’s messengers should not be afraid, because of God’s loving and watchful care of them: “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” (vv. 29-31).

As already mentioned, God does not send messengers out carelessly. By these tender words he proves it! He is not capricious in his watch and care over his loved ones, no matter where they are sent. A person’s worth, especially a redeemed person’s worth, is more valuable to him than the sum total of all other creatures. God is genuinely concerned when messengers pay a high price for serving him.

Discretion

Jesus colorfully draws from the animal world to bring to bear the necessity of his messengers to conduct themselves with discretion. He put it this way: "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (v. 16).

If members of the animal kingdom can show discretion in survival, how much more should God's servants? The servant of Christ should conduct himself in a manner worthy of Christ even in the midst of persecution. He should be like a sheep, a snake and a dove all at the same time. It is instructive to take a look at these three comparisons.

Sheep, when attacked, do not have the ability to retaliate – they are hopelessly harmless. In the same way Christ's messengers should exercise a demeanor of harmlessness even when under attack.

Then there is the snake, which has a reputation for its shrewdness and keenness. These two characteristics are recommended as human qualities, involving insight into the nature of things and circumspection, common sense and wisdom to do the right thing at the right time in the right manner.

Finally, Jesus mentions the dove, which symbolizes peace and innocence. This creature reminds us that neither wrongdoing nor questionable practices should mar the reputation of God's servant who is under fire. He is called upon to be discrete in his response, no matter how trying the situation, living uprightly in the midst of contemptuous circumstances.

COMFORT IN PERSECUTION

Jesus has detailed the cost of serving as one of his messengers. He has made it clear that he would not send anyone out carelessly nor clueless about the dangers they would encounter. These truths are evident up to this point. Finally, he explains that neither would he send them out comfortless. Comforting clauses are found throughout his discourse. Jesus knew these words of reassurance were important in giving peace of heart and fortitude in mind to those who would face opposition.

There is comfort in knowing that it is Jesus who puts us on mission with him: "I am sending you out..." (v.16). The double pronoun and choice of word "send" can better read, "I myself am commissioning you." Granted, some may say that by their own free will they have chosen to serve, or volunteered themselves to Christ's cause, and maybe to an extent that is true. But there is great comfort in knowing that it is ultimately Jesus who sends messengers to do his bidding, especially into hostile environments.

There is comfort in knowing that if put in the position of having to defend one's ministry, that one should "not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be

you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (v.19). God will provide the words for a proper defense.

Finally, there is great comfort in knowing that in due course, "He who stands firm to the end will be saved" (v. 22). One way a person proves his redemptive relationship with God is evidenced by his unwavering loyalty to God to the very end. People don't allow themselves to be abused or lay down their lives for Jesus unless they really and truly believe in him. They prove their genuine belief in him by their willingness to suffer for him.

CONCLUSION

It is costly to serve as a cross-cultural messenger of Jesus, and Jesus made this very clear in Matthew chapter 10. Some messengers pay a higher price than others. Some experience minimal opposition, whereas others are severely persecuted. Some serve with little discomfort, whereas others pay with their very lives. All are expected to be aware of the fullness that is theirs in following Jesus, no matter what the cost.

Messengers of Jesus are both vulnerable and valuable. David Sills, in his book, *The Missionary Call*, helps keep Jesus' teaching on persecution and martyrdom in global perspective. He states, "The dangers that exist are real, but only illustrate the fact that men and women need Christ. The suffering and dying of missionaries advance the Kingdom as nothing else could and the blood of the saints has ever been the seed and fuel of gospel advance."¹⁴

This is true, It has always been this way. Those who are on mission with Jesus must keep advancing, even in the face of hostility, whether there is a global pandemic or not.

¹⁴ David Sills. *The Missionary Call*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009.



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INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Rethinking International Students Ministry

Teng Yang Tan

INTRODUCTION

Much have been reported and discussed about the impact of COVID-19 on lives of people around the world. Some were affected more than others. Many social NGOs have rushed to help people who are poor and marginalized. Studies have shown that the impact of this pandemic on ordinary people, regardless of ethnicity or religion, is unprecedented. One of the most vulnerable population groups ignored is international students. The responsibility has fallen on many concerned churches, compassionate Christians, and missions' organizations to alleviate the negative impact on these students.

Looking back, we were amazed by how the number of international students had leapfrogged over 200% in three decades. We saw many international students crossing borders, cultures, and languages to pursue higher education and knowledge. Countries like US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and UK were opening doors wide to these students. Asian countries, like Malaysia, followed suit about 15 years ago. Malaysia projected an increase in international students intake from 177,000 a year ago to 250,000 by 2025. A small country like New Zealand had close to 120,000 international students not too long ago. It was presented that this is "A single most significant human movement in history", the most strategic mission in God's Kingdom today for fulfilling the Great Commission. – Global Frontier Missions.

Many countries had benefited from the economic prosperity brought to the countries' shore, not to mention rich cultures that they brought with them. The tremendous contributions international students make to the countries' economy had resulted in governments introducing policies and developing higher institutions to attract more international students.

All these have changed in just one painful year!

For many of them, studying abroad has been the first-time experience, leaving home for the first time, and living independently elsewhere. Though it can be adventurous, exciting, it can also be scary and feeling quite lost. When crisis like pandemic hit, they were taken aback and confused as to what future holds.

We will explore how COVID-19 impacted the lives of these international students, how they cope with many restrictions imposed, what negative or positive outcomes that change their outlook, financial issues, governments' initiatives, and how churches, Christians, and missions' agencies could help.

"TO LEAVE OR TO STAY?" THAT IS THE QUESTION

To Stay

It is an understatement that COVID-19 has drastically changed the educational landscape of international students around the world. "Change" is the word that sums up the predicament. University programs have changed; living situation has changed; social interactions and communications have changed; mobility has changed; financial sustainability has changed; ability to cope mentally has also changed..... Most lectures, and classes have been moved on-line, with minimal contact with lecturers, and tutors. Governments have embarked on a slogan: "A new normal", requesting everyone to change one's mindset to adapt to "new normal" like wearing face masks, social or physical distancing, frequent washing of hands, and restricting movement. But the "new normal" seldom takes into consideration of mental and spiritual conditions faced by people, more so the international students who are lost and harassed.

Not to overlook is reports of an increase in xenophobia, prejudice, and racism that confront some Asian students. Two international students, one a Malaysian, and the other a Singaporean were attacked in Australia, accused of spreading "Chinese" virus. *"Honestly, physically, it wasn't that bad because I protected myself. But it was more of a mental trauma. Now, we're scared to even go out. We get more wary of white people, especially if they come up to us or are running towards us. Since the lockdown, everyone is being really open with how they feel about Asians. They think 'cause you're Asian, you have the virus. It doesn't make sense at all."*, one of the students commented. (Source: <https://mothership.sg/2020/04/singaporean-malaysian-students-assaulted-melbourne/>)

"A Thai student who has been studying in Belgium, reports multiple incidences of slur being directed at her on campus such as "corona" and "no mask" (when she was wearing a mask). 'It just kind of opened my eyes to how some people are,' she says. She says these experiences often reduced her motivation to study and sometimes made her sad and angry" (An example given by Amoneeta Beckstein, a multicultural positive counselling psychologist. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/blogs/how-are-international-students-coping-covid-19-pandemic.>)

"A Malaysian student has described being evicted from her Perth (Australia) home due to her landlord's fears about the coronavirus outbreak, despite the fact she had not travelled to China." (ABC News 13 February 2020)

Some countries have revised their visa policies as one

of the reasons to combat this pandemic. One example is the recent US immigration ruling that drastically affect international students. With this new ruling, students do not know if they can finish their programs or if they can even start a program or allowed to re-enter the country if they temporarily return home. They are burdened with anxiety of facing the risk of being deported, or their student status changed, irrelevant of whether they have a legitimate enrolment in institutions. Thankfully, the decision that affects international students was somehow dropped as a result of protest from various institutes of higher learning. *"While the government agreed to rescind that directive in response to litigation, the rescission left the fate of new international students unclear."* (Source: *Inside Higher Education* November 25 2020) *Nevertheless, the anxiety is still there.*

With all these changes unpreventably falling on everyone, along with the chronic stress of the pandemic, it may pose mental-health challenges, which is usually not part of a "relief" effort given to citizens, let alone international students. University and college programs have ground to a halt with exams postponed, classes shifted to online mode. Some were in dilemma, as their courses were linked to international institutions that conduct exams at certain times beyond their control. Some were not adequately prepared as helps were not appropriately given for the exams. Mentally, they were affected by uncertainty, anxiety, and situation where they have no access to counselling and advice.

A Chinese student who decided to stay experienced chronic depression. The university she enrolled in was closed for an unspecified period of time. No counsellors were available on campus to help her. Church workers were not allowed in except under compelling circumstances.

An international couple who came to Malaysia to study, together with their 2 children, faced an even daunting task of keeping their family intact and upbeat in a situation like this. They decided to stay as it was too expensive and difficult for them to travel as a family. The biggest concern for them is worrying about their loved ones (his mother was not well) at home with little hope of being together anytime soon due to suspension of flights.

If they stay, many international students have to find ways to cope with all these changes. Furthermore, there are extra expenses incurred – if they are among those who require COVID tests. Do they have to be further quarantined? Do they have enough money to stay on? Who to turn to when their family members are not here to support? Where can they release their stress in situations like this?

To Leave

But if they choose to leave, they face another problem: travel restriction. Many countries have imposed a

ban or a conditional travel regulation in and out of countries' borders around the world. On top of that there is also limited access to suitable transport arrangement. Almost all airlines are cutting back on their flights in and out of countries. One student had to pay almost double the fare, with a number of stopovers, to get her back to her home country. She had to borrow money to purchase the ticket. They would have to forfeit deposits to their lodging, university fees. Coupling with the stress of returning home, they have to figure out what the future holds for them. Some have not completed their prescribed courses and without academic qualifications to lean on.

HOW COVID-19 IMPACTS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



Some African students expressed dismay that if they did not complete their studies, they would face criticism, and even worst culturally they would face shame at home. Many have paid exorbitant amount of money to be able to study abroad.

There are more stories of international students, and God has given us an incredible opportunity to carry out His command to reach the nations through international student ministry, especially in time of crisis. As you can see, the tremendous pressure befalls these students is real. They need help more than we could imagine.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS MOBILITY

The fallout from COVID-19 pandemic for educational institutions around the world will likely be definite and longer than expected. Institutions that depend on international students will face serious financial repercussion, given the pandemic's broad and unsettled impact on global mobility. We see a drastic drop in enrollment everywhere around the world. That means the opportunity to reach these students has become less.

In Malaysia, for example, the requirement is strict for international students.

"If the students come from countries categorised as a Covid-19 red zone, they must be placed under the 14-day quarantine at their residence and download the MySejahtera (tracing app) application.

"For those from green zones, they only need to be screened for Covid-19 but are not required to be under quarantine for 14-day at home (should they test negative)," A senior government minister said. Reported The New Strait Times (19 June 2020)

While conditions for international mobility could hardly be worse, we still see a general interest in studying in Malaysia. The approval to study in Malaysia is still pending, though.

"Thousands of foreign students are waiting to enter Malaysia to continue their studies and despite the border closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of new applications is showing an upward trend since May.

A check with Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS) showed that a total of 6,088 out of 14,949 students have applied from January to July this year to enrol in degree programmes.

The majority are from China." Reported The Star News (28 August 2020)

The Star News report inspires some hope that the impact, while serious, the enrolment in Malaysia may be less pessimistic than feared. But the longer the pandemic lasts, the more international students will change their plans. The longer they wait, they will develop a decreasing appetite for pursuing education abroad.

One positive trend, though, is that many international students seem to view this crisis as a temporary phenomenon. Many are hoping that countries will begin to open up as their governments implement progressive approaches to combating this pandemic. Countries that bring the spread of pandemic under control the earliest will almost certainly have an advantage in recruiting international students. At the time of this writing, news of possible availability of effective vaccine raised some hope. Much will have to be done by various government agencies to affirm the international students that they will be taken care of once accepted, and a real opportunity to show that their countries are more desirable as destinations for higher education.

'WHAT SHOULD I DO, LORD?' - WHAT THE CHURCH COULD DO

In every situation, God causes His Church to respond according to His direction. A situation as serious as COVID-19 requires unusual, and coordinated response. We could wait and hope for the best, or we could respond by obeying His leading. I believe God has created an opportunity for His Church to communicate His mercy, love, and lead many into His Kingdom. Lord, what do you want me to do?

God-Focused Mindset

Nothing takes God by surprise. His plan for international students is still very much intact. God's purpose is to be known and enjoyed and praised as infinitely glorious in his free and sovereign grace. This is the purpose that governs all the works of God.

*"O LORD, my God, you have accomplished many things;
you have done amazing things and carried out your purposes for us.*

No one can thwart you!

*I want to declare them and talk about them,
but they are too numerous to recount!"*

(Psalm 40:5 NET)

God opens doors and He shuts doors; all for His own purpose. He knew that universities would be closed, classes cancelled, and He knew all about the travel restrictions and economic turbulence. These so called crisis more than often drives people to seek Him. Somewhere, somehow, some ways, in some appropriate times He would open other doors to opportunity for ministry.

Getting Our Perspective Right

God has a command in Leviticus 19:33-34 *"When a foreigner resides with you in your land, you must not oppress him. The foreigner who resides with you must be to you like a native citizen among you; so you must love him as yourself, because you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God."*

The command requires welcoming, walking alongside, same treatment as you would give to your own country folks, and most important of all is to love, irrespective of race, religion, status, or ethnicity.

It is always a challenge to have Kingdom perspective. These international students might not stay on to help with church programs, organisational activities, or just to fill the numbers in churches. But God has a different design and plan to reach nations from our door steps. There are many examples of how international students who were helped and returned home to be light and salt in their own countries and communities. The Great Commission to disciple all nations for His Kingdom is very much on God's mind.

Recognising that Every Crisis Creates Evangelism Opportunity

Like many locals, international students who are in a host country, the COVID-19 pandemic forced them to "attend" classes on-line. While the locals would take every opportunity to rush home, many international students were unable to return to their home countries. Stress and physical needs create an opportunity for serving and fostering genuine friendship. With modern and efficient communication, church and mission workers could manage to connect with these students virtually. Occasional visits, whenever possible, give rise to personal and emotional

sharing. Gospel message came through in a real and transformational way.

Many were invited to attend virtual church services. Instead of hosting large gathering, on-line technology can be used to convey the same information and communication at a distance, with individual follow up sessions. It was a new experience for the first-timers to the church services. And many we talked to were just delighted by the opportunity to “attend” church, and thus opened up windows of opportunity for the Gospel, and the sowing of seeds.

We partnered with a city church to conduct on-line Bible discussions from the start of the pandemic and the program attracted students from various backgrounds and beliefs. We have seen the hunger to know about God and His message. Some have never had opportunity to hear and talk about the Christian message until this approach is made available. A student from a closed country asked for a Bible so he could read it.

One partnering church has embarked on on-line English classes for international students, attracting many, especially the Chinese students. Through this program the church has served in various capacity in helping these students cope with the changes and great opportunity to share the Gospel. These students would drop by to talk, seek counsel or just a place for them to release stress by plying badminton and table-tennis at the church’s roof-top court.

We need to constantly remind ourselves that evangelism is not a one-dimensional activity or program, it requires holistic approach - meeting needs, providing help, sharing life, studying the Bible, hospitality, and even praying with them, and for them and their families. Some were done virtually, others were done on a personal and very small group basis.

Counselling and Mentor Ministry

Since the pandemic can have adverse consequences for international students’ mental-health, we encourage churches and missions groups to provide biblical-based on-line counselling services. We dare not take this challenge lightly as reports and studies have shown that mental stress can be very devastating to one’s health and future endeavour. In some extreme cases it might lead to chronic depression or even suicide.

Dr. Rozanizam Zakaria, professional psychiatry professor, wrote: “50 percent of cases of mental problems start before the age of 14 years..... We need better mental health networks in the community for the purpose of prevention and treatment....We also need to increase the empowerment of on-line counselling services.” (<https://www.malaysiakini.com/columns/546747>)

Dr. Rozanizam’s concern highlights the lack of such services, let alone a spiritual one.

An ISM team member who used to have international students from many nations gathered, before the

COVID lockdown, in her home also reported that many students missed the time where they could share, have fun, and eat together, participate in Bible discussions. Through these gathering, they sought refuge, counselling, and friendship. Now they would have to rely on virtual “meet”. But because of the conducive environment and the hospitality that they experienced before the lockdown, they are equally keen to “meet” to keep their friendship and receive inputs. They see this group as their family in host country.

This is an opportunity for churches to provide such services and mentor ministry, friendly and approachable, that the international students can contact and seek help. We believe that biblical counselling and personal mentoring are the best solutions for healing and spiritual support.

Equipping the Workers

With most regular programs halted or slowed down, it would be the most ideal time to think about retraining our workers who work among international students, or those who have been keen to get involved. It is not uncommon for churches and Christian missions to use technology to equip their workers in time like this. On-line, or digital conferences, Zoom training sessions should be organised. Our team has a series of webinars on understanding cultures so as to equip workers to understand various worldviews and communicate the Gospel in various cultural understanding. The webinars were attended by various church workers, missions leaders, and Christian student leaders.

Other tools or webinars in the pipeline are “How to do story telling”, “Discipling international students”, and “Preparing international students for home”.

We also must emphasise that ministering among the needy is not at all easy and requires a lot of support and compassion. *“When he (Jesus) saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”* (Matthew 9:36 NIV) To be compassionate is to give one’s energy, time, resources, and heart to others to meet their needs. That will take a lot out of a worker of the Gospel. A friend who laboured in the harvest field among the refugees and migrants, has mentioned about “compassion fatigue”. We must seriously consider this in equipping our workers. Help and support must be given to them to relieve this fatigue before it takes toll on them. The Lord assures His people that: *“All day long he shows compassion and lends to others, and his children are blessed.”* (Psalm 37:26 NET)

Networking Among Churches and Christian Workers

In some countries, international students are quite widely spread out in different locations. Some churches cater to a certain nationality, while others have international students from many parts of the world. Some churches are beginning to see the need

to reach out, some do not have resources to help the students, and some do not have the skills and experience to engage these students. There are many Christian missions groups, or Christian fellowships in campuses who are already working among these students. One of the roles of International Student Ministry (ISM) is to provide a network where churches, organisations, and Christian fellowship groups could link up and share experiences, and resources. We are praying to set up teams in different districts, comprising various groups to work together to reach and serve these students, *so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.* (John 4:36)

Corporate Prayer

Nothing more pleases the Lord than when God's people come together to pray. When we pray we recognise that God is our source of refuge, encouragement, help, and peace. When Jesus looked at the crowd, he said to the disciples, *"The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."* (Matthew 9:37-38) Jesus' whole focus is God and God's ability to do something, to put things right, to make it work, to know what needs to be done.

We, as human, have little ability to stop the onslaught of COVID pandemic, but we have God who is all powerful, all knowing, all present, our anchor, defender, and shelter. The Psalmist is so reassuring:

*But let all who take refuge in You rejoice;
let them shout for joy forever.
May You shelter them,
and may those who love Your name boast about You.
(Psalm 5:11-12)*

Corporate prayer opens up your heart to the needs of others. Not only does it bring encouragement, edification, joy, and the feeling of love among believers, it prompts believers to reach out in love.

We organise a bi-monthly prayer to allow churches and co-workers to come together to pray for international students. We share needs of these students, activities, and progress in ministry. We usually link these students to churches so that they could be helped or savour the Christian fellowship and the Word of God. It is a conduit to unity, spirit of oneness, and blessing in glorifying God together.

When international students see how God is in control, how He answers prayers, how He causes His people to pray and love them, they who are touched by God will "boast about" Him in time to come.

PRAYER GUIDE DURING COVID-19 FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Below is an excellent prayer guide provided by InterVarsity for Students (please see: <https://campusedgemsu.com/category/prayer/>):

- Pray for international students who have had to

leave their dorms but are unable to return to their home countries and families.

- Pray for students' mental and physical health as they experience isolation away from their campus communities.
- Pray against anxiety, fear, and loneliness.
- Pray for students having to return home to difficult family situations and non-Christian households. Pray for their transition, for peace, and for the strength to minister to their families.
- Pray for students who may face financial stresses due to no longer having services often provided by universities, such as dining halls, libraries and the Internet, medical services, in-person tutoring, and childcare.
- Pray for those who this would have been their last semester on campus and are grieving over the cancelation of graduation ceremonies and other senior celebrations with their campus communities.
- Pray for them as they job hunt in what might be a challenging economic environment. As many universities and colleges move to distance learning, pray that education continues to be accessible to all, especially students with disabilities.
- As InterVarsity transitions to virtual ministry, pray for innovation for student leaders as they continue to lead and minister to other students.
- Pray also for even greater evangelism, that new students would be reached in new ways, as they ask deeper questions in this season of uncertainty.

Additional:

- Pray for the churches in host countries to demonstrate compassion, inclusiveness, and care for these students, seizing the opportunity to share the love of Christ.
- Pray for unity, love, and the spirit of collaboration among churches and missions' organizations for the glory of Christ. *"By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:35 CSB)



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THE MORAVIAN MISSIONAL APPROACH FOR TODAY'S MISSIONS

Juno Wang

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, according to the United Nations, there were 272 million international migrants out of 7.7 billion global population, that is, one in every thirty people was a migrant.¹ Today's missions of using ways and means of accomplishing "the mission" which has been entrusted by the Triune God to the Church and Christians² is glocal. It is global in scope but local in action and in sequence³ because of the seamless integration between the local and the global,⁴ which means local witnesses to have global ripple effects⁵ must be culturally appropriate.

Christ has called all Christians to be His witnesses to the world. He gave this mandate in Acts 1:8 which echoes the same word spoken by God in Isaiah 43:10-12.⁶ Being witnesses means we are transformed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and to obey our calling and the two greatest commandments wholeheartedly. We are determined to apply our faith to all of life and not to limit it within our church and own ethnic people. We are to follow the sacrificed Lamb for His Kingdom expansion.

The Moravian missional approach is the collective expression of transformed Christian living through their obedience to God and His commands to draw the people they serve to their communities. Every Christian is a missionary with Kingdom orientation and cultural sensitivity to engage the hearts focusing on Christ's death, the sacrificed Lamb. This paper will mainly focus on the Moravian missional approach we can learn from both the positive and negative aspects of Moravian theories and practices. It will then derive missiological implications for today's missions and sufferings and reflection. A local church can participate in glocal missions if we learn from the Moravians to quench the Holy Spirit no more and

begin to act now.

TODAY'S MISSIONS

The majority of the world is highly relational and communal, and it is God who brings migrants to live among us. The centrifugal missions as "going-out" shifts to the missions to "coming-in".⁷ Today's mission is local and global interrelatedly.

Relational and Communal Cultures

Most people in the world live in relational and communal cultures. People in these cultures behave politely, act in a socially desirable manner, and respect others to maintain group welfare, unity, and harmony. Group opinions and actions, and psychological closeness are emphasized. Individual goals are coordinated with those of the collective, because group success is placed before individual credit or gain.⁸ It takes a long time to develop friendship in these cultures and view it seriously, because it includes many obligations and lasts a lifetime.⁹ The cultural differences in the issues and structures of accountability cultivate fear and mistrust in relationships.¹⁰ Conversion to them means transferring their identity and loyalty to a new community; therefore, it is important for them to experience the community prior to their decisions to join.¹¹

Opportunities

Every Christian is a participant in God's glorious work as His choice, agent, and pathway in His missional work.¹² Non-Christian migrants often have difficulties accepting Christ when they are in their mono-cultural homeland tied to traditional beliefs, but this attitude might be much weaker in multi-cultural cities. Once migrants accept Christ, they are the agents that not only reach their own people here and back in their

1. United Nations, "World Migration Report 2020," International Organization for Migration, United Nations iLibrary, November 27, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.18356/b1710e30-en> (accessed November 17, 2020).

2. Enoch Wan, "Rethinking Missiological Research Methodology: Exploring a New Direction," *Global Missiology*, (October 2003), <http://www.enochwan.com/english/articles/pdf/Rethinking%20Missiological%20Research%20Methodology.pdf> (accessed November 25, 2017).

3. Enoch Wan, written comments on my first dissertation proposal draft, Portland, OR, December, 2017.

4. Bob Roberts Jr., *Glocalization: How Followers of Jesus Engage a Flat World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 24.

5. Sadiri Joy Tira, "Glocal Evangelism: Jesus Christ, Magdalena, and Damascus in Greater Toronto Area," *Lausanne World Pulse*, (June 2010), <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives-php/1291/06-2010> (accessed September 26, 2018).

6. Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 66.

7. Hyung Jin Park, "The Journey of the Gospel and Being a World Christian." *Torch Trinity Journal* 13, no. 1 (May 30, 2010): 94.

8. Juana Bordas, *Salsa, Soul And Spirit: Leadership for a Multicultural Age* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2007), 47-8.

9. Judith N. Martin and Thomas K. Nakayama, eds., *Experiencing Intercultural Communication*. 4 ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011), 259-60.

10. Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 20.

11. Gregory Boyd and Paul R. Eddy, *Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology*. 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 184-8.

12. Park, "The Journey of the Gospel and Being a World Christian," 98.

homeland, but they are also the natural bridges to reach other ethnic groups in the host country¹³ and wherever they go because of shared migrant experiences.¹⁴

Challenges

Missions without an outward orientation to others conceives an ingrown, complacent, and ethnocentric church.¹⁵ The sin of Babel of rebelling against God's command to fill the earth, and cling to our own culture and reject diversity continues to plague us today. Being a missional church is an obedience issue because we will get out of our comfort and safety zones and engage the world as Christ did if we love like Christ.¹⁶ This is the most significant obstacle for us to engage in glocal missions in the church, and the antidote is the Cross. In the New Testament, several words for "witness" mean martyr, showing the ultimate form of witness is to lay down our life as a witness for Christ.¹⁷ We must see our glocal missions from the Kingdom perspective and use that to expand His Kingdom.

Current Church Missional Approach

God brings to us the migrants who are relational and communal in general, but are churches willing and equipped to build relational bridges to reach out to them?¹⁸ Under the possible influence of functionalism, all aspects of a ministry practically serve as functional acts for the survival of that ministry; therefore, missional approach is pragmatic and managerial. The focus is effectiveness and efficiency of doing the right thing and doing it right, and people could be seen as a number on a ministry or fundraising report. Since the eighteenth century, the entire Western missionary movement has been influenced by positivism.¹⁹ The major consequences of positivism include distinguishing facts from feelings and values, rising individualism, rejecting all traditional knowledge as superstition, and valuing scientific logics and reasons

significantly.²⁰ Nowadays, non-western churches are also under the influence of functionalism and positivism learned from Western missionaries and churches. This missional approach is seen as the right and only way to do missions of the Church.

THE MORAVIAN MISSION MOVEMENT

The most influential missionary effort of the eighteenth century was the Moravian mission. It was the fruit of the Pietism of the mission founder, Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760).²¹

Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf

Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf fully devoted himself to the Lamb of God and to the cause of Christian unity in all the world.²² His education was Pietistic which preached Christianity as the religion of the heart. They declared one drop of love was worth more than a sea of knowledge.²³ Zinzendorf was the key person to formulate the Moravian mission.²⁴ In 1722, Zinzendorf responded immediately after a discussion among the refugees about the oppressive situation of the Hidden Seed in Moravia.²⁵ Zinzendorf provided his land in Herrnhut for refugees from Moravia, Bohemia, and other parts of Germany for religious freedom.²⁶ Through the centuries, these Moravians have suffered persecutions and dangers for their religious beliefs. Their suffering has prepared them for the risks of their missionary efforts.²⁷ In August, 1727, a Pentecostal experience renewed the missionary fervor in Zinzendorf. After that, the Moravians were prepared to be involved in worldwide missions. In 1728, Zinzendorf presented plans for evangelism in the West Indies, Greenland, Turkey, and Lapland. The very next day, twenty-six brethren responded to the call, and committed to pray and go unto the world.²⁸

The World Missions

In 1732, the Moravians sent their first missionaries to the West Indies.²⁹ The Moravian missionaries particularly worked in remote, difficult, and dangerous fields for marginalized and overlooked people because of their suffering and experience

13. Enoch Wan and Sadiri Joy Tira, "Diaspora Missiology and Mission in the Context of the 21st Century," *Global Missiology English* 1, no. 8 (October 2010), 11, under "Diaspora Studies," <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/viewFile/383/994> (accessed November 10, 2017).

14. Stan Downes, "Mission by and Beyond the Diaspora: Partnering With Diaspora Believers to Reach Other Immigrants and the Local People," in *Diaspora Missiology: Reflections on Reaching the Scattered Peoples of the World*, eds. Michael Pocock and Enoch Wan, Evangelical Missiological Society Series no. 23 (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2015), 83.

15. Lianne Roembke, *Building Credible Multicultural Teams* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000), 1.

16. Roberts, *Glocalization*, 146.

17. Walter A. Elwell, et al., *Encyclopedia of the Bible*, no. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 2155.

18. Randy G. Mitchell, "Case Study 5: Diaspora Missions in Minnesota: Local Actions With Global Implications," in *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice*, ed. Enoch Wan, 2nd ed. (Portland, OR: IDS-USA:2014), 308.

19. Brain M. Howell and Jenell Williams Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 352.

20. Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 7-8.

21. A. J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer: A Study in the Moravian Contribution to Christian Mission and Unity* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1962), 12.

22. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer*, 12.

23. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer*, 21-2.

24. David A. Schattschneider, "Pioneers in Mission: Zinzendorf and the Moravians." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 8, no. 2 (April 1984): 64.

25. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer*, 45.

26. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer*, 47.

27. Jacques A. Blocher and Jacques Blandenier, *The Evangelization of the World: A History of Christian Mission*, trans. Michael Parker (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2013), 265.

28. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer*, 78.

29. John Mark Terry and Robert L. Gallagher, *Encountering the History of Missions: From the Early Church to Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 221.

of persecution.³⁰ In 1740, the doctrine of Christ's suffering solidly awakened the first Moravian convert. The missionaries contextualized the Gospel experimentally.³¹ The Moravian missionary outreach focused on a disciplined life with a relationship with Christ, piety, and the fear of God.³² To Moravians, the Holy Spirit was the only missionary, and missionaries were agents of the Spirit and sent to the people whom the Spirit has already prepared to hear their message.³³

At the time when Protestants ignored the Great Commission command, the Moravians sent off their ambassadors for Christ to the world.³⁴ The sacrifice of the Lamb was the foundation of the Moravian mission motivation and message.³⁵ That message was their story of the love of the Lamb.³⁶ During the years of 1732 to 1832, a total of 1,199 Moravians were sent to the fields. In 1882, while other Protestant churches averaged one missionary for every 5,000 members, the Moravian averaged one missionary for every 92 members. A total of 2,000 missionaries were sent to the world, 150 years after the establishment of the mission.³⁷

MORAVIAN THEORIES AND PRACTICES

Moravianism emphasized on the Holy Spirit for the work of soul winning and guidance in speaking and living out the love of Christ. Christianity was more than religious talk but to connect heart, emotion, and intellect. Their missionaries obeyed the two greatest commandments and the Great Commission of being His witnesses, preached Christ, and imitated His humility.³⁸ They worked in humility at the side of ordinary people. The missionaries identified themselves with their target groups, and won them more through patience, love, and caring than through teaching and preaching doctrines.³⁹

Zinzendorf led the mission with Kingdom orientation and by his example.⁴⁰ They learned to be faithful and enduring before they reaped any fruit, and also

to be flexible for mission strategy.⁴¹ Zinzendorf took the work of the apostle Paul as his model. He hoped for something new for world missions, and he was involved in several missions experiments.⁴²

Positive Aspects

The Moravian mission stemmed out of their Kingdom orientation, obedience to the Holy Spirit, the two greatest commandments, and the Great Commission, and transformation by the Holy Spirit. The focal points of Moravian mission were Christ's death, cultural sensitivity, relationships with God and others, the role of the Spirit, and long-term discipleship.⁴³ Mostly, it was their collective expression in the transformational communities. They demonstrated a humility and simplicity that allowed peaceful and respectful interactions with their target groups, while most Europeans were intolerable to cultural differences.⁴⁴ They lived and worked as the servant leaders by Christ's example among the people to whom they were sent. They went out to share Christ not only in their doing through words and deeds,⁴⁵ but also in their being. These missionaries of the eighteenth century shared Christ in a culturally responsive way. The missionaries learned their intercultural outreach skills through their communities and people in the fields. They sought the guidance of the Spirit and did not rule over the heathen.⁴⁶

Negative Aspects

Zinzendorf said he preferred 100 fruitless attempts to none for the glory of God;⁴⁷ however, the lack of formal and structured missionary training paid the price for improper contextualization, religious syncretism, indifference to social justice, and an overemphasis on Christ's suffering. When the missionaries were mainly focused on preaching, they inevitably worked with an unjust system and ignored the broader social issues⁴⁸ which included slavery and the genocide of native people.⁴⁹ Their over-identification with Christ's suffering made them become inward-looking that decreased their evangelistic and missionary zeal which was later realigned.⁵⁰ The Eurocentric leadership styles

30. Richard Tiplady, "Moravian Community, Spirituality, and Mission," in *Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue*, ed. William D. Taylor (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000), 505.

31. Tiplady, "Moravian Community, Spirituality, and Mission," 505.

32. Tiplady, "Moravian Community, Spirituality, and Mission," 503-4.

33. Schattschneider, "Pioneers in Mission," 65.

34. Blocher and Blandenier, *The Evangelization of the World*, 276.

35. Robert L. Gallagher, "The Integration of Mission Theology and Practice: Zinzendorf and the Early Moravians." *Journal of the International Association for Mission Studies* 25, no. 2 (2008): 190.

36. Gallagher, "The Integration of Mission Theology and Practice," 201.

37. Blocher and Blandenier, *The Evangelization of the World*, 276.

38. Terry and Gallagher, *Encountering the History of Missions*, 202.

39. Gallagher, "The Integration of Mission Theology and Practice," 206-7.

40. Terry and Gallagher, *Encountering the History of Missions*, 218.

41. Terry and Gallagher, *Encountering the History of Missions*, 207.

42. Schattschneider, "Pioneers in Mission," 66.

43. Terry and Gallagher, *Encountering the History of Missions*, 221.

44. Gallagher, "The Integration of Mission Theology and Practice," 190.

45. Gallagher, "The Integration of Mission Theology and Practice," 193.

46. Gallagher, "The Integration of Mission Theology and Practice," 193-6.

47. Gallagher, "The Integration of Mission Theology and Practice," 278.

48. Gallagher, "The Integration of Mission Theology and Practice," 202-4.

49. Terry and Gallagher, *Encountering the History of Missions*, 219.

50. Gallagher, "The Integration of Mission Theology and Practice," 185.

and roles were extended in the structure of their Protestantism.⁵¹

MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The Moravian mission is full of positive lessons for churches of all times to follow. Firstly, mission begins with transformation and empowerment by the Holy Spirit. Secondly, mission begins with prayer. Thirdly, mission is out of our obedience to the Holy Spirit and Christ's commands to lay down our life as a witness for Christ. Fourthly, mission is to get out of our comfort and safety zones and engage the world as Christ did. Fifthly, mission is for the Kingdom expansion. Sixthly, the Christocentric message is what the good news is all about because Christianity is about Christ.

Seventhly, mission to relational-and-communal cultural background people is through a relational and communal approach. Eighthly, church leaders need to have the vision for missions and lead by example. Lastly, relational intercultural training for congregations for today's missions should be mandatory, especially when we see migrants living in our neighborhood is related to glocal missions. A Kingdom oriented glocal missions worker needs to have the ability to acknowledge the differences, understand those differences at deeper levels, and appreciate or celebrate those differences,⁵² and this ability can be learned.

Missions and Sufferings

The Moravians were average people like you and me, but every Moravian was on fire for the Kingdom through the enablement of the Holy Spirit and the love of the Lamb. On the Moravian seal is the Lamb carrying banner with a Cross. The Moravians followed the sacrificed and conquered Lamb. They willed to suffer for missions out of their loving relationship with the Triune God, obedience, and transformation. They were able to identify with the marginalized people they reached and lay down their life for missions. They crucified their comfort, convenience, and fears on the Cross to follow the Lamb. The missionaries relied on the empowerment and guidance of the Holy Spirit than their own strengths and skills. Their relational and communal strategy to live out the suffering of Christ and the sovereignty of the Lord in their being was culturally appropriate. Non-believers were drawn to Christ.

As for today's missions, the commitment and effort for a two-week short-term missions trip is much easier to fulfill our missional duty than a year-long local missions. Reaching migrants in our homeland is to cross cultural, relational, and other differences which is against our nature and ways of life. It requires

us to go to Calvary daily to crucify our comfort, convenience, and fears and draw love and grace from God to love others. God commands us to love our neighbors and be His witnesses. His commands are not only for career missionaries and limited to our own ethnicity, but for all Christians and to all ethnicities as well. We are to love and be witnesses to all ethnic migrants living in the neighborhood. After all, the sufferings of laying down our life to love our neighbors is far less than what overseas missionaries have to contend with.

We are to witness that there is no other God besides Him (Isa. 44:8). That means witnesses should not have any idols of convenience, comfort, ethnocentrism, functionalism, and positivism. We need to examine ourselves and see if there are any idols that are needed to be removed for today's missions. It is a mission of living out Christ's life of suffering before preaching it. Suffering from being obedient to the Triune God is not a duty, but a joy and honor to serve and expand His Kingdom. It is out of the unmerited grace and love of God that we love the migrants around us.

Our God is relational among the Trinity and with us, thus we are created to be relational as well. We must uproot functionalism and positivism in our missional approach, and be the agents of the Spirit and relational with God and others. Above all, we need to seek the anointing and empowerment of the overlooked third person of the Trinity. Be transformed and obedient, and faithful and enduring. Let the Holy Spirit produce fruits from our missions. To get involved in today's missions for His Kingdom and glory, we need to get down from our tower of Babel, get out of our church's four walls, and follow the Lamb.

REFLECTION

Whatever evangelism methods we use, Christ should be the center of the Gospel. People cannot be saved without recognizing and identifying with His life, crucifixion, and resurrection. That is the theology of the early Church. A transformed life begins with the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He is not just a savior, but Lord. If Christ is not our Lord, we still live and act by our flesh. Christianity is about Christ. Without a relationship with Christ, Christianity is just a religion or a ticket to enter Heaven. Furthermore, non-churched people would like to see how we live out the Christian faith we profess. They are not drawn to Christianity, because of the failure of Christian life to obey and live out God's commands. Most people are not looking for religion but love.

God calls us to love our neighbors who are like or unlike us. We should be like the apostle Paul who laid down his life every day in his missions (1 Cor. 15:31). Through our missionary lifestyle and intentionality, we reach out to the lost from far and near who are different than us outside our comfort zone. It puts us in need of the power of the Spirit to deliver us from

51. Terry and Gallagher, *Encountering the History of Missions*, 221.

52. William M. Kondrath, *God's Tapestry: Understanding and Celebrating Differences* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2008), 212.

our comfort zone, disobedience, fear, limitations, and all weaknesses. In humility and obedience, we trust the Lord to carry out His will through us by His grace and strengths.⁵³ It is the Spirit within us enabling us to gladly love others. It is in surrender of our will to a life of close following. Our spiritual life will grow in our obedience and continual relationship with God.

Some long time Christians have lost their first love, and they need humility, the work of the Spirit in their inmost parts, and return to a closer relationship with Christ.⁵⁴ We must be near enough to hear Him and ready to do His will out of our devotion to Him and His love.⁵⁵ Our missions work is more than learning a national culture and identifying cultural attributes; it is getting to know people and build personal relationships and trust.⁵⁶

A Gospel witness must overcome barriers and intentionally engage with migrants living in the community. When we face outreach barriers and challenges, we need to fight the tendency to withdraw and isolate ourselves as individuals, families, or micro-communities. Withdrawn Christians are not effective witnesses in the community they live, nor to the end of the world, because they spend most their time within the church community not outside the church walls. Even though they would invite outsiders to church programs and events, non-believers often find it difficult to really understand what the life-transforming Gospel is solely from a Sunday sermon.⁵⁷ To live out the Gospel to relational-and-communal cultural background migrants, the body of Christ needs to actively engage with them in a relational and communal approach.

Relational intercultural training is a way to bridge the cultural gap and help us reach out to the migrants. It focuses on experiential learning in an interactive learning community and is relational. It is training in loving God and others, in doing glocal missions with intercultural outreach skills, in knowing to extend the Kingdom with multi-cultural competency, and in willingness to obey His will. The lost needs to have opportunities to see the transforming power of the Gospel and the outflow of God's love in action within the community before they would enter a church building. Let the Gospel flow naturally along relationship lines.

53. Kevin Yi, "The Temptations of Using Your 'Calling' as an Excuse," Sola Network, under "Church and Ministry," <https://sola.network/article/temptations-calling-as-excuse> (accessed September 10, 2019).

54. Andrew Murray, *The Key to the Missionary Problem: A Passionate Call to Obedience in Action*, (Fort Washington: CLC Publications, 1979), 96-7.

55. Murray, *The Key to the Missionary Problem*, 100.

56. Enoch Wan and Mark Hedinger, *Relational Missionary Training: Theology, Theory and Practice*, ed. Kendi Howells Douglas and Stephen Burris, (Skyforest: Urban Loft Publishers, 2017), 181-3.

57. Alan and Katherine Carter, "The Gospel and Life Style," in *Ashford*, 129-30.

CONCLUSION

Called, gathered, and sent are the three dynamics of a church's constituted life occurring simultaneously and continually.⁵⁸ The Church needs to recognize that it is God Himself who brings the international migrants to us, and we need to seize the glocal missions opportunities for the mission task that is in front of us. We must intentionally sacrifice our time and convenience to reach out to the lost who are different than us outside our comfort zone, and crucify our self-centeredness on the Cross to be His witnesses for the Kingdom. Receive intercultural training to improve our interaction skills and give us confidence to build relationships and trust with the migrants as part of the community, and to live out and share the Gospel in a culturally acceptable way. Let the fire of the Moravian mission continue to inspire and motivate churches for reaching the lost from far and near.

Have you been to Calvary for missions lately? Do you really love Him? John 14:15.

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THE CORONA PANDEMIC & BUSINESS AS MISSION: SEVEN THINGS WE CAN DO

Mats Tunehag

The effects of the corona virus are disruptive beyond comprehension. The situation is changing by the hour. The consequences vary from difficult to dire for billions of people, and nobody knows what the timeline is for this crisis.

Media across the world updates us constantly on the negative effects on businesses and on people's lives, so this short article will have a different focus: what can we do?

But first let's note that throughout history the Church has a track record of serving others in the midst of major plagues and catastrophes.

*"The sociologist Rodney Stark has written (in The Rise of Christianity) that one reason the church overcame hostility and grew so rapidly within the Roman empire traces back to how Christians responded to pandemics of the day, which probably included bubonic plague and smallpox. When infection spread, Romans fled their cities and towns; Christians stayed behind to nurse and feed not only their relatives but their pagan neighbors."*¹

Why has the Church done this for centuries and why should we do it now? One fundamental reason is that we are to love God and our neighbors, and the two are connected. As Bishop Barron says: "Why are the two commandments so tightly linked? Because of who Jesus is. Christ is not simply a human being, and he is not simply God; rather, he is the God-man, the one in whose person divinity and humanity meet. Therefore, it is impossible to love him as God without loving the humanity that he has embraced. The greatest commandment is, therefore, an indirect Christology."²

Why has the Church done this for centuries and why should we do it now? One fundamental reason is that we are to love God and our neighbors, and the two are connected.

Many businesses are facing challenges with cashflow, lockdown, sales, having to let staff go, supply chain

1. https://philipyanney.com/living-in-plague-times?fbclid=IwAR0WQ6_rAe6Yat11ubOQ6l_SSN4AWMzYkyVySORuDQGDhDNRd2e0PKoYPCK

2. Bishop Barron's reflection on today's gospel reading from Mark 12:28 – 34, on March 20, 2020. <https://www.wordonfire.org/bishop-robert-barron/>

disruptions, bankruptcies, et cetera. **So, what can we do now?**

Let me suggest seven areas for action as it relates to BAM businesses and the global BAM community. We also invite you to add your suggestions.

(Please send us your thoughts and suggestions to chairs@bamglobal.org)

PRAY

- Seek God, listen to Him.
- Pray for BAMers and BAM businesses.
- Pray for divine wisdom and intervention.
- Pray for creative thinking and innovative solutions.
- Use St. Patrick's BAM prayer, available in five languages.³
- Ask friends in business how you can pray for them!
- Start or join online prayer groups for BAMers and businesses

Please check Larry Sharp's helpful blog for prayer points. <https://ibecventures.com/blog/a-business-as-mission-crisis-what-do-we-know/>

How else can we pray for BAMers and BAM business?

BUY

- Support local businesses by buying their products and services when possible.
- Shop online.
- Do your Christmas shopping now!
- Buy gifts and give to neighbors, family and people in need.

How else can we help local business and others far away?

GIVE

There is a need for financial, intellectual and social capital.

- Loans: Many businesses face issues with sales, revenue and cashflow, and could benefit from donations and loans. We need contingency funds.
- Advice: Can you help a business with advice, can you be a coach and mentor? You may be an experienced business person who has gone through tough times and learned important lessons.

3. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/st-patricks-day-corona-virus-bam-prayer-five-mats-tunehag/>

- Connections: Can you help connect BAM business with people who can help? With sales? Marketing? Access to loans? To support peer groups?

Do you know of contingency funds? Mentors that are willing, qualified and available? Practical suggestions regarding helpful connections?

REMEMBER THE POOR

The corona crisis affects the poor more than most others. Millions of self-employed have lost their jobs and thus income. There are even more people who are day laborers who work in the informal economy, have no safety nets, and in a lockdown situation they may lose income day 1, and may be out of food soon after. And they have limited access to healthcare.⁴

The mantra many of us hear - *“work from home, wash your hands frequently, and keep physical distance”* - is not possible for millions of people.

Some headlines from India, Africa and Nepal, check footnotes for links to articles:

- “India's poorest 'fear hunger may kill us before coronavirus'”⁵
- "In Africa, social distancing is a privilege few can afford".⁶
- “Daily wage workers are more worried about starving to death than Covid-19”⁷

One group in Thailand provides care packages of food to vulnerable women in the sex industry, who lost their daily earnings because of lockdown.

This global crisis is bigger and more complex than we have ever experienced before in our generation. We are not just going through it and coming back to normal. Things are and will be changing. Thus, we need to review our business presuppositions, and possibly regroup even now.

Another example is an African American woman in North Carolina, USA, who “feeds more than 100 families every day during the COVID-19 pandemic”.

4. These are very vulnerable people who in some cases also are badly treated when they are just trying to survive these dire circumstances.

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/coronavirus-lockdown-india-am-ashamed-says-budaun-police-chief-after-up-cops-caught-on-video-forcing-2201177>

5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-52002734>

6. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/africa-social-distancing-privilege-afford-200318151958670.html>

7. <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/03/26/daily-wage-workers-are-more-worried-about-starving-to-death-than-covid-19>

See footnote for article and video clip.⁸

What other encouraging initiatives do you know of?

LEARN

- Many of us have to stay home, and this may open up opportunities to study.
- Being mindful that our present crisis is unique - albeit not the first one, we should also study lessons learned from previous significant world changing events.
- We should also - even now - try to draw lessons in and from the present crisis.

Let me give a few concrete suggestions:

- In a time of "corona imposed monasticism": let the Word of God come alive, learn from those who have gone before us, and enjoy God's creation. See Bishop Barron's reflections of these three things; video link in footnote.⁹
- Check the BAM Global Reports and study two foundational documents for the BAM Movement: The BAM Manifesto and the Wealth Creation Manifesto. <https://bamglobal.org/reports/>
- In a time with major dramatic changes we should remind ourselves about countries which have been transformed in our lifetime. It will give hope and inspiration during these stressful times. Learn from Israel, Singapore and Rwanda, which have succeeded against many odds.¹⁰

* *Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle*, by Dan Senor & Saul Singer

* *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story - 1965-2000*, by Lee Kuan Yew

* *Rwanda, Inc.: How a Devastated Nation Became an Economic Model for the Developing World*, by Patricia Crisafulli and Andrea Redmond

* *Beating the Odds Together: 50 Years of Singapore-Israel Ties*, by Mattia Tomba. 2019

- I am just now reading a book which describes, analyses and compares 12 Church encyclicals from 1891 to 2009. They deal with topics like business, wealth creation, profit, workers rights, private property, democracy, socialism, theology of work, human dignity, human rights, free markets, democratic capitalism - all from a Bible based perspective mindful of both historical roots and contexts.¹¹ One of the best is the John Paul II

8. <https://abc11.com/society/durham-woman-feeds-over-100-families-during-covid-19-pandemic/>

9. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_VJhBBqE5Y&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR3XD6eBjqDFfuiSRSTvITHNeG-sXUruIVqVl98DhYtNqUdRQ0VfEbs-XkY

10. Israel is an example of a small nation with limited natural resources and with hostile neighbors, which has been transformed to a prosperous world-leading innovator. Singapore was poor and became independent in 1965. It looked at Israel as a model. Today it is another world-leading country; amazingly well functioning, green, safe, clean, and prosperous. Rwanda went from a genocide and devastated country in 1994, to become a beacon in many ways in sub-Saharan Africa. It gleaned on Israel and Singapore.

11. The world has gone through major changes in the last 150 years, sometimes through major wars and political upheavals.

encyclical from 1991: Centesimus Annus¹². I also warmly recommend the book!¹³

What books, articles, videos, and podcasts do you recommend? What are you learning?

REGROUP

This global crisis is bigger and more complex than we have ever experienced before in our generation. We are not just going through it and coming back to normal. Things are and will be changing. Thus, we need to review our business presuppositions, and possibly regroup even now. There are of course also new business opportunities during and after the crisis.

Sounds like bad advice, maybe like investing during the corona crisis. But God showed that the marketplace will be restored again one day, and God was engaged to that end, and He still is.

Praxis¹⁴ is “a creative engine for redemptive entrepreneurship, supporting founders, funders, and innovators motivated by their faith to renew culture and love their neighbors”. Three of Praxis’ leaders have written a thought-provoking essay dealing with these issues: “In this essay we will explain why we think that for most organizations – businesses, nonprofits, and even churches – this is a time to urgently redesign our work.”¹⁵ See footnote; recommended reading!

What are you and your business / organization doing to regroup?

DON'T GIVE UP!

Why pursue BAM? God wants it, the world needs it and we are called to it! It is part of a greater godly plan which the Jews call *Tikkun Olam*: Repair the World.¹⁶

The industrialization, unbridled capitalism, the growth of dictatorial communism, the end of the cold war, and the greatest lift out of poverty in the history of mankind – which has happened through business. Significant Christian thinking has gone into analyzing these developments from Biblical and church related perspectives.

12. The context is the upheaval of the cold war, the collapse of communism, and a cataclysmic change for hundreds of millions of people. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html

13. Papal Economics: The Catholic Church on democratic Capitalism, by Maciej Zieba. 2013

14. <https://www.praxislabs.org/>

15. <https://journal.praxislabs.org/leading-beyond-the-blizzard-why-every-organization-is-now-a-startup-b7f32fb278ff>

16. Learn more about the concept, and how Israel applies it. <https://www.israel21c.org/opinion-tikkun-olam-israels-most-ancient-and-modern-invention/>. I also strongly recommend a lecture by Rabbi Sacks: "To heal a fractured world": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=seiAyrDXKkg>

We are living in the tension of the world that is and the world as it ought to be. Thus, we pray “may your Kingdom come, and may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”. *Tikkun Olam* means co-creating with God, bridging the gap of the world which is to a world as it ought to be. During and after the corona crisis we are to repair and heal people’s lives and improve the world, bringing hope and healing to the world, also through business.

As the markets plunge due to the corona crisis, let us learn from Jeremiah: “The prospects were not good. Actually really bad, even disastrous. The city was under siege, and everything pointed towards a defeat. People would be assaulted, hurt and killed; houses burnt down and the remaining citizens of Jerusalem would be deported to a foreign land. In this doomsday context the prophet Jeremiah was told by God to make an investment – in the doomed city!”

Sounds like bad advice, maybe like investing during the corona crisis. But God showed that the marketplace will be restored again one day, and God was engaged to that end, and He still is. See blog *God Restores the Market Place*.¹⁷

As we pursue BAM and *Tikkun Olam*, we mustn’t lose hope or give up as we are facing tough times. Emmanuel – God is with us.

**This article was published on <https://businessasmission.com/the-coronavirus-pandemic-and-bam-seven-things-we-can-do/> Published with permission from the author.*

17. <http://matstunehag.com/2016/11/22/god-restores-the-market-place/>



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COVID-19, TECHNOLOGY AND MISSION

John Edmiston

The impact of COVID-19 on missions has been vast, and of course it varies widely from context to context. Lockdowns have been very severe in many nations, and not so much in others, and some modes of ministry are more deeply affected. Some of these impacts include:

1. Church closures
2. Poverty and social stress due to lockdowns
3. Cancellation of mission trips
4. Homeschooling of missionary children (and all children)
5. Event cancellations
6. Finding new ways of doing home groups and bible studies
7. Challenges to fundraising
8. Missionaries unable to return home
9. Additional complexity in areas such as social programs and disaster response
10. A profound alteration in relationships among missionaries, pastors and churches

As these things have happened technology has risen up to fill the gap and meet the need. This article will address how technology can enable ministry continuity during COVID-19 and similar situations and how some of these technologies may become a permanent feature of Christian ministry.

Livestreaming, good teleconferencing and messaging apps, along with stable distance-learning platforms such as Moodle and Canvas have made workable virtual presence a possibility even on modest budget. Friends of mine are now using Zoom to hold three- and four-day training events in West Africa.

There is probably no going back to the way we were prior to COVID-19. People have woken up to how much easier it is to schedule leadership-training Zoom calls than to fly to Nicaragua, and no one wants to go back to six months of visa planning just to get everyone there.

Missionaries are now preaching in Creative Access nations via Facebook Live, at a fraction of the cost, and a thousandth of the hassle. No more renting rooms, getting permission and worrying about the security of

a foreigner.

The economics of missions meetings have changed for good. The days of twelve leaders, who already know each other well, flying to a city to discuss routine strategic planning, are hopefully gone forever. The thousands of dollars that such meetings cost is now probably being more wisely spent. We are finding much better ways to do things.

There is probably no going back to the way we were prior to COVID-19. People have woken up to how much easier it is to schedule leadership-training Zoom calls than to fly to Nicaragua, and no one wants to go back to six months of visa planning just to get everyone there.

Virtual presence technology has pretty much come of age. The fact that the entire commercial world now relies on telepresence and work-from-home means that companies are rushing to fix the obvious problems for their own sake. Things are only going to improve. I can live in rural Virginia with less-than-spectacular Internet and still run a large Zoom meeting.

We have a new reality that is not going away and we just have to learn it and learn it well! I started ministry in 1981 in the jungles of Papua New Guinea using kerosene lamps and old slide projectors. The world has changed since then. It has been permanently bent into a new shape. At a guess, we have another year of COVID-19 restrictions coming and going (I hope I am wrong) and by the end of that year we will have permanently altered our ways of doing things. Unless we can adapt we will be largely unheard.

I used to avoid webinars, now I schedule them. I have adapted. Everyone else is adapting as well. We are like seaside trees bent from a constant huge wind of change. Before I would fly internationally just to present a couple of one-hour talks. Now I would probably ask if I could present virtually. We have let go of the old anchors of habit. We have developed new habits, and those habits will now stay in place.

The fear of travel and of large gatherings that COVID-19 has generated will far outlast the disease. I doubt that too many people will be going back overseas to build schools for orphans. A whole new reality will be manifested during the next few years. Those who can find their voice using the new technologies will occupy mind-space and have influence.

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are the heart of missions and depend, to some extent, on regular face-to-face meetings. There is a considerable dilution of meaningful relationship when it has to be digital-only and there is no “breaking of bread”. Yes, we can still convey information and perhaps have a decent committee meeting but missions is far more than such meetings!

I sense that COVID-19 has made our relationships rather thin. We desperately try to keep in contact but without the adventure, the risk, the challenges and frustration of the so-called “real world” it comes across as rushed, bland and overly cognitive.

And the sheer mass of technology interferes with the flow of human interaction. We have all heard the conference call jokes about people having sound problems or having embarrassing moments. However, the reality is a persistent undercurrent of technological stress: “Is this going to work?”.

Technology creates anxiety and anxiety does not help relationships. Technology also exacerbates human differences. I cannot understand you because I have an old computer with low bandwidth and you have an expensive computer and incredible bandwidth which you take for granted and your presentation freezes up on my machine. On top of this is the utter frustration of the “I will call you back” WhatsApp call that goes well for two minutes and then drops out, over and over again. You end up shouting into the phone hoping that will make it work and the person on the other end occasionally reads this as you being angry.

We need to sometimes plan online “social time” where you just get in a Zoom room to watch good worship videos, tell stories and hear testimonies and just listen to each other’s hearts for a while.

Digital relationships require a lot more clarification of terms, especially cross-cultural ones. Making expectations clear, without causing offense, can be challenging and it is possible to come across as cold and heartless without the warmth of face-to-face interaction.

I sense that COVID-19 has brought about a shift in relationships and an increased use of local networks and resources. The “loss” of short-term missions teams and large conferences is, in many ways, beneficial. Asian ministries have been able to focus on their own work without spending a sizeable chunk of the year organizing for outside events.

The hiatus has also enabled us to break out of toxic rhythms and relationships. We now have valid alternatives, good options and reasonable excuses so we can say “No, we are not doing that anymore...” without hurting too many feelings or causing shame.

Relationships that were authentic and real when face-

to-face have remained authentic even when conducted using technology. However, I think we all still long to get back together again around a table of fellowship!

TECHNOLOGY

I have listed some of the major technological groups relevant to Christian ministry below:

Conferencing: Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Skype, WebEx, Free Conference Call, Blue Jeans, GoToMeeting, GoToWebinar – these are designed for a business environment, with a group, for a sustained period of time and include video as an option. Some missionaries may need to carefully research the security of their chosen conferencing app. I included Skype but it is now being downgraded into more of a messaging app.

Messaging: WhatsApp, Messenger, Signal, Telegram, Line, Hike, Discord, WeChat, Amino, Viber, Silent Phone, SnapChat, GroupMe, Yabb, Nimbuzz, Group Facetime, Skype, Google Chat (formerly Hangouts) has Google Rooms which are useful for educators. Messaging apps are aimed at personal or informal use but may, at times, have quite large groups, they can be used for multiple purposes and may or may not have a good video experience. Some missionaries may need to carefully research the security of their chosen messaging app.

Social Media: The main theme of all social media sites is being able to create an online community or “tribe” around yourself, your art, your products or your ideas. There is considerable overlap with messaging apps. Social media sites include: Facebook, Twitter, MeWe, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Parler, Tumblr, Reddit, Quora, Soundcloud and Flickr. Some of these are now shadow-banning Christian content and careful attention to response rates is needed. Do not waste time trying to perfect your Twitter account if no one seems to be responding. Social media may represent a security risk for those working in Creative Access Nations. For more on social media in world evangelism see: <https://www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2018-11/facebooking-the-unreached>

Project Management: Trello, Slack, Zoho, SmartSheet, Basecamp, Asana, Monday.com, and numerous others. These are designed for teams completing projects and are generally cloud-based.

Livestreaming: OBS (Open Broadcasting Software), Streamlabs OBS, Wirecast, ECamm Live, and many others – these take the content of your computer, cameras, mics etc. and display them on YouTube, Facebook Live or other streaming platforms. They can also link with Zoom and various conferencing platforms. Some, such as OBS, can be quite a challenge to master and may require a steep learning curve. Quick tip: OBS is also a powerful, free, screen-recording tool.

Christian Mobile Apps: These include Bible apps

such as YouVersion and Blue Letter Bible, Christian radio apps such as Praise and Worship Music radio, evangelistic apps such as H2BAC, worship apps, prayer apps, individual church and ministry mobile apps and collections of Christian audio books, sermons and reading material. These can keep the faith of individual believers alive and well in the absence of being able to attend a physical church. The Mobile Ministry Forum is a wonderful source of information and training on how to use mobile devices for ministry: <https://mobileministryforum.org/>

Keep it simple. Confusion is a terrible feeling and in my experience 80% of people are easily confused by technology once things reach a certain level. Navigation is of ultimate importance. Point people to where they should go. Make the pathway clear. Have short video tutorials, use screen shots. Watch for any misunderstanding and clarify immediately.

Learning Management Systems: these are the digital replacements for the brick-and-mortar classroom and include Moodle, Schoology, Blackboard, Canvas, Edmodo, Sakai and Ilias among numerous others. Costs range from free (Moodle) to hundreds of thousand of dollars per year to support a large seminary (Canvas). The development of H5P (HTML 5 interactive activities) for Moodle and other major systems has helped improve online learning and make it more engaging. Very careful research is required before selecting the LMS that you will use. Make sure that it has a good support community. Allan Carrington is a passionate educator and YWAM-er who has produced the amazing Pedagogy Wheel which will help you to deploy the correct technology for your desired learning outcomes. https://designingoutcomes.com/assets/PadWheelV4/PadWheel_Poster_V4.pdf you will also need to watch the video that explains it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbSVcjID58M>

Email Technologies: This group includes older and often forgotten but still incredibly useful technologies such as email, email autoresponders (for a free Christian email autoresponder try <http://www.cybermissions.org/olam/>), email lists, and email groups (e.g Google Groups). Email can be used to send out training materials in a sequential fashion, for an example of this see <https://globalchristians.org/email/> . Email campaigns are generally far

more effective than social media campaigns and email is still the preferred means of contact for most consumers. It is not either/or (email or social media) but both/and - here is a link about that fiery debate: <https://www.campaignmonitor.com/blog/email-marketing/2019/05/email-marketing-vs-social-media/>

Funds Transfer: Paypal, Xoom (not Zoom), MoneyGram, Western Union, Cash app, Venmo, Remitly, Apple Pay, Zelle, and numerous others. These vary greatly by country and may be regulated. Careful research is required.

Crowdfunding: Designed for project and mission trip fundraising and for causes. You publicize your project or cause, accept donations, and often give a small token product or incentive in return, Caution! Many do not support Christian work, especially missionary work, and can cancel on you. Others have huge hidden fees, especially the "Christian" ones. This scene changes constantly and at the moment I honestly cannot recommend any reliable crowdfunding platforms at all.

ADVICE FOR DEPLOYMENT OF TECHNOLOGY

Keep it simple. Confusion is a terrible feeling and in my experience 80% of people are easily confused by technology once things reach a certain level. Navigation is of ultimate importance. Point people to where they should go. Make the pathway clear. Have short video tutorials, use screen shots. Watch for any misunderstanding and clarify immediately.

- Minimize the number of apps that the end user has to deal with
- If possible keep everything inside one digital ecosystem
- Research everything first before selecting it and deploying it.
- Do NOT change the software on folks unless you absolutely have to.
- Be consistent and stick to set times. People are busy.
- Keep bandwidth in mind, be prepared to go to audio only if video will not work.
- Reliable technology (even if it is old) is always better than unreliable technology
- Be prepared to pay for reliability
- User experience varies from culture to culture, do not assume that the twenty-something California user experience is what will work in Ghana. Test your system with small groups among those you work with before going live and to scale.
- Give clear, repeated instructions, well in advance, there is no such thing as over-communicating.
- Have a log-in instructions document with screenshots
- Pre-register attendees for events, authenticate attendees if possible.
- If using complex software such as a learning

management system have a video on how to navigate it.

- Send a “we are on now” message 15 minutes beforehand.
- Mute attendees on entry, we do not want to hear their dogs barking.
- Use time zone planning software and calendar invites for iCal, Google Calendar, Outlook Calendar
- Asynchronous (time independent) events are popular e.g. “If you cannot make the webinar you will be able to download it and the PowerPoint slides later at...”
- Practice the presentation in advance
- If screen-sharing put all the PDFs, videos and resources in one folder on your Desktop so you can quickly grab them and things will run much more smoothly, do not scramble all over the place.
- Ten percent of people always have problems logging-in, make time for this in your schedule
- If you are the presenter have a good microphone with clear audio, I absolutely love my Blue Snowball microphone which is also good for conferencing and interviewing in the room, and is not fussy to use.
- Use proper lighting, ring lights are cheap and are very helpful
- People love email freebies to follow-up: “here is the e-book, PowerPoint, devotional etc.”
- Keep the chat active, refer to the chat quite often and encourage community and interaction
- PowerPoints with added audio, which are the saved as MP4 videos, are easy to create and play well on Zoom see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8JV3w4TOVw> for a short video tutorial
- With the above technology groups and precautions in mind, let’s look at how they can be deployed to assist with Christian ministry during COVID-19.

Activity	Technology Choices
Proclamation	<p>Livestreaming Internet video sites Blogs Podcasting Long-Form Social media Radio Broadcasting Satellite TV Internet TV Internet radio Mobile apps.</p> <p>Proclamation is one-way but an added chat functionality and the ability to respond to enquirers is important. Add email, or social media channels.</p>
Intercession	<p>Messaging apps Conferencing apps Email groups Facebook groups</p> <p>Are you taking prayer points from the public? If so, then you might want some sort of contact management system. Moderation is important to keep out sales pitches, conspiracy theories and worse.</p>

Worship	<p>Livestreaming Conferencing apps Low-Power FM radio to car stereo Renting drive-in theaters Pre-recording the service then putting it on YouTube. For a terrific guide on this try The Ultimate Coronavirus Guide For Churches (Western-focused but OK) https://churchmarketinguniversity.com/the-ultimate-coronavirus-guide-for-churches/ There is also an amazing offer from LifeChurch.tv, their free ChurchOnline platform, which is designed to take the hassle out of doing church online. https://churchonlineplatform.com/</p>
Bible Study	<p>Bible apps Christian mobile apps Social media groups (e.g. FB groups) Online videos Conferencing apps Messaging apps (WhatsApp groups) Ebooks Audio books</p> <p>Do you want synchronous (everyone on at the same time) or asynchronous (send out a devotional then have people respond during the day)?</p>
Instruction / Education	<p>Learning Management Systems Training videos Educational mobile apps e.g. the Moodle app Emails sent out by an autoresponder with serialized lessons. Ebooks Audio books</p> <p>For home-schooling - educational resource websites such as NearPod, BrainPop, CK-12, Kami and EdPuzzle</p>
Personal Discipleship	<p>Messaging apps Email correspondence (for encrypted email try protonmail.com) Ebooks + discussion Audio books + discussion Websites Christian mobile apps.</p> <p>Try to keep everything within one or two apps so that the disciple is not confused by technology. Have some way that they can ask you a question during a personal crisis and get a prompt response.</p>
Recruitment of Volunteers	<p>www.VolunteerMatch.org is excellent for finding volunteers. Evaluation by a video conference call Have standard orientation documents and videos. Be extremely clear about tasks, roles and expectations Give bite-sized instructions with tons of encouragement Free volunteer guide at https://globalchristians.org/volunteers/</p>
Conferences	<p>Conferencing apps Livestreaming Webinars</p> <p>Breaking a large conference down into serialized workshops by teleconferencing. The EMDC conference has done this.</p>
Fundraising	<p>Virtual fundraising events (Zoom or other conferencing app) Crowdfunding apps Social media e.g. Facebook donation button (security may be an issue) Email lists and newsletters</p>

Charitable giving	Funds transfer apps Check to see their fees, country they are working in, exchange rates and any legalities that you need to be aware of.
Coordinating a Team	Google docs Project planning software Messaging Conferencing Check security and make sure that only your team members can access the system that you have chosen to use. Good systems have multiple levels of permissions so people can only see the projects that they are actually assigned to.
Member Care and Counselling	Phone Messaging apps Teleconferencing Ebooks and support documentation for various common problems
Signing Documents, Signing Up	DocuSign Adobe Acrobat E-Sign (AdobeSign) Esign Genie Signup.com (Free event signup and volunteer signup) Recruitment, signing statements of belief, and contractual obligations may require e-signing and there are many new and helpful tools for this.

PUTTING THE TECHNOLOGY JIG-SAW PUZZLE TOGETHER

So much technology, so little time! Technology is not a core function in and of itself. Technology supports core functions. So, if your core function is running an orphanage then you need technology to help you do that! No more, and no less. If your core function is Bible teaching, then you need just the technology to teach the Scriptures well, to the largest possible audience that will listen.

Never select a technology just because it is “cool” and the flavor of the month. You are just wasting your precious time. Technology is there to enable you to do the will of the Lord. If God says “love one another” and you cannot physically go to them, then what is the next best thing and how can technology get that done for you? If God says “worship the Lord in holiness” and you cannot physically assemble at church, how can technology enable that core function to exist at the best possible level? Some questions to consider include:

- What is the goal?
- What are the tasks that lead to that goal?
- Which technologies will enable those tasks?
- Who will ensure that the technology works?
- Who do we need to train and who will train them?

So, if your goal is to: “Run a virtual urban ministry consultation focused on India in May 2021” the skills the organizing team might need to master might look like this:

1. Signup.com – to register attendees
2. Facebook event page
3. Create opt-in email list of invitees and double-

- check the email addresses
4. Google Docs spreadsheets for planning and the program
5. Use timeanddate.com to check on time zones for main groups of attendees
6. Form a WhatsApp group for quick planning conversations
7. Learn Zoom rooms – for conference breakout sessions
8. Learn OBS for livestreaming
9. Learn basic lighting and audio for livestreaming
10. Put together a basic technology package under \$150 USD that the main centers will be expected to have and source a bit of funding for it.
11. Teach presenters to do PowerPoint to Video presentations. It is difficult to do a stable one-hour video presentation from many locations. So you keep and play these PPT-to-videos centrally. The presenters can then be made co-hosts, and jump in and comment from their home country.
12. Teach presenters to send you their videos to you by using WeTransfer.com
13. Assemble all videos and materials centrally for broadcast from a powerful computer with excellent and stable Internet. The presenters can still be in their home countries.
14. Check to ensure main centers have adequate yet inexpensive technology webcams, ring lights, decent mics, acceptable Internet)
15. Have a technology rehearsal one month before the conference. Find the bugs and correct them.
16. Decide on how you are going to do worship. Get worship videos from India? Livestream?
17. How are you going to do prayer and intercession? How will people from different nations pray with each other? How can we create a feeling of spiritual intimacy?
18. How will you involve the kind of funders that would normally attend major conferences? How can you “beam them in” at the right moments?
19. How are you going to assemble consultation ideas on a virtual whiteboard (Zoom has this feature)? How will they be recorded? Will you record the Zoom sessions?
20. How will you disseminate the learnings from the consultation? Where will you host the videos? (Vimeo? Or on your own server with a password?)

You do not have to use the exact technologies above, for instance you can substitute Microsoft Teams for Zoom and so on. The point is that conference planning now involves technology planning. Everyone needs to be on the same technological page. You might need to even send out instructions to all attendees about what they will need to do to log-in, to present, and so on. This cannot be done at the last minute. All the graciousness in the world cannot overcome the deep annoyance that flows from constant (avoidable) glitches. You do not have to know all the technology

yourself but you need to ensure that someone on the team is addressing it and staying absolutely on top of it.

You need to consciously and deliberately decide how far you are going to go down the technology rabbit-hole. Some things, such as podcasting, have very deep learnings, you can absolutely tunnel in to perfecting a podcast, the audio, the timing and pacing, your own voice, scheduling, distribution etc. You can learn everything from Adobe Audition to using a mixer. This level of engagement with technology is necessary if it is somehow core to everything else you are doing. If the podcast is essential to your Bible-teaching ministry then by all means go ahead and do it properly and perfectly!

On the other hand, you might just need to use a particular technology a few times a year (such as a Facebook event page), in that case your decision should be "I will watch a ten-minute video on how to do this then just go for it and I do not care if it is perfect". You do not have to spend all your life down the technology rabbit-hole.

Part of the solution is delegation. There are people who have mastery of these things, whom you can recruit, while you focus on what you do best. That said, you need to know the terminology sufficiently well to be able to give concise and precise instructions and you should empower them with budgets and decision-making authority.

Above all, you need to realize that God Almighty has allowed these changes and that He is allowing many old modalities of ministry to permanently fail. This is going to be hard to adjust to. It is the end of most large brick-and-mortar only seminaries, the extinguishment of mega-conferences, the total cancellation of sending 500 kids to Mexico on a missions trip, and the list goes on. There is no going back, there is only going forward, and that going forward will involve learning how to do things with technology, whether we like it or not!



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ANNOUNCEMENT

Due to the current pandemic situation, we are announcing that the Asian Missions Advance will not be sending printed hard copies to your mailing addresses. But we are going to send e-copies of the Asian Missions Advance to your email addresses starting with issue 70. Thank you for your understanding!



Announcement on How to Purchase EWCmrd publications

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www.aladin.co.kr

<https://smartstore.naver.com/missionbooks>



PANDEMIC COVID 19: A MISSION CHALLENGE FOR CHRISTIANS IN PAKISTAN

Pervaiz Sultan

INTRODUCTION

This article looks at COVID -19 in the context of Pakistan with its effects on general public, raising the challenge for Christians with regard to their calling to serve people around and proclaim the gospel of Christ. February 27th 2020 was the day when the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Pakistan. Since then, along with the world, Pakistan has faced socio-economic, political and religious challenges at all levels of society. There were some clear warnings from national and international bodies, medical and other fields who raised issues of general awareness regarding the deadly virus for the precautions to take. There were also some technical advices given to the Government and private Institutions (religious and socio-political), and assistance was offered to fight the virus by international bodies like WHO and US-AID to reduce its consequences especially the death toll.

The biblical materials in their theological interpretation by the church and theologians carry clear mission mandate to proclaim the love of God in the midst of natural calamities and show solidarity with those who have been under any sort of pressure, difficulty and frustration. The gospel of Christ speaks to people in religious and secular situations. As we focus on the mission of the Church in this context, the reader may note that Pakistani Christian community is less than two percent of the population with limited resources to address such a large scale problems as COVID-19. Even so, the challenge was taken on board by many Christian individuals and groups at different levels, with tangible initiatives of showing solidarity with those affected by the situation directly or indirectly.

With regard to the direct effects of the deadly virus, poverty rise, loss and insecurity of jobs , frustration caused by lockdowns, loneliness and isolation, fear and stigma of the disease, and other related issues come under discussion. This raised challenge of pastoral care and immediate help as charity for daily food and shelter and long term development plans and in some case the notions of justice for the oppressed and the poor. For Christians, the chances of persecution have been on rise. The foremost difficulty was the risk for the charity workers and pastors to provide pastoral care in groups and to families which is most of the situation in Pakistan. Some of them were affected and died while engaging with people to help them.

The rate of the cases of COVID-19 was slowed down to great extent during summer months in

Pakistan. General public in this context topped taking precautionary measures. This resulted in the new cases being reported from the second week of October. The worry is that in the coming winter months with fog and smog around in Punjab especially, there may be a new wave of COVID-19 coming to affect general public. Poor women, children and elderly people are more open to the virus. The working class has no choice but to come out of homes to work on daily wages or as domestic workers. Children commute to schools in school vans which are overcrowded. It is very difficult to observe precautions but still the challenge is there to do so. Following are some highlights of the case of COVID-19 and Christian Mission in and with reference to Pakistan.

SITUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY UN & WHO

Demography of the COVID-19 for Pakistan

A study by the World Health Organization identified the following:

There were 113,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of 10th June, 2020. Two thousand two hundred people had died by that date with four provincial legislators. Pakistan has densely populated urban and rural conditions with limited medical facilities as the public health system is underdeveloped.

It was also reported that:

“While the poverty rate declined by 40 percent over the last two decades to 24.3% in 2015, the IMF projects a sharp reversal, with up to 40% of Pakistanis living below the poverty line in COVID-19’s viral wake”.

Regarding the school children, it is reported that 42 million children over the last five to six months have been out of school, while 17 million children under five were missing routine vaccinations. An additional 2.45 million people beyond an existing 40 million now suffer food insecurity.

A relief effort was suggested for the early months of the virus, what is needed now is a long term commitment with a visible pragmatism of care and love for those affected by the situation directly or indirectly.

Recommendations by UN & WHO

The UNs’ (Demography of COVID-19 Pakistan) five point strategic steps in this regard were about essential health service, social protection, protecting job, and

surge in fiscal and financial stimuli promoting social cohesion and investing in community-led resilience and response systems. This recommendation covers a wide national horizon, still its relevance is there for the churches and Christians in their institutional and pastoral set ups.

World Health Organization issued a document on 7th April 2020 as "Practical Considerations And Recommendations For Religious Leaders And Faith-Based Communities In The Context Of COVID-19". Its introductory background has two paragraphs relevant to Christian leadership for their mission and pastoral role.

"Religious leaders, faith-based organizations, and faith communities can play a major role in saving lives and reducing illness related to COVID-19. They are a primary source of support, comfort, guidance, and direct health care and social services, for the communities they serve. Religious leaders of faith-based organizations and communities of faith can share health information to protect their own members and wider communities, which may be more likely to be accepted than from other sources. They can provide pastoral and spiritual support during public health emergencies and other health challenges and can advocate for the needs of vulnerable populations.

By sharing clear, evidence-based steps to prevent COVID-19, religious-inspired institutions can promote helpful information, prevent and reduce fear and stigma, provide reassurance to people in their communities, and promote health-saving practices. Religious leaders are integrated into their communities through service and compassionate networks and are often able to reach the most vulnerable with assistance and health information and identify those most in need. Religious leaders are a critical link in the safety net for vulnerable people within their faith community and wider communities."

This has direct implications for Christian Churches in Pakistan who have access to the most vulnerable to show their concern both on humanitarian and faith levels. All major concerns of the document quoted above have Christian mission tone and is in the range of mission practices.

RESPONSE TO THE SITUATION

Majority population of Pakistan is adherents of Islam. They have a sense of *Haquq al abad*, obligation to the humans in need, and *sadaqa jaria*, charity for the poor and suffering people. So, many of them came up with visible charitable support individually and through large scale charitable organizations countrywide.

Awareness raising programs were sponsored on the media by private and government organizations which had their effect.

Christians' Response to COVID-19 in Pakistan

As stated above, because of their small number in social sector, Christians in Pakistan take time to come up with practical plans of ministry in such cases. Because of a conservative background, many restrict their involvement to sharing the message rather than action. It happened in this case. Others took time to plan and act deciding the scale of their involvement while saving themselves from the effects of the virus. It was so abrupt that many could not grasp the idea and notion of their role and still others were themselves affected in one way or the other, so they stayed passive.

COVID-19 has been described as God's judgment on the world, for sinful living by many Christians in the pews and in the pulpits. Biblical passages like Psalm 91 was used exhaustively, by many preachers from home group leaders, as well as from the mainline churches. Some raised the issue of righteousness and piety to escape the virus as plague coming from God while others put up a challenge to look to God for help and work more tangibly for those affected.

Support for the needy was raised by churches and individuals, some Church Institutions, and Christian NGOs with resources and staff.

Sound biblical teaching on the issue and practical solidarity was a challenge in many cases. Above all, fear among the pastors and church workers were high for their own safety. Some of them got the virus and died.

Church services were suspended for six to seven weeks. When they were opened under restrictions, there was a situation of staying behind either not accepting the situational facts or over simplifying the case of the pandemic. Because of cultural intimate style of shaking hands and embracing, the public church meetings and worship services need to be clearly checked on these matters (SOPs).

Mission Priorities Of The Church In The Case Of Pandemics In Pakistan: Conclusion And Recommendations

With reference to the appeal by the WHO and Mission Theology of a tangible service in the midst of natural calamities, following are some aspects of the challenge raised for Christian service in Pakistan in the wake of COVID 19.

Refuge: God is our refuge (Psalm 46:1, 11), Matthew 11:28-29). Those who dwell in the house of the most high God shall be protected, they will say, in him we will trust. (Psalm 91:1-2). Christian churches have a challenge to make its places a refuge for the people affected by the virus. There was a stage when space was needed set up camps and isolation wards for the patients. Some institutions opened their doors in this regard, but still more was needed.

Compassionate Service: COVID-19 in the beginning was taken a stigma. This was the time Christian pastors and workers would play their part to clear of the stigmatic side of the Virus. There were many such cases that because the stigmatic aspects were not reported and medical treatment was not taken and provided which ended up in deaths. There are records of lepers and people with other dreaded diseases who came to Jesus. Jesus cleared off the stigmatic side of the issue. Precautions are important, still compassionate service to those affected by the Virus is a challenge for those who worship and give glory to Jesus for his healing hand and glorious name.

Critical Link: Religious communities are strategic links between general public and Government, aid agencies and medical departments. In Jesus ministries disciples like Andrew and Philip acted like a strategic link introducing people to Jesus, asking for practical help or raising the issues of practical nature, e.g. how are we going to feed the crowd so large?

Pastoral Care: COVID-19 makes a visible case of pastoral care on a large scale for a long-term engagement. Counseling in the case of depravities and frustration is of utmost importance. Giving confidence and pointing out optimism in the midst of whole scale pessimism of losing jobs and continuous isolated situation of those who were not used to it in both urban and rural areas of the country is another practical commitment. The Lord Jesus highlighted the cases of Individuals and communities which stand a point of reference.

Giving: Sharing of resources, money and time are important. Tapping up local and international resources and using them wisely for the development and to uplift families and individuals in the context of COVID-19 are important areas to benefit children in their schooling, sick in their suffering and women in their plights of struggles to meet ends.

Advocacy: The Church in Pakistan has at many places raised their voice to uphold the case of COVID-19 as a crisis and emergency issue that needs attention with active plans to save humans from perishing. This invites us to keep the case of the deadly virus alive lest people ignore it and get trapped in a situation which is beyond their grips to sort out.



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