

# Reflection On Missionary Societies and Prospect for New Missionary Structures

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*"New Wine into New Wineskins"-Matthew 9:17*

Christianity has become a worldwide religion. More Christians live in non-Western regions such as Asia, Africa and South America than in Western regions, such as Europe or North America. A growing number of scholars say that the central axis of Christianity has moved from the northern hemisphere to the southern hemisphere. However, this does not mean that non-Western countries have become a Christendom like what the West did in the past. Many non-Western Christians still live in religious pluralism. Most Christians still exist as a minority in their society or country, struggling to survive in the shadow of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, or Communism. Also, the fact that the central axis of Christianity has moved to the southern hemisphere is only in terms of population because the dominant theologies and forms of Christianity as a whole are still very much Western. The Western Church still holds the leadership in the global Church.

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The structure or model of missionary societies were born in the political, economic, social, and cultural environment of the Western church. Missionary societies have made significant contributions to the spread of the Gospel as a leading force in the world missionary movement over the past two and a half centuries. Just as Western churches still hold the leadership of the global Church, the structure of

missionary societies has existed as a leading structure not only in Western countries but also among non-Western countries. The question is whether this mission structure is still suitable for today's global environment and for non-Western churches. Wilbert Shenk describes the challenges mission societies face today:

*"Structures cannot lead the way. They must be devised in response to a vision ... we will not find the way forward by concentrating on salvaging or reviving old structures. Indeed, we ought to be prepared to evaluate them honestly and take necessary decisions to terminate those that no longer serve a valid purpose. We should turn our energies to discerning what the shape of mission is to be in the changed world situation and find the wineskins that can hold the new wine of God's Spirit."*(Shenk 1999:185)

Structures for mission have only a secondary or derivative importance. They emerge from theological vision and the global context (Stanley 2003: 39). Therefore, the Church has to boldly discard an existing structure and find a new structure that is appropriate to new vision and new circumstances. The structure of missionary societies is not suitable for today's vision and circumstances. Missionary societies were born in a specific cultural context; they were created in the midst of the political, economic, and social circumstances of the West, and were deeply impacted by imperialism and the Enlightenment. Despite their contribution to the global mission movement, they are no longer relevant to the global Church, especially non-Western churches, in today's transformed environment. Therefore, the global Church, especially non-Western churches, must find new structures appropriate to their environment. This article will summarize the historical background of missionary societies and then point out the problems and limitations that they have. In particular, the article discusses the strategies and options that Asian churches can utilize for the world missionary movement.

## Rise and Development of Missionary Societies

According to Stephen B. Bevans and Rogers P. Schroeder, there are three events that ignited the Protestant missionary movement in the 19th century: 1) the Great Awakening that began in the Dutch Reformed Church and spread to North America between 1726 and 1760; 2) the birth of Methodism

through Wesley Brothers in 1735; and 3) the Evangelical Revival in England and the Second Great Awakening in America between 1787 and 1825. One of the most important developments of these dynamic revival movements is the creation of missionary societies (Bevans and Schroeder 2008:209-210).

David Bosch saw "Voluntarism" as the key word for missionary societies. Those people moved by the Great Awakening could not sit back and wait for organized churches to send them out. These individual Christians, often belonging to different churches, came together for world mission (Bosch 2003: 280). Therefore, these missionary societies are also called Voluntary Societies because they arose voluntarily by individual Christians outside of the churches. This model of missionary societies, according to Andrew Walls, is a "fortunate subversion" of the traditional structure (Walls 2007 :241), which became the leading model of Protestant missions from the 19th century to the present day. Missionary societies have had a tremendous impact on the transformation of Christianity, specifically Western Christianity.

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According to Andrew Walls, the first missionary societies in the modern sense arose among in sober High Church congregations in London at the end of the 17th century (Walls 2007:242). However, many missiologists see the full-fledged start of modern missionary organizations around 1792, the year William Carey published a pamphlet titled 'An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to use as means for the Conversion of the Heathen' (Walls 2007:243; Pierson 2009:201). At that time, several churches, including the Baptist Church to which Carey belonged, were following radical Calvinism. These churches believed that God would deliver people by his own means, without the use of human means or structures. Therefore, Carey's 'obligations to use the means' came out as a refutation of these ideas at the time. The 'obligations to use the means' implies that we must use the means available and appropriate to fulfill the great commission God has given to Christians.

For Carey, the first of the "means" is united prayer. Prayer may be the only thing that Christians of all denominations can do together unconditionally. But

we must not leave out the use of means to obtain what we pray for (Walls 2007:245). As a result, 'use of means' meant 'establishing missionary societies' (Pierson 2009:201). Under Carey's influence, numerous missionary societies were organized, and by 1825, about 30 missionary societies were organized in England, Europe and America (Shenk 1999:62).

Carey wanted to learn the use of these means from trading companies. Carey's Baptist Society adopted a similar structure to these companies (Pierson 2009:201). Therefore, missionary societies have a pragmatic stance in their origins. Similar to what any business would do, mission societies set up committees, gather information, strategize, advertise, raise money, find, train and send out missionaries, and chart the results of their work.

On the other hand, it was the Enlightenment and the French Revolution that greatly influenced the formation of missionary societies. They brought about the social and political egalitarianism of democracy. Now mission moved beyond the monopoly of the institutional churches and clergies to the individual laity. Also, the Enlightenment's optimistic view of humanity supported the motivation to change the world at home and abroad (Bevans and Schroeder 2008:212). Thus, missionary societies opened the door for the participation of the laity, and over time the laity played important and meaningful roles. Professionals in medicine and other fields also took the positions of executives, which were previously thought to be the positions of pastors and theologians. After that, women also took up leadership positions (Walls 2007:250). Rufus Anderson described those involved in missionary societies as follows:

*...what we see in Missionary, Bibles, Tract and other kindred societies, not restricted to ecclesiastics, nor to any one profession, but combining all classes, embracing the masses of the people; and all free, open, and responsible...It is the contributors of the funds, who the real association....the individuals, churches, congregations, who freely act together, through such agencies for an object of common interest...This protestant form of association-free, open, responsible, embracing all classes, both sexes, all ages, the masses of the people-is peculiar to modern times, and almost to our age. (Walls 2007:242)*

As such, missionary organizations based their presence in the general public and developed ways to gain local involvement and support. The general public, people of ordinary status and income, became supporters for foreign ministries.

The founding of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 by Carey became the archetype and the standard missionary model for mission thereafter. To name a few, the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1795, the Scottish Missionary Society in 1796, the Netherland Missionary Society in 1797, the Church Missionary Society in 1799, the British and Foreign Missionary Society in 1804, American Board of Commissioners

for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in 1810, the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society in 1814, the Basel Mission in 1816, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in 1817-1818, the Danish Missionary Society in 1821, the Berlin Missionary Society in 1824, the Rhenish Missionary Society in 1828, the Swedish Missionary Society in 1835, and the North German Missionary Society in 1836, are examples of some of these missionary societies (Bevans and Schroeder 2008:212).

Bosch described the rise and development of missionary societies as follows.

*Thus, by the end of the 18th century, missionary societies exploded in traditionally Protestant countries such as Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, and the United States. In the 1880s, with the advent of the heyday of imperialism, a second wave of new missionary societies clearly arose; once again involving the entire Protestant world evidence; once again the entire Protestant world was involved, but by now it was clear that the United States was edging its way ahead of others, not only in the numbers of missionaries sent abroad but also in the number of new societies formed. The end of World War II saw another wave of missions, with a total of 81 missionary societies established in North America before 1900. Over the next 40 years, 147 in the period 1900-1939; 83 in the period 1940-1949; 113 more in the period 1950-1959; 132 missions in the period 1960-1969; and during the next 10 year, 150 new mission agencies were established (Bosch 2003:327).*

Meanwhile, a multitude of new missionary societies were established in the late 19th century. Many of them belonging to a new category called 'Faith Missions', and the pioneer and prototype of which was the China Inland Mission. These missions were not the start of a completely new form, but rather built upon existing voluntary missionary societies (Walls 2007:252). They continued the revolutionary effects of the missionary societies on the Church by assisting its de-clericalization, providing new scope for women's energies and gifts, and adding an international dimension which hardly any of the churches could achieve. (252-253). Therefore, the Church received continuous influence from missionary societies, and changed in its structure and contents in a different way than before.

In Korea alone, the number of missionary societies is increasing year by year. Currently, there are 43 denominational missionary societies and 185 non-denominational missionary societies as members of the Korea World Mission Council (Korea World Mission Council 2023a: Web). In 2022, there were 23,596 Korean missionaries in 169 countries. Among them, 22,204 long-term missionaries and 482 short-term missionaries belonging only to Korean missionary societies (cupnews: web).

At least in the beginning, missionary societies

were not denominationally exclusive or confessional. Even denominational societies like the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) were primarily seen as pragmatic instrument for evangelizing to other people. This outlook was shared with the founders of such interdenominational or non-denominational missionary societies as the London Missionary Society (LMS), the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), and the Basel Mission. These dynamics shaped the ecumenical movement within Protestantism (Bevans and Schroeder 2008:212). But today's missionary societies are diverse. Some are denominational, while some are inter-denominational. Some are non-denominational, and some are even anti-denominational. Regardless of the background and characteristics of missionary societies, their influence on the modern missionary movement has been great.

### Missionary Societies and Imperialism

It is difficult to deny that the missionary movement of the Western Church grew along with the colonial expansion of Western Europe and America. It is extremely difficult to imagine that missionary activity in non-Western countries were carried out by evangelism itself, rejecting the political and economic power of the West itself. Although some missionaries tried to reject the benefits of colonialism, the overall trend was that the Western churches took advantage of colonialism in their missions. Because of the enormous political power and wealth of Europe and the United States, missionary activities in non-Western countries, except for some countries such as China, could be actively carried out.

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Jonathan Bonk argues that the strategies and results of Western Christian missionary activities over the past 200 years are incomprehensible apart from the vast economic and material superiority missionaries enjoyed over the vast majority of people in these areas generally called as 'mission fields' (Bonk 2006:4). As a missionary who has worked in Ethiopia, the United States, and Thailand for the past 30 years, I have witnessed that the great economic power of Western

missionaries is still the biggest foundation for their missionary works.

For Ludwig Rutti, the entire modern missionary enterprise is so polluted by its origins in and close association with Western colonialism that it is irredeemable (Bosch 2003:518). The kiss between mission and imperialism may have been sweet for a moment, but it brought bitter results. With the fall of colonialism, Christianity was rejected in many places. In the case of China, when the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949, all foreign missionaries were expelled, because the Chinese Communist Party suspected that imperialism was behind the missionaries' activities. China still maintains a suspicious eye toward missionaries.

Criticism against missionaries also emerged from churches in the mission fields. In 1971, Kenyan leader, John Gatu criticized that the financial support of Western missionaries was preventing the self-reliance and self-government of local churches, insisting that the time had come for foreign missionaries to withdraw from the Third World, and that the churches in the Third World should be allowed to find their identity, and that continuing the current missionary movement was an obstacle to the identity of local churches (Gatu 1971:4). This missionary moratorium was extended from Kenya to other continents. Bosch records the argument made by Emerito Nacpil as follows:

*Speaking at a consultation in Kuala Lumpur in February, 1971, Emerito Nacpil (1971:78) depicts mission as "a symbol of the universality of Western imperialism among the rising generations of the Third World". In the missionary, the people of Asia do not see the face of the suffering Christ but a benevolent monster. So, he concludes, "The present structure of modern mission is dead. And the first thing we ought to do is to eulogize it and then bury it". Mission appears to be the greatest enemy of the gospel. Indeed, "the most missionary service a missionary under the present system can do today to Asia is to go home!" (Bosch 2003: 518).*

The missionary moratorium is being requested directly or indirectly from local church leaders to Korean missionaries as well. Philippine Presbyterian churches' pastors also requested that Korean missionaries leave. The head of one of the ethnic groups where Christianity was the most active in Myanmar once expressed to me personally that it may be better for Korean missionaries to leave for the Myanmar Church, and talked about some of the problems caused by Korean missionaries.

Even now, missionary societies and their missionaries from the West are engaged in missionary activities with abundant materials and advanced technology, and under the influence and protection of the Western governments. For example, I felt the strength of the US government and missionary societies based in the United States in responding to

the Ebola outbreak in Liberia. Ebola began to attract worldwide attention when two missionaries working at a mission hospital in Liberia were exposed to the disease. One of these two was a doctor belonging to the Samaritan's Purse (<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/article/samaritans-purse-responds-to-ebola-outbreaks-in-africa/#>), who was ministering at the hospital established by SIM, and the other was a SIM missionary. I became aware of this incident from an internal communication within the SIM community before it became widely known to the world. The two were evacuated by a private jet to the United States, where they were treated in a completely isolated hospital and freed from this dreaded disease. In the process of evacuating them, leaders from the SIM International office and the US office conducted close consultations with the US government. It is not known who paid for the cost of their transportation and treatment, but it is no secret that it must have been astronomical. While I paid homage to such a quick turnaround, I could not ignore the question that comes from a corner of my heart. Would this have been possible if these were Korean missionaries who did not belong to international mission societies? What if they were missionaries from the Philippines, or if they were missionaries from Ghana, or other countries in Africa? Could they have received this kind of help? Furthermore, what happened to the Christians in the local churches who contracted Ebola? The Ebola incident made me feel once again the magnitude of the power of Western-oriented mission societies. It is difficult for non-Western missionaries, let alone local church members, to expect such protection and help.

## Missionary Societies and the Enlightenment

The Enlightenment has had a great influence on the Western church and missionary movements. Bosch asserts that the entire Western missionary movement of the past three centuries emerged from the matrix of the Enlightenment (Bosch 2003:344). It can hardly be denied that the spirit of enterprise and initiative spawned by the Enlightenment played an important role first in the genesis of the idea of missionary societies and then in their amazing proliferation (327-328). The Enlightenment values human reason and focuses on human abilities and achievements along with the development of science. The Enlightenment forced the Church to think and act pragmatically. Jehu Hanciles argues that the Enlightenment's use of human powers and human means led to the birth of missionary societies and characterized missionary work.

*Among other things, of course, the emphasis in this orientation would lead to the birth of a plethora of voluntary societies and associations and provided a new framework for Christian mission. This emphasis on human initiative, on human ingenuity, on human skill – not to mention the full deployment of resources,*

*including the latest technologies for propagation of the gospel – remains a major hallmark of the western missionary enterprise to this day* (Hanciles 2006:12)

The churches before William Carey were passive in mission. For them, mission was purely in the hands of God. However, the Enlightenment urged Christians to pay attention to human abilities and to use the means possible in mission. Therefore, the missionary societies that began in earnest with Carey sought to use many methods and techniques that were considered effective in spreading the Gospel. Missionary societies borrowed their strategies and methods from common corporations, not from the Bible or church history. Numbers, records and statistics are important. They do not hesitate to use the latest technology. They use marketing techniques and sophisticated publicity to arouse public interest. Bosch explains the missionary movement of the 19th century imbued with pragmatism by citing the writings of several scholars as follows.

*A charter and battle plan for Christianity's final conquest of the world were called for. It was not to be achieved by means of miracles, but by means of "industry and zeal". The "principles of reason" and the "dictates of common sense" blended happily with the "directions of scripture" and the "obvious designs of providence". The building of the kingdom of God had become much a matter of technique and program as it was of conversion and religious piety. The gospel was viewed as an instrument for producing a vital transformation in the total human situation, a "weapon" that alleviated woes, a "divine medicament" and "antidote", a "remedy" and "appointed means of civilizing the heathen". The gospel was a "tool", along with all the many new tools and implements Western technology was beginning to invent: It joined the three great gods of the modern era- science, technology, and industrialization and was harnessed with them to serve the spread of the gospel and of Christian values.* (Bosch 2003:335-336).

Missionary organizations are criticized for being pragmatic in their origin and enterprise. Efforts to spread the Gospel by all available means often reduce the nature of evangelism.

One way of achieving manageability is precisely to reduce reality to an understandable picture and then to protect missionary action as a response to a problem that has been described in quantitative form. Missionary action is reduced to a linear task that is translated into logical steps to be followed in a process of management by objectives, in the same way in which the evangelistic task is reduced to a process that can be carried on following marketing principles. (Escobar 2001:109).

Samuel Escobar criticizes pragmatism within missionary societies, which statistically analyze the results of missionaries' activities and presents them graphically and is the result of being influenced

by the concept of market economy and eventually surrendering to the spirit of this age. (Escobar 2001:109-110). In fact, much of missionary work cannot be reduced to statistics. They cannot be measured or reduced to numbers. In addition, success or failure revealed by statistics can have a completely different meaning in the dimension of deep spiritual warfare.

As missionary societies grew, they became more and more like a corporation, and efficiency and professionalism became important.

*Such increases in scale and institutional commitment appeared to require increasing dependence on secular models of corporate organization. By the 1920s, the denominational missionary societies, especially in the USA, had become big business, relying explicitly on the methods of secular corporations to manage the whole complex enterprise. Business efficiency and specialist technical expertise became increasingly important, and as they did so the power of the home boards over field policy increased.* (Stanlry 2003:42).

In this way, efficiency and professionalism are also emphasized in the mission field, and local churches that have difficulty handling these things have no choice but to continue to be subordinate to a missionary society.

On the other hand, the purpose of missionary societies, both old and new, was essentially to spread the Gospel. Theoretically, once a church is established, the mission should go elsewhere. In practice, however, even as new churches emerged, the society remained, serving as a natural channel of communication, through which flowed aid, personnel, money, materials and technical expertise (Walls 2007:253). Even though the missionary society's unique role was fulfilled, it remained on the ground, making the local churches continue to depend on them. In the end, the relationship between the local church and the missionary society has changed to a relationship of giving and receiving finances. Instead of a relationship of giving and receiving mutual help, it has become a relationship in which one side leads the other. Missionaries' money came to exercise power, and local churches were influenced by missionaries not only financially, but also in all areas of the church.

Now, as missionary societies are institutionalized and the system is bloated, societies that are desperate to maintain themselves are emerging. When the economic power of countries sending missionaries becomes difficult and interest in missions decreases, missionary societies face financial difficulties. Also, in the structure of the current missionary society, it costs a lot to keep missionaries in the field and continue ministries through them. In poor non-Western countries, a missionary family is using the money that several local families can live on. As Hanciles puts it, "In the non-Western world, missionaries are "kings and queens". They can have "3-story houses with maids" (Hanciles 2006:14).

The great century of Protestant missions began with

William Carey and the rise of missionary societies. The contributions made by mission societies cannot be understated. One of the reasons why today's Christianity has spread worldwide is because of the dedication and sacrifice of countless missionaries and missionary societies. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the many harms caused by mission societies and missionaries just because we have seen many successes. We should quickly break away from the idol of enlightenment, which values human reason and technology, and the pragmatism derived from it.

### Missionary Societies and Churches

Lesslie Newbigin writes, the New Testament knows only one missionary agency—that is the Church. But the Eighteenth Century saw the birth of missionary societies that could not claim to be churches (Newbigin 1960:10). Despite the existence of the church, there is a question, 'Is there a biblical basis for missionary societies to carry out world missions?' Ralph Winter used the words sodality and modality to support the existence of missionary societies, and Paul Pierson also supports Winter's position. On the other hand, Wilbert Shenk sees no direct acknowledgment or precedent for missionary societies in the Bible (Shenk 1999:179). Peter Cotterell is urging churches to put an end to the unbiblical practice of handing over missions to missionary societies and put churches in the forefront. He argues that if there is no ground in the New Testament for a concept of mission apart from the church, then a missionary society has no permanent validity. If and where the church becomes structured for mission, then the mission society as a non-church sodality becomes anomalous (Cotterell 1981:156).

I am convinced that the Church must be a missionary in itself and should be the subject of mission, but at the same time, I believe that if the Church neglects the mission given to it, God will create a movement on the outskirts of the Church or among the minority. Even under the circumstances when missionary societies began, those with the best theology and clergy were often enemies of the missionary movement. Some have argued that the Great Commission was fulfilled in the time of the apostles, since apostleship occurred once and the Lord's commandment "go into all the world" was given only to the apostles. Therefore, individual missionary work is presumptuous and carnal, and it is wrong to dare to take up the apostleship for oneself (Walls 2007:246). On the other hand, Carey saw the Lord's mandate as given to all Christians. He thought that the general structure of the Church at the time could not handle the Lord's mandate and organized a missionary society as 'use of means'.

While missionary societies arose when the Church was not interested in missions, the emergence of missionary societies brought about a dualism of church and missionary organizations in mission.

Mission is no longer the exclusive property of the Church. Furthermore, mission was not regarded as the essence of the Church. Mission societies became the main actors of missions, and churches became satisfied with a passive role of supporting missions. Missions have come to be carried out as a specialized work of missionary societies regardless of the active participation of churches. Nevertheless, it is now time to bring this undesirable and unique situation back to normal.

It is no longer an era where missions can be the exclusive property of missionaries or mission societies. Now we need to return the word "missions" to the Church and the word "missionaries" to the general congregation. There was a time when going out as a missionary was considered a sacrifice of life, and there was a time when uniquely dedicated people had to go through special training. But now the world is so close and interconnected that it can be considered as one place. The world is increasingly becoming a political or economic bloc without borders. With the development of transportation, it is possible to go anywhere in the world within a day. Additionally, the number of overseas workers and immigrants along with international students is increasing remarkably. Therefore, now we must return the great commission of the Lord to make disciples of all nations to all believers and encourage them to live a missionary life in any way. Each Christian is essentially a missionary, and mission is the essence of the Church. Worldwide evangelization is still far away, even if the current number of missionaries will continue to work in the next few centuries. Only when all Christians around the world participate in this missionary movement will worldwide evangelization be possible in human history.

It is encouraging that churches today are increasingly engaging in independent missionary activities rather than through missionary societies. Nevertheless, it is still recommended that churches carry out missionary activities through missionary societies, concerned about the lack of missionary 'professionalism' of churches. Most of the professionalism here refers to the business management expertise within mission societies. It is questionable how much this expertise in business management has contributed to the missionary movement. This effort by the Church to lead missions is to shake off business management expertise in missions, and to create an era in which all members of the Church can fully participate in missions and do missions according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, not human wisdom and power.

The majority of church members feel that they have no direct relationship to mission. Even church leaders see mission simply as one part of the church's ministries. This is because so far, the Church has not led the missions, but the missionary societies have led the missions. I believe in giving missions back to the Church, missions must be thoroughly church-centered. The Church should go beyond

simply supporting missionaries and actively send out missionaries and actively participate in missionary work. This is the missionary pattern and model shown in the New Testament.

### **Missionary Societies and Churches on the Mission Fields**

Mission in the Western Church has been identified with the expansion of their denomination. Independent mission societies have also established churches or denominations of the type they support, although not as seriously as denominational missionary societies. This denominationalism is one of the chronic problems of Korean missions. Presbyterian missionaries working in Africa have established Presbyterian seminaries to establish a Presbyterian denomination in Africa. Whenever I think about African culture, I am not sure if the Presbyterian government system is really suitable for Africa. If we set up a school named Reformed Seminary in Ethiopia, I cannot imagine what Ethiopian would accept that word as a reformation from something in their historical past. What is clear is that if anyone wants to start this school, he is going to transplant his Reformed theology to Ethiopia.

The Korean Church, without even realizing it, has been taking the local Christians as "Babylonian Captivity" (Bosch 2003:456). Local Christians are deprived of the right to read the Bible, judge, and act according to the light of the Holy Spirit. The Korean Church, which failed in self-theologizing, has hindered the efforts of the locals to establish their own theology. We must encourage the local churches themselves to recover the richness of their own cultural heritage (Ramachandra 1996:270) and to "make Christianity the most culturally translated, without compromising its essential characters", and therefore most truly global, to feel at home in all cultural contexts (Bediako 2004:32).

Problems were also revealed in the social work that missionaries do to improve the lives of local people. I have often found missionaries who do not trust the locals hired by the missionaries, and also regard their morals and work skills as low. Also, it is not uncommon for missionaries' business projects to turn out to be failures. This is because the missionaries thought and conducted business at the standard they were familiar with, without considering the economic and social environment of the mission field. As Merle Davis notes, the Western church has made the mistake of dressing the Eastern David in Saul's armor and putting Saul's sword in his hand (Bosch 2003:295). When I worked among Gumuz people in Ethiopia, I witnessed the relief activities of JAICA, Japan International Cooperation Association. JAICA provided state-of-the-art equipment to a local government office where Ethiopia's Gumuz lived. They installed a state-of-the-art computer system at a time where electricity ran on solar power. Gumuz

officials left these high-tech gadgets in the dust for years to come. At that time, few Gumuz people could count to more than ten. Even though the officials were better educated than the general public, they were also people who had no experience with computers, so they could not use computers at all. Missionaries, to varying degrees, often do such absurd things. They are running a business that goes beyond the economic self-sufficiency of the local people and ignores the social development process.

The churches on the mission fields were, of course, churches. However, in the eyes of the missionaries, they were churches of a lower status than Western churches. They need compassionate control and guidance, just like children who do not age. In the end, churches on the mission fields could not get out of the helplessness such that they could not move without the financial support of Western churches. In the end, the mission of the Western church was one-way. There was a country that sent missionaries and a country that received them. One side was the total giver, and the other side was the total receiver. As such, missionary societies have been relying on the political power and great wealth of the West for missionary work, so churches in politically weak and economically poor countries have no choice but to receive them unilaterally. Even though the church on the mission field grew and became experienced, it was still forced to be subordinated to the Western church economically.

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The result of such unilateral mission based on material is negative. Bosch writes, "Many of the grand institutions erected by missionary societies, often at great cost and with tremendous dedication - hospitals, schools, colleges, printing houses and the like-have turned out to be impediments rather than assets to the life and growth of the younger churches." (Bosch 2003:365). Despite the movement to reflect on and correct these mistakes of missionaries, many Korean missionaries are still focusing on building

huge institutions unilaterally using materials as the main means of missionary work. Even if they have good intentions, they cannot escape responsibility for the negative influence they will have on churches on the mission field. The Church is indeed not only the recipient of God's merciful grace but sometimes also of His wrath. Indeed, in many parts of the world, including its traditional home base, the Christian mission appears to be the object not of God's grace and blessing, but of God's judgment (Bosch 2003:365). I believe Korean missionary societies should be able to expose the harm that Korean missionaries have done to the mission field. The future of Korean missions will be bright when we reflect on the failures of Korean missionaries and take them as lessons from history. Just as the Church must always be reformed, missions must always be reformed.

The Korean Church is no longer a church that only sends missionaries. Now it has become a church that must receive missionaries. The Korean Church has revealed its helplessness beyond its ability to evangelize within Korean society. The Korean Church now needs help from other non-Western churches. Non-Western churches must learn how to practice discipleship and engage in missions in the midst of poverty and persecution. When I was ministering in Ethiopia, I owed countless spiritual debts to my Ethiopian brothers. I learned aspects of faith that are difficult to find in Korean churches. The depth of faith tempered in their poverty and persecution was not something I could easily follow.

Looking at the short-term mission teams coming from Korea, I wondered what they could give to the Ethiopian church. Rather, I thought that the short-term mission teams of the Ethiopian Church should go to Korea. The only reason Korean short-term mission teams were able to come to Ethiopia was by no means because their spirituality was better than that of Ethiopian Christians. Just because Ethiopia is poorer than Korea, and they were able to afford the travel expenses, which was equivalent to a few years' salary of an ordinary Ethiopian Christian, they regarded Ethiopia as a mission field and came for short-term missions.

The pastor of the largest church by membership in London is from Nigeria. The pastor of the largest church in Europe is also Nigerian. The Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations Church in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, was started by Sunday Adelaja from Nigeria who came to study in the former Soviet Union. Within 10 years of its establishment, 23,000 members had gathered. Under the guidance of Pastor Adelaja, numerous sister churches were established in 35 countries including Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, USA, India and the United Arab Emirates. This church goes beyond simple evangelism and is carrying out various ministries such as Stephania Soup Kitchens for the homeless and poor and Love Rehabilitation Center for drug addicts (The Embassy of God 2015: Web). There may come a time

in the future when Korea needs an African pastor. There is no longer a separate region for sending and receiving missionaries. Now, everywhere is a missionary field.

### Mission from Power and Mission from Weakness

The fatal flaw of missionary societies is that, in their origins and work, whether they are supported by money, materials, and or technology, they are fundamentally power-based. If the power is immediately removed from missionary societies, it is doubtful how long they will last. Missionary societies were secretly associated with imperialism and have always been influenced by the Enlightenment. Imperialism and the Enlightenment fundamentally worship human power. In it, human pragmatic thinking is sufficient, but in its existence and action, it lacks the confession of human weakness to fear God and rely entirely on God.

We should pay attention to the way Jesus brought God's reign to the earth.

*Certainly the "powers of the kingdom" are manifest in him. He does mighty works, which to eyes of faith are signs of the presence of the reign of God (Luke 11:14-22). Yet, paradoxically, his calling is to the way of suffering, rejection, and death – to the way of the cross. He bears witness to the presence of the reign of God not by overpowering the forces of evil, but by taking their full weight upon himself. Yet it is in that seeming defeat that victory is won. (Newbigin 1995:34-35).*

Jesus' missionary method was weakness. God's power is revealed in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Our weaknesses, not our strengths, should be our missionary method.

It is difficult to deny that Korean church missions have also been carried out by relying on Korea's diplomatic and economic strength. Korea is a country that belongs to the top of the diplomatic and economic power among non-Western countries. Also, the Korean Church showed unmatched growth in membership and finances. Korean missions have been doing missions like what Western missionaries did in the past based on the power of the Korean Church. Although it cannot be said that the Korean Church took advantage of imperialism or colonialism like the Western churches in the past, it followed the pattern of Western churches.

When I visit Asian countries, I hear voices of concern about Korean missionaries. Many Korean missionaries have been doing project-oriented missions based on finances so far, but there is a concern about how to continue missions if the growth of the Korean Church slows down and finances shrink.

Originally, the mission of the Korean Church was a mission out of weakness. The Korean Church has participated in the missionary movement from its beginning. In 1913, the Korean Presbyterian Church

sent three pastors as missionaries to Shandong Province in China. Missionaries went from a poor country to a rich country, from a weak country to a strong country, from an uncivilized country to a civilized country, and from a country with a young Christian history to a country with an old one.

*The most important thing in the Korean church mission is the Shandong Province mission in China. Because this was the first mission only targeting the locals. In fact, this was the first mission to Asia by Asians to other Asians since apostolic times. Although Korea was an extremely poor and powerless country, the Korean church sent a message to the world that even the young, poor, and powerless non-Western churches could bear the heavy missionary responsibility* (Park 2011:156-157).

Today's missionary environment has many similarities to that of the Jerusalem church when it began its missionary movement. Just as the early Christians who were weak politically, economically, and socially at the time they went out as missionaries to various regions of the mighty Roman Empire, Christians from poor countries in Asia, Africa, and South America go out with a missionary purpose to rich countries in Europe and North America. They are very weak compared to the people they target for preaching the Gospel. Essentially, since they are weak, they have no choice but to do missions out of weakness.

### Pursuing New Mission Models

A mission structure or model must be deeply relevant "with us today." Any mission structure or model must be discarded if it does not fit our current conditions and the situation and field in which we find ourselves. I have a fundamental question about whether the structure of mission societies that began with William Carey is still applicable to us today. Wilbert Schenk says that groups and institutions are products of the specific historical and socio-political circumstances in which they were created (Shenk 1999:177). This suggests that mission societies were also created in the context of a particular era. Andrew Walls asserts that missionary societies arose in a particular period of Western social, political and economic development and were shaped by that period (Walls 2007: 253). Although it is acknowledged that mission societies have made great contributions to the world missionary movement within God's plan in the past 200 years or more, I do not think they will continue to be suitable for the world missionary movement in the future. Now is the time for churches, not only non-Western ones, but also Western churches, to start seriously thinking about finding structures other than the structure of missionary societies. The situation of churches today is completely different from the situation of churches in England or America in the past. The present world

is also distinctly different from the world where Western missionaries were active in the past. We must find missionary structures that suit the circumstances around us. As Bosch famously said, "Transforming mission means both that mission is to be understood as an activity that transforms reality and that there is a constant need for mission itself to be transformed." (Bosch 2003:511).

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If the missionary society structure has to be folded, what kind of structure can be used as an alternative? Can there really be a structure that can replace the missionary society model? I believe above all that the Holy Spirit will lead the missionary movement. Arthur Glasser said that the Holy Spirit will show us new structures suitable for a new political, economic, and social era.

*The creativity of the Holy Spirit will continue to match the political, economic, and sociological changes taking place in the world. New mission structures and support patterns will emerge, but they will no longer be Western-dominated. Missionaries from the two-thirds world will increasingly occupy the center of the stage. Indeed, the internationalization of the missionary movement is "the great new fact of our time." Evangelicals show every evidence of growing in numbers and maturity as we approach A.D. 2000. But their response to the challenges of the days ahead means that tomorrow's missionary obedience will hardly resemble what we see around us today* (Glasser

1989:7).

On the other hand, can there be one missionary structure that the worldwide church can follow? Bosch emphasizes "mission in many modes" in the last chapter of his book "Transforming Mission" (Bosch 2003:511). I do not believe that the worldwide church need not and cannot have a single missionary structure. This is because the environment of the world is very diverse and complex, and change is unimaginably rapid. And the situation is different for each church in each country. Even if the Vietnamese church wants to do missions, it is difficult to use the missionary structure of the Korean church. This is because Vietnamese churches are still under the control of communism, and their size and economic power are quite different from those of Korean churches. Local churches in each country must develop their own missionary structure appropriate to the political, economic, social and cultural environment in which they find themselves. Filipino churches are making efforts to volunteer Christians for mission among the 10 million Filipino overseas workers. It would be appropriate for churches in China, which borders 13 countries, to develop a structure to mission-motivate Christian merchants. Historically, Chinese merchants were famous as excellent silk merchants.

Christianity will be recognized as a truly global religion only when it has local appearances. Unless Christianity is translated into local forms, Christianity will still be perceived as Western. This is also true in missions. The overall picture of missions is still very Western. Asian churches should not stick to the existing mission structure or model, but should keep an eye on how God is working today. If the Asian churches respond to the flow of God's mission and develops unique structures suitable for the Asian churches, the global Church will be able to enjoy greater and richer benefits than before.

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