

# asian missions advance

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## Diaspora Mission: Glocal Mission and “Mission at Our Doorstep”

Enoch Wan

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to explore the practice of “diaspora mission” by combining “Glocal Mission” and “Mission at our Doorstep,” based on the phenomenon of movement of people at a large scale globally. For the sake of clarity, several key-terms are defined below:

- **Diaspora Ministry** — serving the diaspora in the name of Jesus Christ and for His sake in these two diaspora, i.e., mobilizing the diaspora to serve others.<sup>1</sup>
- **Diaspora Missiology** — a missiological framework for understanding and participating in God’s redemptive mission among diaspora groups.<sup>2</sup>
- **Diaspora Missions** — Christians’ participation in God’s redemptive mission to evangelize their kinsmen on the move, and through them to reach out to natives in their homelands and beyond.<sup>3</sup> There are four types of diaspora missions (see Figure 1.1)<sup>4</sup>:
  - 1. **Missions to the Diaspora** — reaching the diaspora groups in forms of Evangelism or pre-evangelistic social services, then disciple them to become worshipping communities and congregations.
  - 2. **Missions through the Diaspora** — diaspora Christians reaching out to their kinsmen through networks of friendship and kinship in

host countries, their homelands, and abroad.

- 3. **Missions by and beyond the Diaspora** — motivating and mobilizing diaspora Christians for cross-cultural missions to other ethnic groups in their host countries, homelands, and abroad.
- 4. **Missions with the Diaspora** — mobilizing non-diasporic Christians individually and institutionally to partner with diasporic groups and congregations.
- **Glocal mission** - practice “global mission” by engaging in cross-cultural mission locally.
- **International Migrant** - “a person who moves

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1. Enoch Wan, *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice* (second edition). Institute of Diaspora Study – USA. 2014:6.

2. Enoch Wan, *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice* (second edition). Institute of Diaspora Study – USA. 2014:6.

3. Enoch Wan, “Global People and Diaspora Missiology,” presentation at Plenary session, Tokyo 2010-Global Mission Consultation, Tokyo, Japan, May 13, 2010.

4. Adapted from Enoch Wan, “Research Methodology for Diaspora Missiology and Diaspora Missions,” presentation at Regional EMS Conference, North Central, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL., February 26, 2011.

away from their place of usual residence across an international border, temporarily or permanently.”<sup>5</sup>

- **Mission at our Doorstep** - “Fulfilling the Great Commission by practicing diaspora missions locally with global significance”

## GLOBAL TREND OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

In alphabetical order, the G7 countries are: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. International migrants are being drawn to these nations of which the U.S. historically having the highest number of migrants among the seven.<sup>6</sup> The total population of these seven nations is merely 16% of world population yet 33% of the global diaspora population: moving from east to west and from southern hemisphere to the north.<sup>7</sup>

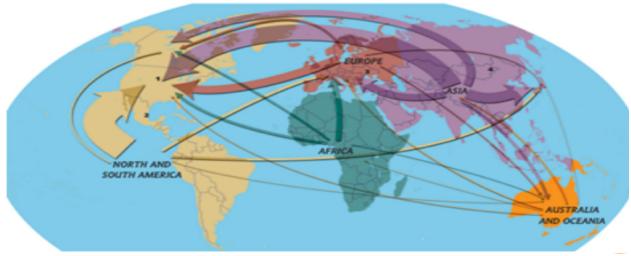


Figure 1 – Mega-trend of Human Mobility (2013)<sup>8</sup>

*“The current global estimate is that there were around 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, which equates to 3.6 percent of the global population.”<sup>9</sup>*

The extensive quote below is an excellent snapshot of the global trend:<sup>10</sup>

*“May 7, 2024 – The report highlights*

5. “Top Statistics on Global Migration and Migrants” by Veronica Paez-Deggeller, Migration Information Source, August 26, 2025 @ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/top-statistics-global-migration-migrants> (Accessed Nov. 14, 2025)

6. For detailed demographic data of international migration to G7, readers are recommended to visit the following websites:

- “Net migration of the G7 countries from 2000 to 2025, by country” @ [https://www.statista.com/statistics/1372901/g7-country-net-migration/?srsid=AfmBOork-fA2o0PFr-b97alq\\_jii\\_grY\\_0AVGkUWHnUyDOpYhBJ4vbTeZ](https://www.statista.com/statistics/1372901/g7-country-net-migration/?srsid=AfmBOork-fA2o0PFr-b97alq_jii_grY_0AVGkUWHnUyDOpYhBJ4vbTeZ) (Accessed Nov. 14, 2025)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM). WORLD MIGRATION REPORT 2024 (367 pages in pdf format) @ [https://www.developmentaid.org/api/frontend/cms/file/2024/05/pub2023-047-l-world-migration-report-2024\\_0.pdf](https://www.developmentaid.org/api/frontend/cms/file/2024/05/pub2023-047-l-world-migration-report-2024_0.pdf) (Accessed Nov. 14, 2025)

7. Eleonore Loeb Adler and Uwe P. Gielen, eds. *Migration: Immigration and Emigration in International Perspective* (Westport, CT: 2003:16.)

8. “Migration: The Human Journey” - National Geography Action! @ <http://www.nationalgeographic.org/xpeditions/activities/09/gapacket05.pdf> (Accessed Dec. 20, 2013)

9. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This figure is a statistic from the United Nations’ 2024 World Migration Report and the UN’s International Organization for Migration. (Accessed Nov. 14, 2025)

10. World Migration Report 2024 Reveals Latest Global Trends ... <https://www.iom.int/news/world-migration-report-2024-reveals-latest-global-trends-and-challenges-human-mobility> (Accessed Nov. 14, 2025)

*that international migration remains a driver of human development and economic growth, highlighted by a more than 650 per cent increase ...*

Global immigration is increasing, with a growing number of international migrants and a significant rise in forced displacement. Factors like economic opportunity and conflict continue to drive migration, with Europe having the largest number of international migrants, but Asia and North America also receiving many. While international migration is rising, it still constitutes a small portion of the overall global population.

### Current trends

- **Growth in migrant numbers:** The estimated number of international migrants reached 304 million in 2024, an increase from 275 million in 2020.
- **Forced displacement:** There is a significant and growing number of forcibly displaced people, with 117 million individuals displaced by persecution and conflict as of late 2024.
- **Regional concentration:** Europe and Asia host the largest populations of international migrants, while North America is third. Some regions, like North America and Western Europe, see more intercontinental migration, while Asia and Eastern Europe experience more intraregional movement.
- **Increase in “South-South” migration:** A notable trend is the rise in migration between countries in the Southern Hemisphere.
- **Economic drivers:** Economic factors like the search for jobs and better living conditions remain a primary reason for voluntary migration.
- **Increased risk:** The number of recorded deaths among migrants worldwide has been high, with drowning being a leading cause.

### Factors influencing migration

- **Push and pull factors:** Migration is influenced by “push” factors like poor living conditions and crises, and “pull” factors such as economic opportunities in wealthier countries.
- **Technological advancements:** Revolutions in communication and transportation have made migration more feasible.
- **Policy changes:** Immigration policies, such as those in Japan which increased processing fees, can affect migration patterns and corporate hiring.

In the last few decades, globalization ushered in the realities of an interconnected world. Key factors of “who moves, where, and why” are “economic opportunity, political instability, demographic shifts, and environmental change.” In 2020, there were 275 million international migrants and in 2024 there was an impressive increase:

*"a record 304 million people lived in a country other than their country of birth, representing about 3.7 percent of the world's 8.2 billion people, according to UN Population Division estimates. This is up from, who comprised 3.5 percent of the global population. To put this in perspective, if the population of international migrants was considered its own country, it would be the world's fourth most populous, after India, China, and the United States."<sup>11</sup>*

Diaspora people move based on voluntary or involuntary forces<sup>12</sup> because of the options they have in their situations. Diaspora migrants have more proactive choices for the voluntary "pull factor" while the involuntary "push factor" leaves them in a reactive state of desperation.<sup>13</sup> Understanding the push and pull factors increases our ability to discern the needs and desires of the migrants and offer venues for witness opportunities.<sup>14</sup>

These large-scale movements are missional acts considered providential because when people move, the Gospel moves.<sup>15</sup> It is God who controls movements of people and uses them for His purposes.<sup>16</sup> The apostle Paul when addressing the Athenians stated: "From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries" (Acts 17: 26). North American evangelicals should realize what is happening in our community and embrace it as a divine opportunity.<sup>17</sup> Every Christian is a missionary to reach them with the Gospel since people in transition are more receptive to change including conversion<sup>18</sup> because they are usually hoping for something new. The Gospel may be the newness they have been looking for, for a new start.<sup>19</sup> We may not completely understand God's call and intention for the growing diversity in our community, but we can be assured that it is for a good reason.<sup>20</sup>

11. "Top Statistics on Global Migration and Migrants" by Veronica Paez-Deggeller, Migration Information Source, August 26, 2025 @ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/top-statistics-global-migration-migrants> (Accessed Nov. 14, 2025)

12. Wan, "Diaspora Missiology," in Wan, 3.

13. Mark Hausfeld and Joshua Fletcher, "The Muslim Diaspora," 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: William Carey Library, 2015), 40-1.

14. Hausfeld and Fletcher, "The Muslim Diaspora," in Pocock and Wan, 42.

15. Tereso C. Casiño, "Why People Move: A Prolegomenon to Diaspora Missiology," *Torch Trinity Journal* 13, no. 1 (May 30, 2010), 34.

16. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization Issue Group No. 26 A and B, "Lausanne Occasional Paper 55."

17. Andy Olsen, "The Migrant Missionaries," *Christianity Today* 61, no. 6 (July/August 2017), 45-6.

18. 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).

19. Ingleby, "Postcolonialism, Globalization, Migration and Diaspora," 3.

20. Raafat Girgis, "House of Prayer for all People: A Biblical Foundation for Multicultural Ministry," *International Review of Mission* 100 (April 2011), 73.

Diaspora missiology emerged recently in response to the new demographic reality as articulated below:

*"Diaspora missiology" as a focus of missiological research and a contemporary strategy of Christian mission is promising due to the following factors: the changing landscape in Christian missions (i.e., the shifting of Christendom from the West to the rest, and from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere, increasing impact of globalization on Christian mission, the emergence of majority mission, and the ever-increasing size and scale of the phenomenon of diaspora."<sup>21</sup>*

Being informed of the global trend of international migration, we shall turn our attention to the study of diaspora missiology and the practice of diaspora mission.

### The Study of Diaspora Missiology and the Practice of Diaspora Mission

Diaspora missiology is a relatively new missiological paradigm in response to the movement of people at a large scale internationally. The figure is a visual summary of diaspora missiology and diaspora ministry/missions.

DIASPORA MINISTRY			
DIASPORA MISSIOLOGY	Type	ministering to the diaspora	ministering through the diaspora
	Means	the Great Commandment: pre-evangelically serving others	
	Target Group	serving the diaspora by attending to their social & spiritual needs	mobilizing diaspora Christians to serve other diaspora people
DIASPORA MISSIONS			
DIASPORA MISSIONS	Type	missions to the diaspora	missions through the diaspora
	Means	motivate & mobilize diaspora individuals & congregations for the Great Commission in evangelistic outreach and missions	
	Target Group	members of diaspora community	kinsmen in homeland & elsewhere; not cross-culturally
missions by, beyond & with the diaspora			
cross-culturally to other ethnic groups in host society and beyond			

Figure 2 - Diaspora Ministry and Missions<sup>22</sup>

The statement below explains the "why" and "how" regarding the emergence of diaspora missiology:

*"Diaspora missiology as a focus of missiological research and a contemporary strategy of Christian mission is promising due to the following factors: the changing landscape in Christian missions (i.e., the shifting of Christendom from the West to the rest, and from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere, increasing impact of globalization on Christian mission, the emergence of majority mission, and the ever-increasing size and scale of the phenomenon of diaspora."<sup>23</sup>*

The paradigm of diaspora missiology is different from that of traditional missiology which is described

21. Michael Pocock and Enoch Wan (Editors). *Diaspora Missiology: Reflections on Reaching the Scattered Peoples of the World*. William Carey. 2015:20.

22. Enoch Wan, *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice* (second edition). Institute of Diaspora Study. 2014:8.

23. Michael Pocock and Enoch Wan (Editors). *Diaspora Missiology: Reflections on Reaching the Scattered Peoples of the World*. William Carey. 2015:xx – "Introduction"

below:

*"Traditional missiology" is represented by organizations such as the American Society of Missiology ("ASM" which publishes the journal *Missiology*) and the Evangelical Missiology Society ("EMS" which publishes the *Occasional Bulletin* and annual monograph).<sup>24</sup>*

The figure below is a comparison of traditional missiology and diaspora missiology in four dimensions of the continuum. Background information is provided below to help readers understand the continuum between the two opposing poles.

On one end of the continuum the characteristics of traditional missiology are summarized as follows:

1. The focus is polarized and dichotomized, with separation between "saving souls" and the "social gospel"; "church planting" and "Christian charity"; "paternalism" and "indigenization"; "long-term missions" and "short-term missions"; "career missionaries" and "tent-makers."
2. Conceptually, traditional missions are "territorial," with a sharp distinction between "here" and "there." It is "lineal," meaning that movement goes in one direction: "sending" more important than "receiving," "assimilation" more important than "amalgamation."
3. The perspective is geographically divided into foreign missions versus home missions, urban versus rural, state/nation versus country/state. As a discipline it compartmentalizes between "theology of missions" and "strategy of missions."
4. In the paradigm of traditional missiology, priority is given to the "unreached people groups" in the most "unreached" regions of the world over "reached people."

At the opposite end of the continuum, the characteristics of diaspora missiology and diaspora missions are summarized as follows:

1. The focus is on holistic missions and contextualization, integrating evangelism and social concern. For example, Christian workers cannot just start a local church among refugees without also addressing their physical needs and becoming their advocate.
2. The concept is "de-territorialized," i.e., the "loss of social and cultural boundaries" in mission strategy. A practical example of this is the evangelism training in Tokyo among Japanese believers who plan to evangelize Brazilians residing in Tokyo. Brazilians who no longer reside in Sao Paulo have become reachable through Japanese Christians for they are living in Tokyo! Diaspora mission is also "GLOCAL"<sup>25</sup>

24. Enoch Wan, *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice* (second edition). Institute of Diaspora Study. 2014:98.

25. "GLOCAL" missions is ministry outreach being carried out simultaneously locally and globally, i.e., what we do out there,

in contrast to the "lineal" concept of traditional missions because diaspora missions is multi-directional.

3. The perspective of diaspora missiology is non-spatial, not geographically divided or confined to home/foreign, regional/global, urban/rural; rather, it is borderless! It is transnational and global. Thus, church planting is carried out not only on land, but also on the ocean aboard ships among seafarers.
4. Diaspora missiology as a discipline is integrated with biblical studies, theology, evangelism, social sciences, arts, and technology.
5. As a paradigm, diaspora missions goes wherever God providentially places people spatially and spiritually, in contrast to the "sending and receiving" in traditional missions.
6. The priority of diaspora missions is every person outside the Kingdom everywhere; there is no difference between reaching out to Buddhists in New York or Thailand, Muslims in London or Iran, and communist Chinese in Africa or inside China.<sup>26</sup>

#	ASPECTS	TRADITIONAL MISSIOLOGY ↔ DISPORA MISSIOLOGY
1	FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polarized/dichotomized</li> <li>• "Great Commission" ↔ "Great Commandment"</li> <li>• saving soul ↔ social gospel</li> <li>• church planting ↔ Christian charity</li> <li>• paternalism ↔ indigenization</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holistic Christianity with strong integration of evangelism with Christian charity</li> <li>• contextualization</li> </ul>
2	CONCEPTUALIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• territorial: here ↔ there</li> <li>• "local" ↔ "global"</li> <li>• lineal: "sending" ↔ "receiving"</li> <li>• "assimilation" ↔ "amalgamation"</li> <li>• "specialization"</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "deterritorialization"<sup>27</sup></li> <li>• "glocal"<sup>28</sup></li> <li>• "mutuality" &amp; "reciprocity"</li> <li>• "hybridity"</li> <li>• "inter-disciplinary"</li> </ul>
3	PERSPECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• geographically divided:</li> <li>• foreign mission ↔ local, urban ↔ rural</li> <li>• geo-political boundary: state/nation ↔ state/nation</li> <li>• disciplinary compartmentalization: e.g. theology of missions/strategy of missions</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• non-spatial, "borderless," no boundary to worry, transnational &amp; global</li> <li>• different approach: integrated &amp; interdisciplinary</li> </ul>
4	ORIENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OT: missions = gentle-proselyte — coming</li> <li>• NT: missions = the Great Commission — going</li> <li>• Modern missions: E-1, E-2, E-3 or M-1, M-2, M-3, etc.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new reality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</li> <li>• viewing &amp; following God's way of providentially moving people spatially &amp; spiritually.</li> <li>• moving targets &amp; move with the targets</li> </ul>

Figure 3 - Four Dimensions of the Continuum: from Traditional Missiology to Diaspora Missiology<sup>27 28 29</sup>

we do it here simultaneously. See Bob Roberts Jr., *Transformation: How Glocal Churches Transform Lives and the World* (Zondervan, 2006). Also "Glocal Church Ministry: Bob Roberts has an idea that may change American congregations, if not the world," interview by Mark Galli (posted 8/02/2007); available at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/july/30.42.html>

26. Enoch Wan, *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice* (second edition). Institute of Diaspora Study. 2014:99-100.

27. "deterritorialization" is the "loss of social and cultural boundaries"

28. Enoch Wan, *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice* (second edition). Institute of Diaspora Study. 2014:99.

29. See Sadiri Joy B. Tira, "Filipino International Network: A Strategic Model for Filipino Diaspora Glocal® Missions," *Global Missiology*, (October 2004); available at [www.GlobalMissiology.org](http://www.GlobalMissiology.org).

The figure below lists out opportunities and challenges when working with the diaspora.

CHALLENGE TO CHANGE	OPPORTUNITY (diaspora missiology)	NEW APPROACH (diaspora missions)
<b>Old focus:</b> polarized/dichotomized • “great commission” ↔ “great commandment” • saving souls ↔ social Gospel • church planting ↔ Christian charity • paternalism ↔ indigenization • “laity” ↔ “clergy”	<b>New focus:</b> • no longer polarized/dichotomized: • holistic perspective • no disciplinary compartmentalization	<b>Strong integration:</b> • evangelism + Christian charity • “Great Commandment” + “Great Commission” • motivate and mobilize diaspora without dichotomy of “laity” and “clergy” • interdisciplinary, etc.
<b>Old conceptualization:</b> • territorial: here ↔ there • “local” ↔ “global” • lineal: “sending” ↔ “receiving” • “assimilation” ↔ “amalgamation”	<b>New conceptualization:</b> • non-spatial; no boundary • transnational & global • “unreached” → accessible • “borderless” → “ministry without borders”	<b>New approach:</b> • “deteritorialization” • “glocal” and “liquid church” • hyphenated identity and hybridity • “Mission at our door step” • “borderless church,” “bus church,” “church on the oceans”

Figure 4 -Working with the Diaspora: Opportunities and Challenges  
“Glocal mission”

Definition of “glocal” given by Roland Robertson is “the simultaneous co-presence” of both universalizing and particular tendencies.<sup>30</sup> Glocalization in business practice refers to the practice of maintaining a global brand identity while adapting its menu for local preferences in taste and style. The American international companies McDonald and Kentucky Fried Chicken are excellent cases as such. They are popular eateries in China featuring menu items specifically tailored for local tastes; instead of serving only hamburgers and fried chickens originally in the USA. In the mission context, cross-cultural communication and evangelism (of the unique Messiah Jesus to any people/social group that is different from our own) are taking place locally – that is glocal mission as shown in the figure below.



Figure 5 – Glocal mission and “mission @ our doorstep”

With the flow of international migrants from many countries and with various religious backgrounds in G7 nations, the concept of “unreached people” of traditional missiological framework is no longer relevant, thus the emergence of diaspora missiological paradigm.<sup>31</sup> As such, glocal mission is to be practiced within the context of multi-ethnicity and religious pluralism. The organization introduced below is a good example of “glocal mission” -

- “Glocal Mission” is a Christian non-profit organization based in Houston, TX, founded in October 2016 by Rev. Dr. David Kim, together with a network of missionary pastors and congregations.”

30. Roland Robertson - 1997 International Conference on “Globalization and Indigenous Culture.” The proceedings of this conference were published in a volume titled *Globalization and Indigenous Culture*, edited by Nobutaka Inoue, by the Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, in 1997.

31. Enoch Wan, *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice* (second edition). Institute of Diaspora Study – USA. 2014:part 3.

- “At Glocal Mission, our mission is to equip, mobilize, and resource believers to engage in God’s work both locally and globally – glocally. We believe the Great Commission is too big for anyone to accomplish alone and too important not to pursue together.”<sup>32</sup>

God is bringing people to us, but we are reluctant to take part in His glocal missions because of our sense of security of the strange or new. God always has the nations in His mind, but we are staying in our cultural prison to avoid emotional stress produced from intercultural relationships.<sup>33</sup> The orientation of glocal missions is: simultaneously embracing the global scope of Christian mission and engaging in local action/adaptation for Kingdom purpose. Due to the seamless integration between the local and the global,<sup>34</sup> it means local evangelistic outreaches have global ripple effects.<sup>35</sup> The figure below is a glocal model for missions to the diaspora in the case study by T.K. Stephen Lin on ministering to Indonesian migrant workers in HK.<sup>36</sup>

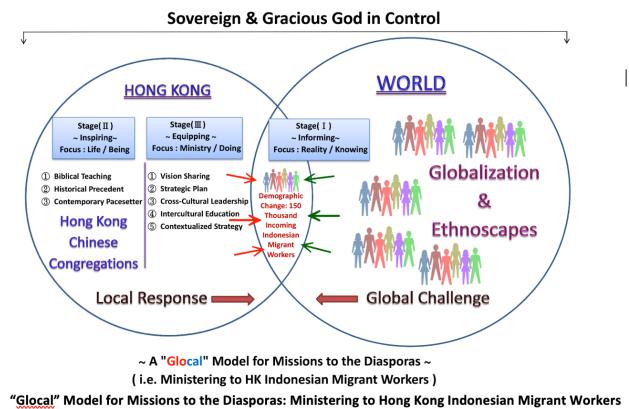


Figure 6 – A Glocal Model of Mission to the Diaspora Indonesian Migrant Workers in HK<sup>37</sup>

A biblical precedent of the practice of glocal mission is found in Acts 9:1-20. Being a disciple in Damascus, Ananias was guided by a vision from Jesus to find Saul who came from Jerusalem to persecute Christians in Damascus. In obedience to the small task of finding Saul, laying hand on him and healing his blindness. Though hesitated to so because Saul being known

32. Glocal Mission @ <https://www.glocalmission.org/> (Accessed Nov. 14, 2025)

33. Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 117.

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

35. 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).

36. Stephen Tat-Kit Lin, “Mobilizing Chinese Congregations in Hong Kong to Engage in Local Diaspora Missions to Indonesian Migrant Workers: From Informing, Inspiring, to Equipping.” Unpublished Dissertation, Western Seminary, 2016.

37. Stephen Tat-Kit Lin, “Mobilizing Chinese Congregations in Hong Kong to Engage in Local Diaspora Missions to Indonesian Migrant Workers: From Informing, Inspiring, to Equipping.” Unpublished Dissertation, Western Seminary, 2016:223.

as persecutor of Christians and the church, Ananias placed his hands on Saul who later regained his sight when scales fell from his eyes then was baptized. By carrying out “the mission to heal Saul’s blindness then baptizing him locally,” Ananias was instrumental in Saul’s conversion, calling and commission to become the apostle to the gentiles globally. For the apostle Paul’s ministry spanned from Asia to Europe in outreach and church planting. The impactful life of apostle Paul with “global significance” is to be credited to the obedience of Annias to the “simple local mission” - helping, healing, baptizing Saul who had “global significance in Kingdom ministry. Ananias was not a missionary: crossing ocean to reach people in foreign land for church planting. Yet his practice of glocal mission is an example of obedience in Christian mission.

Therefore, local congregations in cities within the G7 contemporary context are to be informed and inspired to practice glocal mission. Christians are to be motivated and mobilized to be involved in glocal mission.<sup>38</sup> A helpful reference is written by Bob Roberts Jr. is GLOCALIZATION: How Followers Of Jesus Engage A Flat World. Zondervan 2016. Another helpful reference is: The Church Going Glocal: Mission and Globalisation. co-authored by Tormod Engelsviken, Erling Lundeby, Dagfinn Solheim, Fortress Press, 2011.

### **Mission at our doorstep**

“Diaspora missions” is very practical as illustrated below in terms of “missions at our doorstep” that can be practiced at local congregations (see publications such as *The World at Your Door: Reaching International Students in Your Home, Church, and School*,<sup>39</sup> *Missions Have Come Home to America: The Church’s Cross-Cultural Ministry to Ethnic*,<sup>40</sup> *Missions within Reach*,<sup>41</sup> *Reaching the World Next Door*,<sup>42</sup> *Strangers Next Door: Immigration, Migration and Mission*,<sup>43</sup> etc.

Unlike time of old when missionary had to travel abroad to reach the lost in foreign land, now we can engage in cross-cultural mission in our own neighborhood where transnational migrants came as refugee, international student, victims of human-trafficking, diplomats, businessmen, etc. Movement of people at global scale presents wonderful opportunities for engagement of cross-cultural

38. For reference, “Glocalization, Diaspora Missiology, and Friendship Evangelism” by Tuya Zaretsky. Lausanne World Pulse, May 2010. (accessed September 26, 2010)

39. Phillips, Tom and Norsworthy, Bob (1997) *The World at Your Door: Reaching International Students in Your Home, Church, and School*. Minnesota: Bethany House.

40. Jerry L. Appleby, (1986), *Missions Have Come Home to America: The Church’s Cross-Cultural Ministry to Ethnic* Missouri: Beacon Hill.

41. Wan, Enoch (1995) *Missions Within Reach: Intercultural Ministries in Canada*. Hong Kong: Alliance Press.

42. Thom Hopler and Marcia Hopler. *Reaching the World Next Door: How to Spend the Gospel in the Midst of Many Cultures*. InterVarsity Press, 1994

43. J. D. Payne. *Strangers Next Door: Immigration, Migration and Mission*, IVP 2012.

mission right on our doorsteps. While the Church continues to send missionaries to foreign fields, it also has an opportunity to consider appropriate ways to reach communities that are coming to our locations. Diaspora missiology provides a method for learning ways to build relationships with global people groups, learn their culture, and invite “the stranger” into our local context (see Matthew 25:35). This, then, is an opportunity for glocalized evangelism: the world at our door. The figure below is a summary of how powerful, and practical is the practice of “Mission at our Doorstep.”

NO	YES
-No visa required	-Yes, door opened
-No closed door	-Yes, people accessible
-No international travel required	-Yes, missions at our doorstep
-No political/legal restrictions	-Yes, ample opportunities
-No dichotomized approach	-Yes, holistic ministries
-No sense of self-sufficiency & unhealthy competition	-Yes, powerful partnership

Figure 7 – The “yes” and “no” of “Mission at our doorstep”<sup>44</sup>

The figure below shows “the “CORRECT” way of 7 step” in practicing “mission at our doorstep.”

opportunities	challenges	relational paradigm
compassion	motive	Horizontally compassionate towards diasporas
Obedience		Vertically in obedience to God’s “Great Commandment”
Relationships of grace	means	Vertically God is gracious to mankind (especially to Christians) thus they should be gracious to diasporas horizontally
Reality of community		Vertically the Church is “the household of God.” Horizontally new spiritual community as Christ’s body in local congregations
Empowerment		Vertically depend on God for empowerment and horizontally empowering diaspora; instead of paternalism
Christian multiplication	missions	Vertically dependent on God for the increase and multiplication. Horizontally doing the seeding and watering faithfully in diaspora missions
The full circle		Vertically and faithfully fulfill the “Great Commission” and horizontally motivate and mobilize the diaspora for a full circle of reproductive Christian missions.

Figure 8 – Opportunities and challenges of “diaspora missions” – the “CORRECT” way of 7 steps<sup>45</sup>

“CORRECT” is the acronym of seven steps in the practice of “mission at our doorstep” relationally. Explanation is provided below for practical implementation:

Step 1: There are plenty of opportunities to practice Christian charity and the challenge is to have a correct motive of love and compassion (horizontal relationship), as in the case of Jesus Christ and the crowd - Mt 9:35-38; 1Cor 13:1-3.

Step 2: There are plenty of opportunities to be obedient to the “Great Commandment” vertical relationship to God (Matthew 22:36-40). And the

44. Enoch Wan, “Diaspora Missiology,” *Occasional Bulletin*, Spring 2007:6.

45. Enoch Wan, “Practical diaspora missiology: evangelizing immigrants,” *Ethnic Summit*, Seattle, WA, April 2007.

challenge is to have a pure heart and correct motive horizontally when relating to diaspora.

Step 3: Vertically God is gracious to mankind and special grace yet for Christians (Ro 5:8; 2Cor 5:1) thus they should likewise be gracious to diasporas horizontally.

Step 4: Vertically the Church is “the household of God” (Heb 3:5,15) and horizontally new spiritual community as Christ’s body in local congregations (Eph 2:11-22; 4:11-16).

Step 5: Vertically depend on God for empowerment (Acts 1:8) and horizontally empowering diaspora; instead of paternalism, e.g. the case of the Philippian congregation in kononia for the Gospel.

Step 6: Vertically dependent on God for the increase and multiplication blessing as promised within the “Great Commission” (i.e. presence – Mt 24; power – Acts 1:8). Horizontally doing the seeding and watering faithfully (1Cor 3:6-9).

Step 7: Vertically fulfilled the “Great Commission” in obedience. And horizontally motivate and mobilize the diasporic individuals and congregations to engage in partnership towards the full circle of reproductive Christian missions.

### PRACTICAL WAYS TO ENGAGE DIASPORA GROUPS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

As shown in figure 2 above, there are four types of diaspora mission: “to,” “through,” “by and beyond,” and “with” the diaspora.

#### Mision to the diaspora

Reaching the diaspora groups in forms of Evangelism or pre-evangelistic social services, then disciple them to become worship communities and congregations. For example: Intentionally building relationships with coworkers, neighbors, fellow PTA members, etc. from diaspora groups, and modeling (or sharing) the Gospel with them when appropriate. Learning more about other cultures through immersion or experiencing the local diaspora communities Discovering the needs of diaspora groups and helping them meet those needs.

#### *Case Study: Intermarried Couples*

Diaspora does not necessarily involve crossing international borders. It can refer to people who are in social transition. The American Jewish community, for example, has been experiencing dramatic culture change where since 1985, fifty-two percent of all Jewish people who married have married Gentiles. A 2004 study on the challenges experienced by Jewish-Gentile couples in the United States found that one of their most significant issues reported is the inability to find spiritual harmony. That realization had missiological implications in helping strategize for appropriate evangelistic ministry to these couples.

#### Mision through the diaspora

Diaspora Christians reaching out to their kinsmen

through networks of friendship and kinship in host countries, their homelands, and abroad. For example:

- Training, empowering, and sending out diaspora Christian leaders to build relationships, plant churches and evangelize among their own people
- Building relationships with other diaspora people or those back in the homeland through already existing diaspora relationships
- Diaspora-to-Diaspora ministries: Some mega-churches in Korea (e.g. Onnuri) have planted churches under the same name in Los Angeles to minister to Korean immigrants. These churches, in turn, have planted other churches in other metropolitan cities, such as New York or the San Francisco Bay Area, to minister to Korean immigrants in those cities.

#### *Case Study: Onnuri Church*

The first Onnuri Church was founded in Korea in 1984.

1. Onnuri Church expanded campuses all throughout Korea in the 80's and 90's.
2. Onnuri Church Los Angeles was founded in 1984.
3. Other Onnuri Churches followed, such as Onnuri New York and Onnuri Yokohama. Many of the sent out church planters moved from one diaspora community to another.

#### Mision by and beyond the diaspora

Motivating and mobilizing diaspora Christians for cross-cultural missions to other ethnic groups in their host countries, homelands, and abroad. For example:

- Training, empowering, and sending out diaspora Christian leaders to build relationships, plant churches and evangelize to other diaspora people locally or elsewhere
- Business as Mission: Encouraging diaspora Christians to establish business in other countries that are not welcoming to Christian missionaries and supporting them in this endeavor.
- Utilizing Business Travelers: High tech industry environment requires a lot of business travel. These present short-term opportunities to network and build relationships with people in other cultures and countries.

#### *Case Study: Oikos University*

Oikos University, a small Christian university located in Oakland is run by a group of Korean pastors, such as Namsoo Woo, who is currently the chairman of the board. Throughout the 2000's, some of these Korean pastors educated and trained several Mongolian students who had immigrated to the United States. A few of these Mongolian students became missionaries and were sent off not just to their own country of Mongolia, but to other locales and countries as well.

#### Mision with the diaspora

Mobilizing non-diasporic Christians individually and institutionally to partner with diasporic groups and

congregations. For example:

Joint fellowship, activities, or ministries with other ethnic churches in the area

Short-term mission trips in a multi-ethnic church

Trips back to the motherland with diaspora friends

Establishing or joining industry or field related clubs and events, and networking with other Christians.

Partnerships and joint programs between non-church Christian institutions, such as between educational institutions.

Planting of multi-ethnic churches

The following figure is a summary of the concept and practice of "with" approach in the practice of diaspora mission.

CONCEPTUAL	PRACTICAL	
	Relational Pattern	Practical Way
Bridging & Bonding	<p>Networking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridging by regional proximity or linguistic/racial affinity</li> <li>• Bonding: kinship/friendship/mutual interest</li> </ul> <p>Partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National &amp; transnational individual</li> <li>• Local congregations or institutional entities of multiple variety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospitality</li> <li>• Reciprocity</li> <li>• Connectivity &amp; complexity</li> <li>• Solidarity</li> <li>• Unity</li> </ul>

Figure 9 – The concept and practice of "with" approach<sup>46</sup>

#### Case Study: San Jose Christian College in the 1990's

- San Jose Christian College, now called William Jessup University and relocated in Rocklin, CA, launched the Multi-Cultural Bible Institute in the late 80's and early 90's to train Christian leaders from the ethnic communities in the Bay Area. The program taught in 7 different languages. Through this program, SJCC partnered with many of its graduates to plant ethnic churches not only in Northern California, but all over the world.
- In a 1996 report, there were 14 Cambodian churches, 6 Korean churches, 3 Khmu churches, 4 Iranian churches, 3 East Indian churches, 3 Hispanic churches and 1 Filipino church planted in Northern California through this program.

#### "Mission at our doorstep" and Chinese diaspora

The practice of "mission at our doorstep" has significantly blessed the Chinese church globally and in church planting among Chinese diaspora locally in North America.

For reference on diaspora missiology generally, two key texts are recommended below:

- Enoch Wan (Editor), *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice*. (Second Edition) Institute of Diaspora Studies – USA (Second Edition – 2014).
- Michael Pocock and Enoch Wan (Editors), *Diaspora Missions: Reflections on Reaching the Scattered Peoples of the World*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2015.

A text specifically dealing with "mission at our doorstep," ministering to international students in the

46. Enoch Wan, "Practical diaspora missiology: evangelizing immigrants," Ethnic Summit, Seattle, WA, April 2007.

series on diaspora missiology is:

- Enoch Wan (Editor), *Diaspora Missions to International Students*. IDS, 2019

For more publication on diaspora missiology by the author is listed in Appendix 1.

Having been honored as "the Father of the Republic of China," at age thirteen (1879) Sun Yat-sen (孫中山) followed his mother visiting his older brother in Hawaii. In Honolulu, he enrolled in Iolani School and Punahoa School where he received Western education and Christianity – a case of "mission at our doorstep" of student ministry locally in Hawaii.<sup>47</sup> Later he gave up his medical practice in Hong Kong and focused on political activities. On November 24, 1894, he began the efforts in launching a series of revolution based on Western political ideology ("of the people, for the people and by the people") to replace the millennium-honored imperial government of China.

**International students of Chinese ethnic descent were being reached by those who practiced "mission at our doorstep" on college campuses in US and Canada.**

By motivating and mobilizing diaspora Chinese in Hawaii, Hong Kong and elsewhere, he fought against the dynastic power of Ching dynasty from Manchuria. In 1911, he introduced Western style of democracy and successfully founded the Republic of China – the first democratic government in Asia. For that accomplishment, he had been honored by the Chinese as "the father of modern China" with impact on many Asian countries in people movement for democracy. As a believer both in Christianity and democratic ideology, his impact extended beyond Chinese society and inspired Asian political leaders moving towards democratic governance.

International students of Chinese ethnic descent were being reached by those who practiced "mission at our doorstep" on college campuses in US and Canada. The historian of Chinese Christianity in America, Fenggang Yang in his book *Chinese Christians in America Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities* (Penn State University Press. 1999) documented how Christianity in general and Chinese churches in particular have integrally influenced the identity formation of Chinese immigrants.

The successful and fruitful student ministry to Chinese diaspora is to be credited for the founding and flourishing Chinese diaspora congregations in North America. According to the research findings of chapter contributors to the title *Diaspora Missions to Interna-*

47. A similar case is Nelson Mandela, studied in the United Kingdom with exposure to Christianity and Western democratic ideology, who later brought the practice of racial prejudice to an end and became the president of South Africa.

tional Students, all four types of diaspora missions (see Figure 1.1) are being proven to be effective strategies in the practice of “mission at our doorstep.”

There are organizations specializing in reaching international students. For example, at the website of Inter Varsity Fellowship there is a statement: “InterVarsity is a family of international students and scholars on campuses across the US gathering for friendship and to discuss faith, culture and the things we care about most.”<sup>48</sup> Jamie Wang who serves with “Power to Change” at McMaster University in Canada stated well: “Reaching International Students Is Strategic for Global Missions.”<sup>49</sup> Van Simmons serving on the Student Pathways Team of the International Mission Board articulates well the essence of “mission at our doorstep” in serving international students succinctly:

*“According to the Institute of International Education (IIE), over one million students from countries around the world are currently studying in colleges and universities in the United States. When we think of taking the gospel of Jesus “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8), we can begin by reaching out to the international students that God has brought to our campus and community.”<sup>50</sup>*

In addition, he suggested practical ways such as - be a friend, conversational English, welcome bags, attending international events, day trips, programs for international wives, invite them to your home, airport pickups, develop good relationships with the International Student Office at university.<sup>51</sup>

In an attempt to integrate “diaspora missions” with international student ministry, the following quotation from an unknown author is very helpful:

**Ministering to international students is a great way for Christians and local churches to participate in the Great Commission!**

### Why Is International Student Ministry Important?

Many international students come from **Unreached People Groups (UPGs)**. UPGs are ethnolinguistic groups with limited or no access to the Gospel.

We consider a people group unreached when there is no indigenous community of Jesus’ followers able to engage this people group with church planting.

**Technically speaking, in a UPG, less than 2 percent of the population actively follows Jesus.**

The USA receives international students from countries that have hundreds of unique UPGs. While studying abroad, these UPG students have

48. See website: <<https://www.internationals.net/>> (accessed September 26, 2010)

49. Jamie Wang, “What I’ve Learned about Reaching International Students. January 21, 2019 @ <https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/article/what-ive-learned-about-reaching-international-students/> (accessed September 26, 2010)

50. Van Simmons, “Reaching International students” @ <https://collegeministry.com/reaching-international-students-on-campus/> (accessed September 26, 2010)

the freedom to hear the Gospel.

Let’s break down the stats on international students in America to see the trends.

### So Many Students!

**In 2023-24, there were over 1.1 million international students in the USA.**

In 2025, there were over 135,000 international students in New York Alone.

While America’s international students come from all over the world, certain countries consistently send the most students. **The top 2 countries where international students came from in 2023-24 were India and China.**

India is home to 2,041 distinct UPGs totaling over 1.3 billion people.

China is home to 444 distinct UPGs totaling over 139 million people.

In the Great Commission, Jesus commanded His followers to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). UPGs represent nations around the world that still have yet to hear the Gospel.

**International student ministry is strategic because when these UPG students hear the Gospel in the USA, they take the message of Jesus back to their families.** This is how the Gospel can spread into countries and regions closed to traditional missionaries!<sup>52</sup> (original emphasis)

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, we began with a description of the global trends of international migration, followed with explanation of diaspora missiological paradigm. Then two approaches in the practice of diaspora mission are introduced: “glocal mission” and “mission at our doorsteps.”

Instead of being merely theoretical, practical ways to engage diaspora groups in your neighborhood are proposed. The paper is concluded by the use of Chinese diaspora as a case study.

## APPENDIX 1 – SELECTED PUBLICATIONS BY ENOCH WAN ON DIASPORA MISSIONOLOGY

### Books

Wan, Enoch, and Ria Martin. *Diaspora Missions Engagement in the Global North through Intercultural Campus Ministry: 'By and Beyond' Filipinos*. Western Academic Publishers, 2023.

Abdon, Nestor, and Enoch Wan. *Marginality of Visible Minorities in Canada: A Missiological Study*. Western Academic Publishers, 2023.

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52. Author unknown, “International Student Ministry: A Hidden Door to the Nations” @ <https://internationalproject.org/international-student-ministry/> (accessed September 26, 2010)

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Enoch Wan and Thanh Trung Le, *Mobilizing Vietnamese Diaspora for the Kingdom* (Portland, OR: Institute of Diaspora Studies, 2014).

Enoch Wan and Ted Rubesh, *Wandering Jews and Scattered Sri Lankans: Viewing Sri Lankans of the Gulf Cooperative Council through the Lens of the Old Testament Jewish Diaspora* (Portland, OR: Institute of Diaspora Studies, 2014).

Enoch Wan and Elton S. L. Law. *The 2011 Triple Disaster in Japan and the Diaspora: Lessons Learned and Ways Forward* (Portland, OR: Institute of Diaspora Studies, 2014).

Enoch Wan and Anthony Francis Casey, *Church Planting among Immigrants in US Urban Centers: The Where, Why, and How of Diaspora Missions* (Portland, OR: Institute of Diaspora Studies, 2013).

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"The Practice of Diaspora Missions in Local Congregation: From Beginning to Base" Enoch Wan. Published in [www.GlobalMissiology.org](http://www.GlobalMissiology.org) January 2017

"Serving China's Internal Diaspora: Motive, Means And Methods" Enoch Wan & Joe Dow. Published in [www.GlobalMissiology.org](http://www.GlobalMissiology.org) January 2016

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Enoch Wan  
ewan@westernseminary.edu

Dr. Enoch Wan is the PhD, Director of the PhD, EdD & DIS Programs of Western Seminary, Portland, Oregon..