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THE FOURTH WAVE:
THE NEW LOOK OF MISSIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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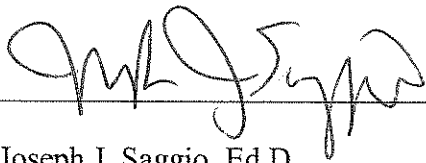
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ABSTRACT

Global Christian missions is entering a new century with profound challenges and amazing opportunities. If we are serious about Jesus' Great Commandment and Commission, what kind of global missions force is needed to reach every person on earth in the Third Millennium with the saving grace of Jesus Christ?

This paper uses historical analysis to look at the dynamics of the first wave of missions during the Early Church. These elements include four spiritual keys of revival, prayer, unity, and outreach. The research evaluates the kinds of people God used, his sovereign purposes in history, and what civilizational and technological advances aided the missionary enterprise.

This project then analyzes the first Three Waves of Modern Missions through the same historical lens. Wave One began in 1792 and focused on outreach to the coastlands of the world. Wave Two extended Gospel outreach to the interiors of many nations in the 19th century. Wave Three in the 20th century launched outreach to hidden or unreached peoples with much specialization in ministry.

This paper then discusses how the Three Waves of Modern Missions built on each other and were a result of God's sovereignty and man's participation. The writer concludes that a Fourth Wave of Modern Missions has begun that will be led by Two-Thirds (Majority) World missionaries and include people of all ages and nationalities that will take Christ's Good News to every person on earth using creative communications and relational ministries in every sphere of society.

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INTRODUCTION

As a thirty-five year career missionary in Youth With A Mission (YWAM), I have believed for many decades that the focus of history is *missions*—reaching every person in the world with the Good News of Christ. In pursuit of that goal, I’ve had the privilege of sharing Christ in over sixty nations of the world since 1970. During that time, the “face” of missions has changed greatly.

When I joined YWAM in the early 1970’s, YWAM was primarily a white, Protestant missionary society of 300 full-time workers. Today Youth With A Mission has over 16,000 full-time staff from over 150 nations in our organization--whose members are 60% people of color. Is this change indicative of a major shift in the focus of 21st century missions?

Various words or phrases have been used over the past two thousand years to describe the advance of world evangelism. The Apostle Paul and the Early Christians talked about their *mission* to share Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8 and 21:19). After the advance of the Church through the Middle Ages, it became popular to describe sharing your faith cross- culturally as engaging in *missions*.¹ Today, *being missional* is the phrase of choice for many of those engaging others with the claims of Christ.² For the purposes of this paper, I will use all three of these terms synonymously to describe the advance of Christian faith in the nations.

I believe both the biblical narrative and the history of the expansion of the Gospel since that time can be best explained through various “waves” of evangelism that the Holy Spirit has orchestrated. The Day of Pentecost launched the first wave of Christian advance as the Early Christians (Jews) shared the Good News of Christ with fellow Jews in Jerusalem and thousands

¹ Many major Protestant missionary organizations use this term such as the General Council of the Assemblies of God .

² The name of the Northwest University M.A. program in “Missional Leadership” underscores this.

came into the Church. The Kingdom of God then spread to the Gentiles through Paul's encounter with the house of Cornelius and the growth of faith among the non-Jews. After centuries of persecution, the waves of Christian evangelism had permeated the entire Roman Empire.

After a time of decline during the Middle Ages, missional activity saw a major resurgence in Europe and then renewal of the Catholic Church via the Reformation. According to missiologist Ralph Winter, founder of the US Center for World Missions, modern day missions began in the late 18th century when William Carey, the first Protestant missionary sailed to India in 1792.³ This first wave of modern missions focused on the *coastlands* of the world.

The second wave of modern missions began in the 19th century with David's Livingstone's ground-breaking exploration of the African interior and other missionaries, such as Hudson Taylor in China, also sharing the Gospel in the inner regions of China. Missional advance was going global at this time, having started in the seaports of the world but then moving *inland*.⁴

In the 20st century, missions focus progressed from the coastlands and interiors to a third wave of missions outreach among unreached peoples of the world numbering 6000 globally.⁵ At the time of this writing, there are less than 1,000 people groups in the world that are untargeted and unengaged with missionary activity and over two billion people world-wide profess faith in Christ. Yet, there are two billion people in the world, primarily Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus, who have not yet been evangelized.⁶

Past moves of God and three waves of modern missions have set the stage for what I believe will be the final harvest of planet earth. The contention of this paper is that a *fourth wave*

³ Ralph Winter, "Four Men, Three Eras," *Mission Frontiers* (November 1997), 11.

⁴ *Ibid*, 12.

⁵ *Ibid*, 13.

⁶ Joshua Project. <http://www.joshuaproject.net/>[accessed 4 April 2010].

of modern missions has begun—and that wave will build upon the growing expansion of Christian missions that has occurred over the past two thousand years.

RESEARCH QUESTION

In this research project, I will examine the current trends in world evangelization that have been built upon 2,000 years of missionary enterprise. What kind of 21st century mission force is God raising up to complete the Great Commission? What will be the make-up and focus of what I am calling the Fourth Wave of Global Missions?

My research leads me to conclude that the coming wave of missions will build upon all the strengths of the past—yet usher in a new era of individual participation unseen in past moves of God. This paper will discuss at length:

- How past waves of evangelization have set the stage for the current move of the Holy Spirit around the world.
- How the past three waves of modern missions were necessary to bring about the fourth.
- What types of people and nations will be involved?
- What might be the fruit of this latest wave of God’s love among the nations?

METHODOLOGY

I have used use a mixture of three different research methods to analyze trends in modern mission and where the future is leading us.

1. *Historical* - There is much that we can learn from the past moves of God in history in the story of missions. There is a great treasure trove of literature on this subject for which I am grateful. I will lean on the writings of historians and missiologists who have chronicled the past as predictors of the future.
2. *Conceptual* – Predicting the future is somewhat predicated on past historical trends, but ultimately lies in the realm of conceptual conjecture. In my thirty-five years as a missionary, an evolving concept of the missional future has been growing in my heart and mind as I’ve watched a new form of missionary emerge in many parts of the world.
3. *Theological* – Missions is a part of the “study of God” that theology encompasses. Missiology is vital element of theology in understanding God’s work on the earth, for God is in the people business (John 3:16).

Data

The data necessary for this project has been drawn from books, articles, web-sites, conferences, teachings, and mission statistics compiled by historians and missions leaders in many parts of the world. I will lean heavily on certain experts in these fields which include Kenneth Scott LaTourette, Ruth A. Tucker, David Barrett & Todd Johnson, Patrick Johnstone, Ralph Winter and the publications of some of the world's largest global missionary societies. The data was collected by reading, personal conversation, and analysis. In some cases, information has been gathered by telephone and electronically via web-sites from various mission organizations.

Analysis

I have analyzed the data through the lens of written comparative research. I have naturally leaned heavily on the perspective of various authors and missiologists in the field and their perspective on current and future missions. I hope to limit my literary bias through extensive, international research in the field.

There are a number of biases that I have attempted to neutralize in this project. First, I am a white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant (German heritage) serving in an organization that began with the same homogenous ethnic make-up. Secondly, my experience is based on working with one specific organization, Youth With A Mission. Therefore much of my analysis will be impacted by that specific organizational perspective. However, our organizational bias has been greatly diluted through YWAM becoming 60% people of color over the past fifty years.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MISSIONS

Early Church Missions – 30 AD to the 4th Century AD – Roman Empire,

Christian missionary work is the most difficult thing in the world. It is surprising that it should ever have been attempted. -- Stephen Neill⁷

From its inception, the Church of Jesus Christ has been on a mission. Jesus himself set the missional direction for the followers of the Triune God by leaving the comforts of heaven,

⁷ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 15.

coming to the earth, laying down his life for the sins of all people, and commissioning his disciples to go and do likewise (John 20:21).

During his post-resurrection appearances, Jesus gave four clear commands that have summed up the Christian missionary enterprise. The first one, found in Matthew 28:18-20, is often called the *what* of world evangelization: “I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”⁸ Leslie Lyall of Overseas Missionary Fellowship says that by his death and resurrection Jesus defeated the great usurper and was soon to charge his church to possess his possessions and to enter into his heritage.⁹

Secondly, Jesus states the *where* of the Christian mission: Mark 16:15 – “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere.” This is the founding verse of YWAM that was given to Loren Cunningham while seeing a vision of waves of young people coming up on the shores of the world in 1959.¹⁰

The third axiom of the call is the *when* of world missions found in Luke 24: 47-49:

With my authority, take this message of repentance to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. There is forgiveness of sins to all who turn to me. You are witnesses of all these things. And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from on high. The early followers of Jesus were to wait for an important infilling of the Holy Spirit in the Jewish capital city and then take the message of God’s love and forgiveness to every nation on earth.

⁸ I will primarily use the New Living Translation (NLT) for Scripture references throughout.

⁹ Leslie T. Lyall, *A World to Win* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1972), 6.

¹⁰ Loren Cunningham, *Is That Really You, God?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1984), 30.

Finally, there is the *how* of the missional enterprise found in Acts 1:8. Jesus said, “But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, and in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Thus the comprehensiveness of missions is that God has called his people to make disciples of all the nations--demonstrating their changed lives through baptism and growing it by teaching. He has commanded us to take the message of his love and forgiveness to every person in every part of the world. He asked his early followers to wait to begin that mission until they had received a supernatural empowerment from the Holy Spirit, the unnamed third member of the Trinity. Then, in the power of the Holy Ghost, they were to go global—starting where they were, going to regions nearby, and eventually filling the entire world with the message of God’s love.

This plan of salvation had been a long time in coming. J. Herbert Kane in his classic work *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective* shares:

The Christian mission is a part of God’s sovereign activity in the realm of redemption. From first to last the Christian mission is God’s mission, not man’s. It originated in the heart of God. It is based on the love of God. It is determined by the will of God. Its mandate was enunciated by the Son of God. Its rationale is explained in the Word of God. For its ultimate success, it is dependent on the power of God. Nowhere is the sovereignty of God more clearly seen than in the Christian mission.¹¹

The Early Church obeyed the commands of Jesus and spent ten days praying about their assignment in an upper room in Jerusalem. They confessed their sins to one another—especially the Twelve abandoning Jesus the night of his arrest and Peter’s cowardly betrayal of his Lord. They recounted the years Jesus had walked with them, taught them about the Kingdom of God, met their deepest needs, healed the sick, and raised the dead. They then passionately prayed to God to give them the grace and ability to do what he was asking them to do.

¹¹ J. Herbert Kane, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 98.

Ten days after Jesus' ascension into heaven God poured out his Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts. 2:1-4). On that day of the beginning of the Christian mission, 120 people were filled with power by the Living God and flooded out into the streets speaking about God's goodness in various languages they'd never learned. Kenneth Scott Latourette says that the coming of the Holy Spirit was of major importance because it changed the believers into enthusiastic witnesses.¹² Dennis Bennett, one of the early leaders of the charismatic renewal, describes how God sent the first Christians out into the world around, inspiring them to praise and glorify God, not only in their own tongues, but in new languages, and in so doing, renewed their minds, refreshed their bodies, and brought power to witness.¹³

Christian missions began on Pentecost. Many thousands joined them in the coming years as they proclaimed Jesus' message and obeyed the commands of their risen King. E. Glenn Hinson believes the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire focused on baptism, the Eucharist (worship), holy lives, and personal disciplines.¹⁴ The Acts story also mentions the self-sacrifice and generosity of the early followers as they met the needs of those around them, flowing out of a heart of love for Jesus. The changed lives of the growing Church were a magnet of attraction in a dark, dreary and harsh Roman outpost named Palestine. Jesus had given them eternal hope, and that hope was highly combustible through a godly mix of revival fire. Over the next seventy years, the Early Church would grow into hundreds of thousands of followers of Jesus the Messiah.

I believe there were at least four keys to missional success during the time of the Early Church as recorded in Acts:

- *Revival Fire* – on the Day of Pentecost – Acts 2:1-40

¹² Kenneth Scott LaTourette, *The History of Christianity*, (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 2000), 59.

¹³ Dennis and Rita Bennett, *The Holy Spirit and You*, (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971), 27-29.

¹⁴ E. Glenn Hinson, *The Evangelization of the Roman Empire* (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1981), 60.

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- *Prayer* – in the Upper Room and Temple which preceded the outpouring of God’s Spirit (Acts 2:1).
 - *Unity* – as seen in their love for each other (Acts 2:44-46)
 - *Outreach* – multitudes coming to Christ (Acts 2:41, 42, 47).

We will return to these same four characteristics as we discuss each future wave of world evangelization.

Two other elements also played strategic roles. One is “People and Providence” which relates to the choice of messenger and means God uses in each time period in history. The other is the development of “Civilization and Technology.” But before we look at God’s specific strategy for the Early Church missions, we must understand the concept of God’s sovereignty in human history—his providential use of people, events, and nations.

A basic premise in analyzing the various waves of Christian evangelism over the past 2,000 years is that God is the sovereign director of history. From the beginning, God has had a plan for redeeming the world—a fact that the Bible stresses throughout from the beginning of creation in Genesis 1 to the new heavens and earth described in Revelation 21.

Massachusetts pastor A.W. Foljambe echoed this idea in a January 5, 1876 message to his congregation when he stated that the more thoroughly a nation deals with its history, the more it recognize an over-ruling Providence. Conversely, if a nation deals superficially it with its history, seeing only secondary causes and human agencies, the more irreligious it will be.¹⁵

Arnold Guyot, the first geology instructor at Princeton College in the 1850’s, saw an even larger picture of the providential dealings of God in history. Guyot believed that God had purposes for whole continents. He taught his Princeton students that Asia was the continent of

¹⁵ Verna M Hall, *The Christian History of the Constitution of the United States of America* (San Francisco: The Foundation for American Christian Education, 1966), Ia.

origins (the human family, its races, civilizations and religions), Europe was the continent of *development* (arts and learning), and America was the continent of *propagation*, i.e. Christian missions to the world. I will propose in the Conclusion that the Far East will be providentially be used of God as the continent of *consummation* in the cause of world evangelism.

Guyot stated that:

In the grand drama of man's life and development, Asia, Europe, and America play distinct parts, for which each seems to have been admirably prepared. Truly no blind force gave our Earth the forms so well adapted to perform these functions. The conclusion is irresistible—that the entire globe is a grand organism, every feature of which is the out-growth of a definite plan of the all-wise Creator for the education of the human family, and the manifestation of his glory.¹⁶

People and Providence in the Early Church

God Himself chose the time in history and the specific place for Jesus to come to earth to launch the redemption of the world (Galatians 4:4). Jesus came and shared the Good News with the Jewish race almost exclusively (Matthew 15:24), and his first followers were Jews. Thus the first thrust in missions was Jewish-led by God's sovereign choice and centered in Jerusalem.

When the Jewish believers were slow in taking the message to Jesus' next assigned territory—Judea and Samaria—God allowed persecution to spring up which scattered the early believers in those directions (Acts 8). During this time period, Peter, received the vision of the Gospel going to the non-Jewish people, the Gentiles (Acts 10), and Saul, later named Paul, was led by God to become the apostle to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7).

After these events, God gave clear instructions on the trajectory of global missions. After prayer and the laying on of hands (Acts 13:3), Paul launched the Church's first recorded missionary journeys. On his second trip, the Holy Spirit specifically forbade him from taking the Good News *east* (into Asia), but rather, through the Macedonian call (see Acts 16:6-13), God

¹⁶ Arnold Guyot, *Physical Geography*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Press, 1971), 5.

told him to pioneer and plant churches in the *west*—which would set the pattern and direction of world evangelization for the next two thousand years. E. Glenn Hinson believes that the principal strategy for the expansion of Christianity was to plant churches which could continue to attract and enlist converts. More directly the network of churches, strongly committed to hospitality, provided a transportation system for missionaries.¹⁷

Apparently the Roman Empire, which extended from northern Africa to the far reaches of Great Britain, had been prepared for the next step in the plan of world evangelization. Jewish settlements already dotted the Empire, and they would be the most effective depots for further dispersion of God's grace and a jumping-off point into Gentile communities. Hinson again explains,

The immense success of Christianity in penetrating the Graeco-Roman Empire and its accommodation to Hellenistic culture within so short a span of time can be explained only on the assumption of the extensive preliminary preparation by Hellenistic Judaism. There can be no question that at the beginning of the Christian era, Judaism was an ardently missionary faith which "compassed land and sea" to make proselytes. It had already tilled the vast field of the Empire as a preparation for the Christian Gospel.¹⁸

Through those already-plowed fields swept the revival fires of the Early Church which eventually sprouted seeds throughout the entire Roman Empire.

Civilization and Technology

Other cultural and civilization factors were critical to missional advance in the early centuries—most of it created by the *Pax Romana* which dominated the known world. Greek and Roman civilization had combined to build a vast system of roads throughout the Empire that encouraged travel, trade and cultural exchange. There was also the "universality" and accuracy of the Greek language which served as a perfect vehicle for the dissemination of the Gospel.

¹⁷ E. Glenn Hinson, *The Evangelization of the Roman Empire* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1981), 57.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 58.

Historian Harold R. Cook believes that political unification under Roman rule, the network of roads and use of sea lanes, and the widespread use of the Greek language favored the spread of the new faith.¹⁹ Michael Pocock adds that people migrations were also crucial to Christianity's expansion in the first five centuries AD.²⁰

Thus a unified and relatively open civilization, large scale migrations, a great network of roads, and a precise, universally used language were God's cultural tools during the early advance of Christian missions. Initially Jews led the Gospel advance, but soon the Gentile peoples, sprinkled throughout the Roman Empire began turning to Christ and engaging in the mission. University of Texas professor Rodney Stark states in his work *Discovering God* that "It is by 350 CE the Christian population of the Empire numbered many millions."²¹

Birthered in revival, directed by God's Providence, and using the most advanced developments and technologies of the era, the first wave of Christian missions had spread west and north throughout the reaches of the Roman Empire—eventually leading approximately half of its population to faith in Christ.²² J. Herbert Kane then describes the next step in Christian missions:

Following the conversion of Constantine, Christianity entered a period of unprecedented expansion. During the 4th century, the number of Christians multiplied by some 400 percent. Between AD 500 and 1200, Christian missionaries—many of them monks—roamed all over Europe teaching and preaching the gospel and establishing monasteries which became centers of not only light and learning but also of missionary activity...Christianity then spread far beyond the borders of the Roman Empire.²³

¹⁹ Harold R. Cook, *Highlights of Christian Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), 16.

²⁰ Michael Pocock and others, *The Changing Face of Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 49.

²¹ Rodney Stark, *Discovering God* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 310.

²² *Ibid*, page 313. Stark's "Christian Growth Chart" projects that the Early Church began with about 1000 believers in 40 AD but had reached over 31 million followers of Christ by 350 AD representing nearly 53% of the Roman world.

²³ J. Herbert Kane, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), 258.

The growth of the Christian faith, even during the chaotic days of the Middle Ages, was changing the face of the civilized world and laying the foundation for further developments in Europe and beyond. Missionaries had also arrived in the Far East—starting with the Apostle Thomas in India and the Nestorians, through Alopen, had reached all the way into what is now China as early as 635 AD.²⁴

But it was not until the 18th century A.D. that a re-birth of global missions would be fully realized—and this “Gospel of the Kingdom” would be catapulted into every nation on earth.

The First Wave of Modern Missions – 1730s to 1850s – The Coastlands

The Reformation of the 16th century led by Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, and later John Calvin brought great resurgence of personal faith and biblical teaching in Roman Catholic Europe, but to its leaders, theology was primary and missions secondary. Ruth A. Tucker notes that Martin Luther was certain of Christ’s imminent return and claimed that the Great Commission was binding only upon the New Testament apostles.²⁵

Yet, in response to the Protestant Reformation, a renewal in Catholic missions surged during this time period under the leadership of Ignatius Loyola & the Society of Jesus—the Jesuits—and Francis Xavier, a Jesuit pioneer who brought the Gospel to Japan between 1542-52 and died while en route to China. During the 15th and 16th centuries other Catholic monks joined the ranks of Spanish and Portuguese explorers in taking their faith to the New World.²⁶ The Catholic faith was expanding during this season of Protestant renewal in Europe, but it would not be until the 1700s that the modern day missions movement would be born again through a German nobleman—Nicolaus von Zinzendorf-- and his unassuming group of religious refugees.

²⁴ One of my favorite books on this period is Thomas Cahill’s modern classic *How the Irish Saved Civilization* (New York: Doubleday, 1995). Without the literary skills of the courageous monk-missionaries of the Middle Ages, not only might the Bible been lost to antiquity, but also many of the great writings of Western civilization.

²⁵ Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 97.

²⁶ Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*. (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1982), 274-275.

be until the 1700s that the modern day missions movement would be born again through a German nobleman—Nicolaus von Zinzendorf-- and his unassuming group of religious refugees.

Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf was born in 1700 into wealth and nobility.

According to Tucker,

Count Zinzendorf was one of the most influential mission leaders of the modern Protestant missionary movement. He pioneered ecumenical evangelism, founded the Moravian church, and authored scores of hymns; but above all else he launched a world-wide missionary movement that set the stage for William Carey and the “Great Century” of missions that would follow.²⁷

In 1716, Zinzendorf, in conjunction with four teenage friends, started “The Order of the Grain of Mustard Seed” a club that was committed to advancing the Good News. In 1719, the youthful Zinzendorf visited an art gallery while studying in Halle, Denmark where he viewed a painting (Domenico Feti’s *Ecce Homo*) that showed Christ with a crown of thorns with this inscription: “All this I did for you. What are you doing for me?” This vision of Christ’s sacrifice and our responsibility to tell others changed Zinzendorf’s life and became the “mustard seed” of what would become the modern thrust of missions.

Zinzendorf’s call to ministry crystallized in 1722 when Protestant refugees, fleeing persecution from the European religious wars, sought refuge on his estate in Berthelsdorf, Bohemia, later named Herrnhut (the watch of the Lord). On August 13, 1727 revival broke out in a Lutheran Church service that had a profound impact of the community. Two years later an around-the-clock prayer watch was started (beginning with twenty-four people and eventually building up to seventy-two) that went on for over one hundred years. By 1738 the first Moravian missionaries had arrived in the Caribbean—some of them by the only means possible--by selling themselves into slavery. As tearful families bade them farewell as they boarded ships headed for

²⁷ Tucker, 100.

the New World, the courageous Moravians pioneers told them that Jesus was worthy to receive the due reward of his sufferings.²⁸ Most would never return.

In subsequent decades, Moravian missionaries would share the Christ's message throughout Scandinavia, the New World, and other parts of the world. Zinzendorf spent thirty-three years of his life overseeing a network of growing Moravian missionaries that eventually numbered in the hundreds.²⁹ The Moravians are one of the first groups since the time of Early Church who demonstrated a missions commitment to reach the world for Christ.

As important as the example of the Moravians were to this renewed thrust to evangelize the world, it would take the heroic labors of an English cobbler to fully launch the modern age of world missions. Ruth Tucker states that "The beginning of the Protestant missionary movement is conveniently dated as 1800. William Carey is the grand patriarch, and the setting is the subcontinent of India where the world's oldest and most complex religions were born."³⁰

For three hundred years, Christian explorers had been sailing the far reaches of world by ship. As early as 1600, Queen Elizabeth I had granted a charter to the East India Company which would put the British (and Christian) stamp on India for centuries to come.³¹

William Carey was born in 1761 near Northampton, England. At an early age he became apprenticed to a shoemaker and married his master's daughter named Dorothy in 1781. Carey had an unusual burden for the unreached (heathen) and when sharing his burden one day with a group of ministers, one of them exclaimed: "Young man, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine."³²

²⁸ Latourette, 961.

²⁹ Tucker, 102.

³⁰ Ibid, 121.

³¹ Ibid, 121.

³² Ibid, 123.

Carey didn't agree with that theological assessment and in 1792 he published *An Enquiry Into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (shortened title). In his eighty-seven page treatise he applauded the Moravians for their missions zeal.³³ After tracing the history of Christian missions, Carey used twenty-one pages of the book to list the countries of the world and their populations, lamenting that out of a then-global population of 731 million, "420 million lie in pagan darkness."³⁴ He called on the Christians of his day to use every means possible to reach them, and ended his appeal with these stirring words: "What a heaven it will be to see the myriads of poor heathens who have been brought to the knowledge of God. Surely a crown of rejoicing like this is worth aspiring to. Surely it is worthwhile to lay ourselves out with all our might, in promoting the cause, and the kingdom of Christ."³⁵

Soon thereafter he started the Baptist Missionary Society upon Isaiah 54:2-3 while uttering the words most associated with him: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." Carey set sail for India with his young family on a Danish vessel on June 13, 1793 and arrived on November 19 in Calcutta. This uneventful five month trip by sea-faring ship to a distant unreached coastland of the world would set the stage for what Kenneth Scott LaTourette would term "The Great Century" of missions activity.³⁶

Carey's young family eventually moved three hundred miles north of Calcutta to Malda. These were hard years of battling foreign diseases, learning the local dialects, and trying to understand the complexities of a teeming Indian culture. In 1800 the Carey family moved back nearer Calcutta to Serampore. Dorothy died here at the age of 51 in 1807. William Carey then

³³ William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (Leicester, England: Ann Richards printer, 1792), 37.

³⁴ Ibid, 62.

³⁵ Ibid, 87.

³⁶ Latourette, 961.

focused the remaining thirty-four years of his life in pioneering missionary efforts that began to bear fruit. Thirteen of those years went spent in marriage to Lady Charlotte Rumohr. He would also be joined by Joshua Marshman and William Ward for twenty-five of those years, becoming one of the most famous missionary teams in history.

Carey did extensive medical work in northeast India and also started Serampore College in 1819. Bruce Shelley comments on Carey's impact on world missions:

William Carey introduced Christian to missions on a grander scale. He thought in terms of the evangelization of whole countries...Above all, he saw that Christianity must be firmly rooted in the culture and traditions of the land in which it is planted. For all these reasons and more Carey gained the title, "Father of Modern Missions."³⁷

Many other missionaries, inspired by the courage and writings of William Carey, began to travel by ship to the various coastal seaports of Africa, Asia, the New World, and the Pacific. They included Adoniram Judson, the first American-based Protestant missionary who landed in Burma (modern-day Myanmar) in 1812 and Robert Morrison, missionary to China who was the first to translate the Scripture into Chinese. The Good News of Christ was finally leaving the borders of the old Roman Empire in a new wave of Protestant missionaries committed to reaching the populated, trade-oriented coastal cities of the world.³⁸

The missional keys of the first wave of modern missions appear to be similar to that of the Early Church.

Revival

The Moravian community had been transformed by spiritual revival during the summer of 1727, and the power of this awakening to repentance, love, forgiveness, and holy living, became the fountain of their missionary endeavors. In 1729, a yet unregenerate John Wesley

³⁷ Shelley, 374.

³⁸ Latourette, 1047-55.

encountered the revival faith of the Moravians on a ship making its way to the colony of Georgia. Upon returning to England, he sought out Peter Bohler, a Moravian pastor who encouraged him to “preach faith until he had faith.” Soon thereafter, John Wesley’s heart was “strangely warmed” and the Methodist revival, a part of the First Great Awakening, began to impact all of England.³⁹ John Wesley visited the Moravian community of Herrnhut in 1738 and said that it was like “heaven on earth.” By the time of his death in 1791, there were 100,000 Methodists in Britain and the New World and many of them were joining the growing missions movement.⁴⁰

An American-grown version of the First Great Awakening was another major driver in the surge of Christian missions during the early part of the 18th century. Most historians associate its birth with Congregational minister and theologian Jonathan Edwards whose sermon series on saving faith in the fall of 1734 led to an awakening in Northampton, Massachusetts that led to 1,200 conversions in the town.⁴¹ For ten years the awakening spread through the American colonies with an estimate 50,000 of 250,000 colonists making decisions for Christ during that period and spiritual foundations being laid for the American Revolution.⁴² During this decade, George Whitefield, an original member of John Wesley’s Oxford Holy Club, preached throughout England and the Colonies, sometimes speaking to crowds as large as 30,000 on the Boston Commons. George Whitefield was the most recognized preacher in colonial America and the revival he served was a fountain of Christian missions for decades to come.⁴³

³⁹ John Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 56.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 419.

⁴¹ R.C. Sproul, *The Spirit of Revival* (Wheaton, IL: Good News Publishers, 2000), 22-24.

⁴² *America’s Great Revivals*, (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1976), 12.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 15-24.

Prayer

The Moravian prayer watch at Herrnhut was the seed-bed for Moravian outreach. The equation was simple: When people pray fervently for the world, God sometimes allows them to be answers to their own prayers. Thus two years after the Moravians began their round-the clock praying, the first Moravian missionaries began to go out.⁴⁴

The First Great Awakening was also built on fervent, united prayer. Jonathan Edwards wrote a famous treatise on “concerts of prayer” in 1747 that crossed the Atlantic and instructed believers on both sides of the seas to unite in prayer for world evangelism. In direct opposition to the European Religious Wars, these concerts of prayer united Christians from many denominations around the need to seek the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest.⁴⁵

In 1806, a group of students at Williams College in Massachusetts were caught in a rain storm and retired to a “haystack” to wait out the storm. Robert Mills shared his burden while under the mountain of straw, and fervent prayers were offered for the evangelization of the world. The impromptu prayer meeting concluded with this affirmation of the Great Commission: “We can if we will!” Soon a student led prayer movement spread to many campuses and was an integral part of the Evangelical Awakening of the early 19th century. The first American missionary, Adoniram Judson, was called to the mission field by reading an account of the Haystack Prayer Meeting.⁴⁶

Unity

The Moravian revival of August 13, 1727 occurred when religious refugees of different nations and cultures repented of their sins, reconciled broken relationships, and committed to live

⁴⁴ Latourette, 1311.

⁴⁵ J. Edwin Orr, *The Eager Feet* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 89.

⁴⁶ Courtney Anderson, *To The Golden Shore: The Life of Adoniram Judson* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1987), 42.

in loving unity with each other. Their “love feasts,” a shared meal around a time of communion, brought back memories of Early Church commitment and fellowship and became famous throughout the world. During the American Great Awakening, pastors in various towns would preach the Gospel together in the streets—demonstrating the union that Christ’s love can bring. These were small steps during a very polarizing time, but the increase of unity among God’s people was a fulfillment of the prayer of Jesus in John 17 and allowed the Holy Spirit to awaken and send his workers to new fields of the world.⁴⁷

Outreach

The combination of revival, increased prayer, and demonstrated love among the 18th century believers was obviously a key to their vision for missions outreach. The Moravians set the early example and now many thousands were following. But there were other important factors in the rise of this first wave of modern missions to the coastlands of the world.

People and Providence

God chose the Jewish people to be the first members and missionaries of the Early Church and its mission. As Gentiles were converted to God, they joined the growing missions force. For the next fifteen centuries, as far as records exist,⁴⁸ the vast majority of Christian missionaries were Roman citizens like the Apostle Paul who were guided by God to take the Christian message westward from Jerusalem to the outer reaches of the Empire. Notable exceptions were the Apostle Thomas who, according to legend, was the first to take the Gospel

⁴⁷ OIT, 55.

⁴⁸ According to Thomas Cahill, much of the records of the missionary advance of the early centuries perished during the upheaval of the Middle Ages associated with the sack of Roman and fall of the Roman Empire.

to India,⁴⁹ and Saint Patrick, a Roman citizen from what is now Britain, who shared his faith in Christ cross culturally with the people of Ireland where he had once been a slave.⁵⁰

The first wave of modern missions saw the rise of the Protestant European missionary taking Christ's Good News far beyond the confines of the Roman Empire to coastal ports in the Americas, the islands of the Pacific, and (to a lesser extent) the major port cities of Asia, and Africa. As the first push of Early Church mission was westward, so the modern re-birth of missions also went primarily in a westward direction. The Americas were the first stop by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries, but soon the ports of the South Pacific and Asia were the next westward destinations. We will return to this theme of the westward thrust of the Gospel in other sections of the research.

Civilization and Technology

A major impetus to Christian outreach during this period was Gutenberg's 1450 invention of the printing press and printing of the first Bible in 1455 (180 copies of the first run). At the turn of the 21st century, TIME magazine named Johann Gutenberg the most important person of the past five hundred years because the invention and use of movable type vastly accelerated the multiplication of knowledge throughout the world.⁵¹ During the first modern wave of missions, Christian Bibles, books, tracts, and periodicals were instrumental in disseminating the Good News of Jesus Christ into the coastal cities of the world.

As the Roman roads and Greek language were essential to the spread of the Gospel in the first centuries, clearly the age of exploration, the invention of the compass and other advance navigational techniques allowed sea-faring ships to become the main technological tools that aided the first wave of the modern age of missions. Most of the colonial explorers were God-

⁴⁹ A.E. Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas* (London: Cambridge Publishers, 1905), 221-225.

⁵⁰ Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 107.

⁵¹ Paul Gray, "Johann Gutenberg (c. 1395-1468)," *TIME*, 26 December 1999, 23.

fearing men with a sense of adventure. Howard believes that one of the main motives for the explorations of Marco Polo and Christopher Columbus was evangelization⁵² Though there is evidence that the Chinese had discovered America two generations before the coming of Columbus and other Spanish, English, and Portuguese explorers,⁵³ it was the Christian-based Western explorers including Columbus, Vasco De Gama, Magellan, Francis Cook, and many others that provided the transportation necessary for evangelistic outreach. Since ships went to bustling port cities, this first wave of modern missions followed the coastal routes. God was using the infrastructure of that day to advance his global purposes.

This era also saw the expansion of the bi-vocational missionary who often used business or government appointments to advance the claims of Christ. The Moravians were famous for their work ethnic and business enterprises. Others followed their example. Howard notes that William Carey supported himself by running a factory and serving as a professor, Henry Martyn worked as a paid chaplain, Robert Morrison earned money as an interpreter, and David Livingstone was a hired consul for the British government in Africa.⁵⁴

The Second Wave of Modern Missions – 1850's to 1930s – The Interiors

The second wave of modern missions began in the middle of the 19th century—“The Great Century of Protestant Missions”—with David Livingstone’s ground-breaking exploration of the African interior and other missionaries such as Hudson Taylor in China sharing the Gospel in the inner regions of China. Missional advance was greatly expanding at this time, starting in the seaports of the world and then moving *inland*. This was the next logical step in bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person on earth. No one symbolized this era of rugged

⁵² David M. Howard, *Jesus Christ: Lord of the Universe, Hope of the World*. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press), 115.

⁵³ Gavin Menzie, *1421: The Year China Discovered America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008) chronicles the legendary voyages of the Ming Dynasty’s Zheng He and his famous floating armada.

⁵⁴ Howard, 115.

Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person on earth. No one symbolized this era of rugged missionary penetration more than the adventurer and explorer David Livingstone—one of the world’s most intriguing celebrities of the 19th century.

David Livingstone, “the apostle of Africa”⁵⁵ was born in Blamttyre, Scotland on March 19, 1813. He was ordained as a missionary in 1840 and set sail for South Africa, arriving in early 1841. He worked among the Bakwain people for a number of years.

In 1852, Livingstone sent his family back to England and began the first of three major expeditions to explore and evangelize the African interior. The watchword of his life had become, “Fear God and work hard.”⁵⁶ In 1855 he crossed the entire continent—never before accomplished by a European. Livingstone then returned to his family in England and wrote a book on his missionary travels in 1857 that made him famous and inspired hundreds of eager missionaries to go to the African continent in the coming decades.

Livingstone made a triumphant return to Africa in 1858 to explore the Zambesi River. The trip ended in disappointment when it was found that the Zambesi was not fully navigatable. Livingstone persevered on--exploring and sharing Christ in Central Africa. Further travels attempting to locate the headwaters of the Nile River and discovering Lake Tanganyika in 1867 led to his final book entitled *Last Journals*. On November 10, 1871 he shared the now-famous rendezvous with Henry M. Stanley who had been sent by the New York Herald to find him in the depths of Africa. Stanley was a self-professed atheist who later converted to Christ because of Livingstone’s example.⁵⁷

Two years later, sick and pushing onward, David Livingstone was found dead-- praying on his knees for his beloved Africa in a hut on April 29, 1873. His physical heart was fittingly

⁵⁵ Tucker, 125.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 85.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 109.

buried in African soil, but his body was eventually brought back to England where one of Britain's most beloved sons was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey. Worcester explains:

As a missionary explorer, he stood alone, travelling 29,000 miles in Africa, adding to the known portion of the globe about a million square miles...He was the first European to traverse the entire length of Lake Tanganyika...He greatly increased the knowledge of the geography, fauna and flora of the interior, yet never lost sight of the great objects of his life, the putting down of the slave trade, and the evangelization of Africa.⁵⁸

Livingstone had exposed the breadth and beauty of the African continent for others to evangelize and disciple. As a missionary, he was a forerunner that opened the country for Christianity to enter in.⁵⁹

On the opposite side of the world, other fearless missionaries were advancing the faith into the inner regions of darkest Asia. Their greatest challenge was China. Carl Lawrence and David Wang explain in *The Coming Influence of China*: "The early missionaries established beachheads for the gospel along the coast. Hudson Taylor spearheaded the movement into the inland. Today, their work is exploding with growth."⁶⁰

James Hudson Taylor was the man God chose to penetrate the mysterious interior of the Middle Kingdom known as China. Fred Barlow believes that Taylor's strength was found in his prayer life and ability to receive vision and direction from God.⁶¹ Taylor was born in 1832 in Bursley of Yorkshire, England. He worked as a teenager in Drainside, Hull to gain some medical experience and sailed for China in 1853 at the age of 22. He served others workers and learned the Chinese culture in Shanghai during his early years, but he was never happy living with other missionaries. Less than a year after he arrived in China he began making journeys into the interior. On one of those trips he traveled up the Yangtze River and stopped at nearly sixty

⁵⁸ Tucker, 110.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 111.

⁶⁰ Carl Lawrence, *The Coming Influence of China* (Gresham: Vision House, 1996), 3.

⁶¹ Fred Barlow, *Profiles in Evangelism* (Murphreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1986), 2.

settlements never before visited by a Protestant missionary.⁶² Thus began over fifty years of ministry in China that would see Taylor launch and organize the largest missions thrust into the nation and greatly change the face of Protestant missions.

Early in his travels, Taylor concluded that to reach the Chinese missionaries he needed to become one of them. J.C. Pollock tells us that Taylor changed his dress and hair to become Chinese—which wasn't easy.⁶³ Taylor did ten missionary journeys in his first two years (1854-56). He and his family returned to England in 1861 to write about the mission to China, recruit more missionaries, and raise funds for the work.

On 25 June 1865, in England, Taylor dedicated himself to God for the founding of a new society to undertake the evangelization of the "unreached" inland provinces of China. He founded the China Inland Mission together with William Thomas Berger shortly thereafter. In less than one year, they accepted 24 missionaries and raised over \$3,000 (about \$200,000 in 2010 terms).⁶⁴ In early 1866 Taylor published the first edition of the *Occasional Paper of the China Inland Mission* which later became *China's Millions*. Taylor was establishing the first Protestant faith mission which would become a model for many others in subsequent years.

Taylor and his enlarged family of twenty-four new missionaries returned to China in 1866, put on their Chinese clothes and hairstyles, and set about with renewed zeal to win the inland masses. Their enlarged missions team traveled down the Grand Canal of China to make their first settlement in Hangzhou. In 1868 the Taylors took a party of missionaries up to Yangzhou to start a new work. Despite various accidents, regular bouts with disease, and the unusual rigors of missionary life, many Chinese came to the Lord.

⁶² J.C. Pollock, *Hudson Taylor and Maria: Pioneers in China* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 45.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

Over the remainder of his life, Hudson Taylor would grow the fruit of the China Inland Mission to eight hundred missionaries serving in 205 mission stations that had led 125,000 Chinese to Christ.⁶⁵ Hudson Taylor died in 1905--leaving behind one of the greatest outreach legacies in the annals of Christian missions.

Hudson Taylor had a wide vision, a systematic approach, and great organizational skills. Ralph Winter and Steve Hawthorne state that the China Inland Mission was a very cooperative servant organization, with over 6000 missionaries. They say it took twenty years for other missions to join their emphasis in the unreached, inland frontiers.⁶⁶

During this second wave of modern missions, another vital movement of the Holy Spirit was increasing the ranks of missionaries worldwide-- especially the inland frontiers. The "Student Volunteer Movement" (SVM) was born at a Mount Hermon Missions Conference in Massachusetts in 1886. Its beginning had occurred even earlier when seven Cambridge University (English) students, including C.T. Studd., turned their backs on their career ambitions and committed their lives to foreign missions. The movement prospered for some fifty years, during which time, according to J. Herbert Kane, it was been instrumental in sending 20,500 students to the foreign missionary field, most of them from North America. During the early twentieth century it is estimated that student volunteers constituted half of the total Protestant overseas missionary force.⁶⁷

The greatest mobilizer of these student missionaries was John R. Mott who attended a small university in Iowa. In the summer of 1886, Mott represented Cornell University's Y.M.C.A. at the first international, interdenominational student Christian conference ever held.

⁶⁵ Barlow, 3.

⁶⁶ Winter, Ralph D. and Steven C. Hawthorne, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1981), 37.

⁶⁷ John R. Mott, *Cooperation and the World Mission* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1935), 87.

At that conference, which gathered 251 men from eighty-nine colleges and universities, one hundred men-- including Mott-- pledged to work in foreign missions. Two years later, the “Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions” was born.

The sum of Mott's work is impressive. He wrote sixteen books on missions, crossed the Atlantic over one hundred times and the Pacific fourteen times, (averaging thirty-four days on the ocean per year for fifty years), delivered thousands of speeches, and chaired innumerable conferences.⁶⁸ Many others joined him in calling the youth of their generation to global missions.

Tucker states:

John R. Mott, perhaps more than any other individual, influenced the surge of students into overseas missions...The highlight of Mott's career as a missionary statesman was the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, which he organized and chaired. This ten day conference, composed of 1,355 delegates was the first missionary conference of its kind...a high point of missionary enthusiasm; and the call “to evangelize the world in this generation.”⁶⁹

The “Great Century” would spill over into the first three decades of the 20th century with many notable missionaries joining the swelling tide of world evangelism. Let's now look at the keys to missional success that accompanied this remarkable era.

Revival

What paved the way for the second wave of modern missions was a related second spiritual awakening known as the “Evangelical Revival” that impacted the British Isles, other European nations, and especially the United States during the 1790s to 1830s. Revival historian J. Edwin Orr says:

There is no doubt that the general awakening of the 1790s and 1800s, with its antecedents, was the prime factor in the extraordinary burst of missionary enthusiasm and social service, first in Britain, then in Europe and North America... William Carey, a founder and pioneer of the Baptist Missionary Society, was one of a group who first set up in England the simultaneous prayer union that spread throughout evangelical

⁶⁸ Mott, 88.

⁶⁹ Tucker, 324.

Christendom and achieved its avowed purpose in the revival of religion and the extension of the Kingdom of Christ overseas...The revival proved dynamic.⁷⁰

The Evangelical Revival especially touched college campuses on both sides of the Atlantic, and in the United States was a leading impetus for the student missions movements that would emerge later in the century. In the United States, Orr believes this renewal produced many evangelists that greatly influenced the northeast and southern region of the country.⁷¹

A Second Great Awakening known as the “Great Revival” began in 1857 in response to an October Stock Market crash and the ensuing panic that followed. During these years revivalist Charles Finney preached in Rochester New York with over 100,000 people making commitments to Christ and there being lasting spiritual fruit in that city for over one hundred years following.⁷²

Prayer

If revival is the “gun” of Christian missions, then certainly prayer is the “gunpowder” that delivers the ammunition.⁷³ The Haystack Prayer Meeting, Concerts of Prayer, and the growing Evangelical Revival prayer movements had a great impact on the missionary success of the “Great Century.”

One of the most unusual prayer movements of the period was the lay-led “noon prayer meetings” that helped ignite the Great Revival of 1857. The man most credited with this prayer revival was Jeremiah Lanphier, a New York merchant. On September 23, 1857, Lanphier climbed creaking stairs to the third story of an old church building on Fulton Street in Lower

⁷⁰ Orr, 1975, 196.

⁷¹ Ibid, 197.

⁷² *America's Great Revivals.*, 78-82.

⁷³ Ron Boehme, *Prayer is the Gunpowder of Missions*, available at <http://usrenewal.squarespace.com/home/2010/1/29/prayer-is-the-gunpowder-of-global-missions.html>. The article was originally published in the book *Giving Ourselves to Prayer* by Dan R. Crawford, (Terre Haute, IN: Prayer Shop Publishing, 2008).

Manhattan and sat down to wait. He'd place a sign on the street below that read "Prayer Meeting from 12 to 1 o'clock—Stop 5, 10, or 20 minutes, or the whole hour as your time admits." For months few had joined him. This particular week, six people eventually trudged in. The following week twenty had gathered to pray, and the next week—forty.

On October 14, 1857 the nation was staggered by the worst financial panic in its history. Banks closed, men were out of work, and families went hungry. In a few short weeks, the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting had taken over the whole building with crowds of more than 3,000. Within six months, 10,000 businessmen (out of a population of 800,000) were gathering daily in New York City for prayer.

The revival of prayer soon jumped the Atlantic Ocean and spread across the United States, impacting most of the major cities in the nation. After a number of years, and continuing during the American Civil War, it is estimated that more than one million people came to Christ including 43,388 Southern Methodists, 135,517 Northern Methodists, and 92,243 Baptists.⁷⁴ This particular prayer movement was mostly led by laymen, not clergy, and certainly formed the backdrop of the large missionary surge that went around the world in the coming decades.

Unity

The revivals and their corresponding prayer thrusts created a strong bond between believers, breaking down denominational barriers, and encouraging people to work together in the spirit of Jesus' longest recorded prayer found in John 17:21, 22. In this passage Jesus shows the direct correlation between unity and world evangelism.

The 1850s to 1930s also saw the emergence of some of the world's first united missions conferences focused on completing the Great Commission. Evangelist D.L. Moody had called for the Mount Hermon Conference in 1886, the first united national intercollegiate Bible

⁷⁴ *America's Great Revivals*, 52-72.

convention in America. The immediate outcome of the Mount Hermon Conference was that 100 young men decided to give their lives to missions—among them, the young John R. Mott who would lead the charge of the Student Volunteer Movement for decades. As previously mentioned, Mott later served as the organizer of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 composed of 1,355 delegates--the first missionary conference of its kind that united the Church around the world to complete the task of world evangelization.⁷⁵

Outreach

Church historian Kenneth Scott LaTourette believes 1815-1914 was a distinct period in the history of mankind and of Christianity.⁷⁶ The ranks of known missionaries grew exponentially during this period. LaTourette notes that in 1914 Protestant missionary staffs was said to be 5,462. In 1895 about two-thirds were from the British Isles, approximately one-third were from the United States, and between two and three percent were from the Continent of Europe. In 1914, about half were from the United States, about two-fifths from the British Isles, and nearly one-tenth from the Continent of Europe.⁷⁷

People and Providence

During this second great wave in modern missions, God directed his people to reach out to those beyond their first reach—the seaports of the world—into the interiors of previous unknown and unexplored tribes and nations. It was risky to venture into these inland unknowns due to the prevalence of new diseases, fierce or unfriendly tribes, language barriers, and strange customs and manners. But starting with David Livingstone in Africa and being inspired further

⁷⁵ Tucker, 324.

⁷⁶ LaTourette, 1063.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 1325.

by Hudson Taylor's brave accomplishments in China, thousands of young missionaries had ventured forth to answer the call.

A remarkable change in missions personnel during this era was the addition of women involved in missionary work. Women had always served as vital disseminators of the Gospel through child-bearing, family responsibilities, and one-on-one impartation of faith. Some historians credit European women, forced to marry their Viking conquerors and leave their homelands as domestic slaves in medieval times, as most responsible for bringing the faith of Jesus into what is now Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. During the Middle Ages, various nuns such as the famed Bridgett of Kildare and Claire of the Poor Claires—a group related to St. Francis of Assisi—were vital in the spread of Christian truth.

But the 19th century brought a freedom and release to women in missions that greatly impacted the history of world evangelism. By 2001 nearly 60% of the world's missionaries were women. That trend began during the second wave of modern missions—and was catapulted into being through the American Civil War.⁷⁸

Six hundred thousand men lost their lives in the War Between the States. With such a significant loss of male leadership, earning ability, and traditional roles in some families, women stepped into the void to rebuild both the American nation and also the American Church. David M. Howard gives this perspective:

The Civil War strongly affected the progress of women in missions. It was an educative force in America, for through it women were driven to organize because of their patriotism and their pity for the fighting men. In the ten years following the War scores of organizations, including many new missionary societies, were launched... The first single woman on record who was sent to a foreign land was Betsy Stockton, and she was black.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Paul S. Boyer, "Missionary Movement." *The Oxford Companion to United States History*. 2001. *Encyclopedia.com*. <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O119-MissionaryMovement.html> [accessed April 5, 2010].

⁷⁹ Howard, 127.

This new opportunity for single women joining the growing missionary army produced such missionary heroes as Lottie Moon in China, the “patron saint” of Southern Baptist Missions (1873-1912), Amy Carmichael who served in India for fifty-five years (1895-1951) and Gladys Aylward, also a female pioneer in China (1932-1957).

Civilization & Technology

One of the drivers of the second wave of modern missions was the Industrial Revolution that created stronger and more affluent middle classes in both Europe and the Americas. There was more money to make, more raw materials that needed to be procured, and greater wealth being produced that could be used in world evangelization.

The Industrial Revolution was a period from the 18th to the 19th century where major changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and transport had a great impact on the social and cultural conditions starting in the British Isles. It then spread throughout Europe, North America, and eventually the world. The beginning of the Industrial Revolution marked a major turning point in human history with nearly every aspect of daily life being influenced in some way.⁸⁰

Starting in the later part of the 18th century a transition began in parts of Great Britain's previously manual labor and draft-animal-based economy towards machine-based manufacturing. It started with the mechanization of the textile industries, the development of iron-making techniques and the increased use of refined coal. Trade expansion was enabled by the introduction of canals, improved roads and railways. The introduction of steam power fueled primarily by coal, wider utilization of water wheels and powered machinery underpinned the dramatic increases in production capacity. The development of all-metal machine tools in the first two decades of the 19th century facilitated the manufacture of more production machines for

⁸⁰ LaTourette, 1068-69.

manufacturing in other industries. The effects spread throughout Western Europe and North America during the 19th century, eventually affecting most of the world.⁸¹

Christian missionaries greatly benefited from the Industrial Revolution allowing travel on steam and coal-based ships, better medicines to ward off exotic diseases, a high standard of living that increased giving to mission causes, and a general optimism produced by Christian based capitalism—including the America vision of “Manifest Destiny”—a term originally used in 1839 to describe American expansion from the Pacific but later expanded to include America’s “mission” in the world.⁸²

As Great Britain earned the title of global missions leader of the 19th century, the ground was being prepared for American ascendancy to that position in the 20th century. Tucker states:

By the middle of the twentieth century the United States had become the missionary “sender” of the world... They were different in many ways from their missionary forebears. They were women in increasing numbers, and they were better educated with stronger theological views—university educated student volunteers... Like their predecessors, they were hardy individualists, tempered by waves of revivals and spurred on by a pioneering spirit—and the latest technology—to advance the Gospel.⁸³

LaTourette’s “Great Century” (1815-1914) proved a great boon to world evangelization.⁸⁴ But the best was yet to come.

The Third Wave of Modern Missions – 1930s to 2000 – Unreached Peoples with Specialization

The 20st century missions focus progressed from the coastlands and interiors to a third wave of missions outreach among *unreached peoples* of the world numbering 6000 world-wide. With most of the seaports and major inland areas seeing increased missionary activity, it was necessary for those efforts to be more focused on those still needing to hear the Gospel and

⁸¹ Anders Stephenson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1995), 4.

⁸² *Ibid*, 4.

⁸³ Tucker, 285.

⁸⁴ LaTourette devotes three hundred pages of his seminal work, *A History of Christianity: Reformation to the Present* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975) to this important era.

necessary for those efforts to be more focused on those still needing to hear the Gospel and increasingly specialized in their approach. This “honed and skilled” approach would lead to the greatest harvest century of all time. In fact, more people would give their lives to Christ worldwide during the 20th century that the previous nineteen centuries combined.⁸⁵ If LaTourette was right in labeling the 19th century “The Great Century” of Christian expansion, then the 20th century will certainly go down in history as “The Greater Century” of Christian missions.⁸⁶

I will initially highlight three missional pioneers who serve as models and innovators during this period: Donald MacGavran, Cameron Townsend, and Ralph Winter. MacGavran was one of the first to teach the concept of “people groups,” Townsend applied that understanding to language translation and founded one of the world’s largest missionary organizations (Wycliffe Bible Translators), and Winter main-streamed the unreached people group focus for the global Church. Together, they helped set the focus and strategy of the 20th century wave toward completing the Great Commission.

Donald MacGavran

Donald MacGavran (1897-1990) was a missionary, educator, author, and founding dean of Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission in Pasadena, California (1965-71). He was born in India, the son and grandson of missionaries. At the age of thirteen, his father took him to Scotland where his father was serving as one of the 1355 delegates to John R. Mott’s famed Edinburgh Missionary Conference. He married Mary Howard in 1922, and in 1923 the young couple were commissioned as missionaries and sailed back to India where they would serve for the better part of three decades in educational and evangelistic ministry.

⁸⁵ As chronicled in the ground-breaking atlas of global Christianity by David B. Barrett, ed., *World Christian Encyclopedia* (New York: Oxford University Press), 3.

⁸⁶ Patrick Johnstone, *The Church is Bigger Than You Think* (Pasadena: William Carey Library Publishers, 1998), 218.

During the period 1954-1960, MacGavran began to teach and write extensively about the theories he had developed during his time in India including his important ground-breaking book *Bridges of God* in which he stated, "To Christianize a whole people, the first thing is not to snatch individuals out of it and into a different society. Peoples become Christian where a Christward movement occurs within that society."⁸⁷ MacGavran taught a missiological perspective of *contextualization* of the gospel for each culture that was crucial for its widespread advance among an exploding world population. He said that we were in a new age where thousands would acknowledge Christ as Lord, and grow in full discipleship⁸⁸ Ralph Winter later commented that MacGavran's understanding of utilizing the "bridges" of family and kinship ties within each people group thereby promoting "people movements" to Christ was crucial to 20th century evangelization.⁸⁹ MacGavran helped a new generation of missionaries move in their thinking from the seaports, and interiors of countries into the sociological groups within each nation who needed to be reached for Christ.

Cameron Townsend

Cameron Townsend was another 20th century missions pioneer that helped the church realize its need for specialized tasks among hidden peoples. According to Winter, Cam Townsend was one of the three most influential missionary leaders of the last two centuries.⁹⁰ Townsend believed that the greatest missionary is the Bible was the mother tongue. It didn't need a furlough and was never considered a foreigner.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Donald MacGavran, *Bridges of God* (New York: Friendship Press, 1955), 324.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 332.

⁸⁹ Winter & Hawthorne, 137.

⁹⁰ Claude Hickman, *William Cameron Townsend*, <http://www.thetravelingteam.org/node/125> [accessed 28 February 2010].

⁹¹ "The Greatest Missionary," *Houston Baptist University* Volume 3, Issue 2 (January-March 2006), 3.

While working in Guatemala in 1917, Townsend had an experience that changed his perspective. One day a Cakchiquel Indian that Cameron had been living among came to him and looked curiously at his Spanish Bible. Townsend explained to him that it was the God's Word, the Creator of all mankind. The man replied crudely: "If your God is so smart, why doesn't he speak my language?" Townsend was stunned to find that this man, though he lived in Guatemala, was one of the 200,000 Cakchiquel people that spoke no Spanish. For the next thirteen years he dedicated his life to the Cakchiquel Indians, translating the Bible into their language in ten years. Other missionaries had done translation work for centuries, but Cam Townsend was the first to see the specialty need of translating the Bible into every language on earth. In 1942, he started Wycliffe Bible Translators which serves today in over ninety nations and are zeroing in via "Vision 2025" on putting the Scriptures into the remaining 2200 languages that have yet to be translated.⁹²

Cameron Townsend, affectionately called "Uncle Cam" by his associates, had found a "specialty area" of ministry that could greatly speed the sharing of the Good News--putting God's Word in the mother tongue of every person on earth. According to Claude Hickman, Townsend was credited with beginning the final missions era that we are living in today, focusing not on just reaching continents and inland countries, but on every distinct ethnic group, or people group in the world.⁹³

Ralph Winter

A third modern missionary pioneer—Ralph Winter (1924-2009)--founder of the US Center for World Missions—would take the concepts of Donald MacGavran and the methods of Cam Townsend into crystallizing the next crucial step of missions in the Third Wave of the 20th

⁹² Wycliffe Bible Translators, <http://www.wycliffe.org/About/Statistics.aspx>.

⁹³ Hickman [accessed 28 February 2010].

century: focusing on *hidden or unreached people groups*. It was Dr. Winter who coined the term “hidden peoples” at his speech to the 1974 Lausanne Congress—the latest gathering in a series of conventions dedicated to completing the Great Commission. It was during this presentation that Winter shifted global mission strategy from a focus on political boundaries to a focus on distinct people groups. Winter argued that instead of targeting countries, mission agencies needed to target the thousands of people groups worldwide, over half of which have not been reached with the gospel message. For the past forty years, reaching the unreached peoples of the world has been the most prominent banner of the Third Wave of Modern Missions.

After delivering his defining message at the 1974 Lausanne Congress, Winter and his wife Roberta founded the US Center for World Mission on a sprawling college campus in Pasadena, California that now includes the William Carey Library (1976), the William Carey International University (1977), and the International Society for Frontier Missiology (1986). Up until his death in 2009, Ralph Winter taught the worldwide Body of Christ that missionaries needed to do more than just evangelize. People groups needed to be reached through viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movements that were people movements.⁹⁴

Thus 20th century missologists began to organize the remaining task of Christian missions by unreached people groups (Greek *ethnos* or ethnic groups). Donald MacGavran had discovered the need, Cam Townsend had organized a specialty ministry to confront it, and Ralph Winter had coined the term and explained the concept that would drive the Third Wave in Modern Missions. Millions of individuals, thousands of churches, and hundreds of organizations would rise to meet that need in the 20th century and beyond.

The second half of the 20th century saw the strength of the global Church move into the Southern Hemisphere and Two-Thirds World missionaries begin to take their place in the annals

⁹⁴ Ralph D. Winter, “What is an Unreached People Group?” *Mission Frontiers Bulletin* (May-June 1995), 1.

of Christian missions as the up-and-coming missions force. Tucker states that the greatest change in mission outreach that occurred during the course of the twentieth century was the increasing involvement of non-Western Christians reaching out cross culturally.⁹⁵ Luis Bush, who in 1989 coined the term “10-40 Window” and who served as the leader of the A.D. 2000 movement describes the phenomenon of Third World evangelism this way: “Missionaries from the Two Thirds World? Just a few years ago the idea would have seemed unthinkable. But not now! Today the rapidly growing Two Thirds World mission force is one of the most remarkable factors in world evangelism...This vital resource has the potential to reach the whole world with the Gospel. The consequences could be incalculable.”⁹⁶

Though there are numerous Third-World missionaries that highlight the third wave of modern missions in the 20th century, I will briefly highlight four Asians and one African that symbolize the changing face of missions.

Paul Yonggi Cho

Paul Yonggi Cho was a young Assemblies of God pastor who made his way to the capital city of Seoul, Korea in 1956 to begin a small church that grew to about fifty believers the first year. Depending on all-night prayer and retreating to various “prayer mountain” sites to cry out to God for revival and world evangelization, Cho’s church grew to 400 members by 1959. Focusing on prayer, faith-healing, and cell group ministry, the Yoido Full Gospel Church expanded in 1982 to accommodate ten thousand people per service (with nearly 250,000 members), then reached 400,000 in 1984, 700,000 in 1992 and 830,000 by 2007. In the 1990s, Cho decided that rather than expanding further, the church should establish satellite churches in

⁹⁵ Tucker, 396.

⁹⁶ Luis Bush, *Funding World Missions* (Wheaton, IL: World Evang. Fellowship Missions Commission, 1995), 9.

other parts of the city and around the world. Today, Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea is the world's largest Christian congregation.

Samuel Kang

Samuel Kang and his wife, Sarah, left South Korea for Nigeria in 1980 when there were only 93 Korean missionaries worldwide. During the next eleven years, Samuel and Sarah Kang raised a family, planted Nigerian churches, and started a Bible college for Nigerian pastors. Kang returned to Korea in 1991 and currently leads an ambitious 25-year plan to help South Korea send out more missionaries than any other country. He launched a mission agency and became an academic dean at Chongshin University and director of the Korea World Mission Association (KWMA). Kang and the association plan to send 100,000 full-time Korean missionaries by 2030. They hope to mobilize 50 percent of Korean churches to be involved in missions, recruit 1 of every 300 Korean Christians to become missionaries, adopt 200 unreached people groups every five years, and send one million tentmakers into difficult-access countries by 2020.⁹⁷

Robert Moll details the amazing growth in Korean missions, pointing out that South Korea sends out more missionaries than any other country except the United States; in 1991 they sent out 1,200 missionaries, up from eight just eleven years before; Today that number has reached 13,000.⁹⁸

K.P. Yohannan

K.P. Yohannan grew up in a small village in South India. After eight years of missions service in the subcontinent, he went to the United States for his theological studies and also pastored a church. However, he was unable to forget the untold millions who have not heard

⁹⁷ Robert Moll, "Mission Incredible," *Christianity Today* (March 2006), 3.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

about the love of Christ in the 10/40 window.⁹⁹ In 1979, he resigned from his pastorate to give his full time to missions. From that small beginning, today Gospel for Asia has become an effective mission movement with two thousand workers in eleven Asian nations—most of them Indians. K.P. Yohannan spends a significant part of his time traveling to many nations and speaking on the behalf the suffering and needy in our world. His call to the body of Christ is to become His authentic followers and impact their generation for Christ. He has authored more than 200 books published in Asia and seven in the West. As a new breed of Indian missionary evangelist, Yohannan believes that,

Around the world today, the Holy Spirit is breaking over Asian and African nations, raising up a new army of missionaries. Thousands of dedicated men and women are bringing the salvation story to their own people—millions of souls in closed countries who would probably never learn about the love of God by any other means. These humble, obscure pioneers of the Gospel are taking up the banner of the cross where colonial-era missions left off. They are the next wave of mission history—the native missionary movement.¹⁰⁰

Liu Zhenying (Brother Yun)

Liu Zhenying, known to much of the world as “Brother Yun,” is an example of the growing impact and outreach of the Chinese Church. Though closed off to the rest of the world for more than six hundred years, China now reports one of the largest and fastest growing church movements on record led by a courageous group of persecuted pastors and underground house church leaders, most of whom are unknown to history. Brother Yun was saved at the age of sixteen when his father was miraculously healed of cancer.¹⁰¹ After asking God to provide him a Bible, Yun fell to his knees, committed to “devour its contents like a hungry child,” and share it throughout his region of China.

⁹⁹ Gospel for Asia website, <http://www.gfa.org/about/aboutkp/> [accessed 7 March 2010].

¹⁰⁰ K.P. Yohannan, *Revolution in World Missions*, (Carrollton, TX: Gospel for Asia Books, 2000), 18.

¹⁰¹ Brother Yun, *The Heavenly Man*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2002), 25.

Under great threat of arrest, he began to travel to many villages and towns in southern China sharing the Good news and seeing thousands come to Christ. Brother Yun was eventually caught and arrested (three times) and spent many years in harsh Chinese labor camps and prisons. During one stint in prison in 1984, he miraculously fasted without food or water for 74 days, his weight dropping to a mere 66 pounds. God restored him and the miracle led to many conversions.¹⁰² During this same time period, many courageous house church leaders were being hunted and imprisoned including Brother Zhen and Brother Xu who were part of a vast network of house church leaders who were seeing millions of people turn to Christ during the revival decades of the 80s and 90s.

Brother Yun now travels the world telling of the Chinese revival. One of his favorite subjects is the “Back to Jerusalem” movement, a commitment by the Chinese Church to take the Gospel across Central Asia to the city where it all began. The vision was started in 1921 in Shandong Province by a Christian named Jing Dianying who encouraged believers to commit to five things to complete the Great Commission: Sacrifice, abandonment, poverty, suffering and death.¹⁰³ By the 1940s, there were 20,000 Chinese believers enlisted in the cause throughout China, and today the commitment stands at over 100,000 committed to going. Brother Yun says that the Chinese church is willing to pay the price.¹⁰⁴

Adelaja Sunday

Adelaja Sunday, a native of Nigeria, is an African example of the growing Two-Thirds World mission force. Sunday was invited to study in the USSR before *perestroika* (openness) at the age of nineteen. He came to faith only weeks before travelling to the USSR. Upon graduation in from Bible College in Nigeria in 1993, Sunday went out as a bi-vocational missionary to Kiev,

¹⁰² Brother Yun, 107-131.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 279.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 289.

Ukraine, where the Lord then spoke to him about starting a church. Today Sunday is pastor of the "Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of all Nations," which after ten years of existence, has grown to more than 23,000 members. Over seventy other churches have been planted by "The Embassy" in Ukraine and other nations, including Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, United States, India and United Arab Emirates. The mother congregation in Kiev is Europe's largest church—led by this enterprising African.¹⁰⁵

Twelve of Adelaja Sunday's "disciples" each have responsibility for between 1,000 and 2,500 members who meet in cell groups. Sunday rents a sports arena, and holds several services each weekend. He aims to send his twelve closest associates out to plant sister churches throughout the world. Adelaja Sunday is a new breed of Africa pastor/missionary/evangelist who is taking missions from Africa back to the continent from which it came and also to many other nations.

These five stories are typical of the new breed of missionaries that are becoming the present and future face of missions. They exist because the 20st century saw an amazing tidal wave of global missions expansion in the Two-Thirds World developing nations, especially those in the Southern Hemisphere:

- Africa was 4% Christian in 1900. In 2000, 50% of those below the Sahara desert professed faith in Christian—over 300 million people.¹⁰⁶
- Latin America – In 1900 there were 50,000 Protestants (people who claimed to be born again). In 2000 there are 100 million of whom most were Pentecostals.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ "The Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of All Nations" web-site at http://www.familyaidinternational.com/embassy_of_god/who_is_sunday_adelaja.htm. [accessed 7 March 2010].

¹⁰⁶ Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 47.

¹⁰⁷ Todd Johnson, *The Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 311.

- Korea boasts 7 of the 11 largest churches in the world, is 30% Christian, and is the second largest sending nation in the world with 13,000 missionaries serving in other lands.¹⁰⁸
- China went from one million believers in Christ in 1900 to 40- 100 million in 2000.¹⁰⁹

Luis Bush rightly comments: “The spread of Christianity into the non-Western world is one of the great success stories of all history... This massive extension has been a working faith. No other cause in history has fostered such far-reaching humanitarian efforts of goodwill as has Christianity.”¹¹⁰

Let’s once again look at the four spiritual factors we’ve been chronicling—revival, prayer, unity, and outreach-- that fueled the growth of the Third Wave of Modern Missions to the unreached peoples of the world, especially extending Christ’s Kingdom in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Revival

More significant spiritual awakening or revivals took place in the 20th century than in any other era. One that seemed to launch this great century of outreach was the Welsh Revival that began in 1904 under the leadership of Evan Roberts.¹¹¹

In 1906, African America William J. Seymour started revival meetings on Azusa Street in Los Angeles that became characterized by healings, speaking in tongues, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. People came from all over the world to visit this “Pentecostal Outpouring” which eventually birthed such vital denominations as the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, and the predominantly African-American Church of God in Christ. According to historian Vinson

¹⁰⁸ Patrick Johnstone, 269.

¹⁰⁹ Carl Lawrence, *The Coming Influence of China* (Gresham, Oregon: Vision House Publishers, 2006), 85.

¹¹⁰ Luis Bush, *Funding World Missions* (Wheaton, IL: World Evangelical Fellowship Missions Commission, 2001), 480.

¹¹¹ Charles Clarke, *Pioneers of Revival* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971), 28.

640 million members.¹¹² The Assemblies of God World Missions department is one of the world's largest denominational missions with 2719 cross cultural missionaries in 2008.¹¹³

China also saw a spiritual awakening in 1906 under the leadership of missionary Jonathan Goforth.¹¹⁴ This revitalization and expansion of the Chinese church laid the foundation for the greatest numerical revival of the 20th century—the explosion of the Chinese Church under communism from 1949 to the present. The Korean nation saw a move of the Holy Spirit in 1907-10 which especially impacted the north and then south.¹¹⁵ Nearly one-third of South Korea are now born-again Christians. Another move of God of the 20th century took place in Indonesia in the 1960s through evangelists such as Mel Tari who saw many people healed and even some rise from the dead.¹¹⁶

In the 1960s and 70s the Jesus Movement and Charismatic Renewal burst upon the scene in many nations with many hippies and other young people coming to Christ. Though not a full blown revival, the charismatic renewal was an important time of revitalization for numerous individuals and denominations who became filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered to share their faith.¹¹⁷

The 20th century saw many different kinds of Christian revival movements spring up around the world. It is out of those revivals—especially the building force of the Pentecostal and Charismatic renewals—that the Third Wave of Modern Missions has found its source and fuel for advancing the cause of world evangelization.

¹¹² Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 130.

¹¹³ Worldwide Assemblies of God Constituency 2009 Report, *Personnel Report – Assemblies of God World Missions*, published June 3, 2008)

¹¹⁴ Charles Clarke, *Pioneers of Revival* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971), 39-42.

¹¹⁵ Mathew Backholer, *150 Years of Revival*, <http://www.byfaith.co.uk/paulbyfaith/vmathewthoughts18.htm> [accessed 7 March 2010].

¹¹⁶ Mel Tari, *Like A Mighty Wind*, (Houston, TX: New Leaf Publishing, 2001), 150-178.

¹¹⁷ The author gave his life to Christ in the middle of the Jesus Revolution and charismatic renewal in the spring of 1968.

Prayer

I believe the growing tide of global missions and outreach can be directly tied to the increase in prayer in the past one hundred years. Presbyterian pastor A.T. Pierson said near the turn of the 20th century that there had never been a spiritual awakening that did not begin in united prayer.¹¹⁸ For the past one hundred and ten years, a growing emphasis on prayer has been building in many nations of the earth.

This growing focus on intercession has shown itself in many diverse forms including Concerts of Prayer International, Intercessors for America (and many others nations), Washington For Jesus (1980), Promisekeepers (1996 and later), and various large Korean prayer rallies have drawn millions of people into seeking God's face for renewal and world evangelization during the latter part of the 20th century. The passionate Korean Church has modeled to the world a great emphasis on prayer and fasting, all night prayer meetings, prayer grottoes and mountains over the past sixty years.¹¹⁹

Many credit the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 to the faithful prayers of the Polish people and their strong youth movement called OASIS that met and prayed underground for decades under communism.¹²⁰ Houses of Prayer have sprung up all over the world from Kansas City to the Mt. of Olives in Jerusalem. 24/7 Prayer is a growing movement of youth around the world committed to radical prayer for their nations and for the lost.¹²¹ Pastors Prayer Summits are now taking place around the world encouraging pastors and Christian leaders to biblical unity and fervent intercession. One of the largest movements of prayer in the world today is the

¹¹⁸ As quoted in <http://campusamerica.org/sections/1-home/entries/52-vision> (accessed 7 March 2010).

¹¹⁹ I was visiting Seoul, Korea 2001 and was told by my host, a Presbyterian pastor, that his church was involved in forty days of prayer & fasting. I asked him if they did this once a year. He replied, "No, we do it four times a year." I was amazed at the prayer commitment of the Korean believers.

¹²⁰ Peggy Noonan, "We Want God," Revive America web-site available at <http://usrenewal.squarespace.com/home/2009/2/13/we-want-god.html>, [accessed 4 April 2010].

¹²¹ Information available at <http://www.24-7prayer.com/> [accessed 7 March 2010].

International Day of Prayer which originated in South Africa, spread to many sports stadiums across the African continent and went global in 2004. Millions of believers now participate annually in the International Day of Prayer.

Unity

One of the greatest fruits of revival is the unifying of believers for the common cause of spreading the Good News about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Third Wave of Modern Missions saw many walls break down between various Christian groups and denominations that spurred the extension of the Gospel worldwide.

This unifying power of the Holy Spirit took a number of different forms including global and localized missions conferences beginning with the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 and the latest Lausanne Conference (the first was held in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974) in Capetown, South Africa in October of 2010 with most of the delegates coming from the Two-Thirds World.¹²²

Christian unity events such as March for Jesus have also been used to united believers to reach their own cultures and share the love of Jesus with the lost. Inspired by Graham Kendrick and Lynn Green in the mid-1980s, March for Jesus has coordinated millions and millions of Christians taking to the streets not only to pray for their towns, their cities, their countries, all countries but also offer praise and worship to the Living God.¹²³

A further step of unity that shows promise in the past thirty years has been the development of various united missions movements aimed mobilizing the Church to finish the task. Luis Bush was the visionary for the AD 2000 Movement which held a series of global meetings in the 1990s. Its goal was “A church for every people and the Gospel for every

¹²² Capetown 2010, <http://www.lausanne.org/cape-town-2010> [accessed 14 March 2010].

¹²³ Global March for Jesus, <http://www.gmfj.org/pages/founders.htm> [accessed 14 March 2010].

person.”¹²⁴ Bush states that “over 2000 plans have emerged independently, in country after country and around the world, and are indicators of what we must do in the years to come.”¹²⁵

The latest united thrust to reach the world via partnerships and cooperation is the Call2All which sprang out of a vision by Dr. Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ of reaching one billion people for Christ and planting five million new churches. On August 19, 2004, a global conference call brought Christian world leaders to agree to work together toward fulfilling the vision, and on December 7-8, 2004, sixty five world leaders met in Orlando, Florida to adopt the vision of five million new churches to bring a billion people to Christ. The unified conferences are focusing on mobilizing the Church to reach the last 639 unengaged unreached people groups in the world representing 554 million people. The movement is growing.¹²⁶

Outreach

During the early 1990’s, documentary missiologist George Otis Jr. chronicled the amazing increase in evangelism and missions that took place during the Third Wave of Modern Missions (from 1930-2000). Otis said there was a 60-60-60 pattern in church numerical growth during this turbulent and exciting time period:

- 60% of all converts in 1990 had become Christians since 1900,
- 60% of those had given their lives to Christ since 1950,
- And 60% of those came into the Kingdom since 1980—a phenomenal tidal surge in world evangelism.¹²⁷

This era of increased harvest surged with the Student Volunteer movement which began in the 1880s and lasted until the 1930s. The Pentecostal Revival which began in 1906 added a

¹²⁴ AD 2000 and Beyond, <http://www.ad2000.org/> [accessed 14 March 2010].

¹²⁵ Luis Bush, “The Unfinished Task,” *Mission Frontiers Bulletin* (May-June 1998), 28.

¹²⁶ Call2All, http://www.call2all.org/Groups/1000015933/Call2All/About_Us/Dr_Bill_Bright/Dr_Bill_Bright.aspx [accessed 14 March 2010].

¹²⁷ George Otis, Jr., *The Last of the Giants* (New York: Chosen Books. 1991), 224.

“power dimension” to missions outreach which by itself added 640 million people to the ranks of the Church. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. believes that Pentecostalism sees itself as a missionary and evangelistic movement that was a watershed for both missions and for unity and ecumenism.¹²⁸ Grant Wacker credits The Pentecostal Revival with launching over three hundred Pentecostal denominations and their missions enterprises in the United States alone.¹²⁹ Luis Lugo, director of the Pew Forum, describes the impact of the Pentecostal revival and its advance of missions in Latin America:

It's a combination of immigration in which a lot of Latinos are already Pentecostal and the conversion taking place in the Catholic Church among those converting to Pentecostalism. ... It's really evangelism on steroids. This may well be the most dynamic religious movement in the world today in terms of growth and breadth.¹³⁰

One of the unique aspects of the Third Wave has been its amazing degree of specialization in ministry. This diversification parallels the economic diversification spawned by both the Industrial and Information Revolutions. Pocock, Van Rheenen, and McConnell believe that a significant element in the shift in the missionary paradigm from individual efforts to networks of collaboration was the emergence of a variety of specialized organizations in the entrepreneurial style of Western society that began to be applied to evangelism, discipling and church planting.¹³¹

This specialization in ministry is impossible to represent over the past one hundred years or so. I will list some examples below which are just a sampling of the incredible diversity the Holy Spirit added to world evangelization during the development of the Third Wave:

¹²⁸ Cecil M. Robeck, *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival* (Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 12.

¹²⁹ Grant Wacker, *The Functions of Faith in Primitive Pentecostalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 353.

¹³⁰ Luis Lugo, “The Pentecostal Revival,” *Ministry Today* (2 March 2010), 22.

¹³¹ Pocock, 265.

- Crusade evangelism as typified by Billy Graham, Luis Palau, and Greg Laurie.
- Campus ministry such as through Campus Crusade for Christ, the world's largest missionary organizations with over 25,000 missionaries working in 191 countries.
- Young people in missions such as Youth With A Mission, and Teen Missions.
- Healing campaigns with figures like Oral Roberts and Reinhard Bonnke.
- Outreach to global political leaders pioneered by Abraham Vereide in the 1930s.
- Ministry to business people such as the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship.
- Women's outreach through groups like Women's Aglow begun in 1967.
- Christian television and radio--key players in restricted nations.
- Internet websites and chat rooms that transcend closed national borders.
- Outreach through athletes such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA).
- Use of ships in ministry via Operation Mobilization and Mercy Ships.
- Christian humanitarian aid through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as World Vision International.

Yet, the greatest building wave of missions is the hundreds of Latin American, Asian and African church planters are starting churches and adopting unreached peoples. The mission field is becoming the missions force. Scott Moreau of Wheaton College says:

The day of Western missionary dominance is over, not because Western missionaries have died off, but because the rest of the world has caught the vision and is engaged and energized. Today's missionary is as likely to be a black African in Europe as a northern Indian in south India or a Korean in China. In addition, mission leaders are placing a new focus on Asia, where sixty percent of the global population lives. The same is true of Africa and the Middle East.¹³²

The Third Wave of Modern Missions has birthed an amazing array of ministry specialties and people of many nationalities that are reaching people for Christ. As a result, 3,500 churches

¹³² Scott Moreau as quoted by Rob Moll, "Missions Incredible" *Christianity Today*, (March 2006), 36.

are starting everyday, 28,000 people are being saved each day in China, 20,000 in Africa, and 70,000 world-wide.¹³³

People & Providence

A number of major events greatly impacted the swelling of the evangelism and missions tide during the 20th century. The Industrial and Information Revolution greatly enlarged the middle classes in many countries, causing many people to come to the cities in search of opportunity—where they also came in contact with the Gospel. Large people migrations including Africans to Europe, Latinos to the United States, and Asians all over the world brought many formerly unreached people in contact with Christianity. The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 also exposed nearly half of the world to Christian ministry and outreach.

A significant change in the Third Wave was the main-streaming of youth into the global missions enterprise. From the time of the early Church through the first two waves of modern missions, only adults were really able to take up the missionary calling. In fact, during the first and second waves of missions, it was common practice for missionary families to leave their children at home because life was too dangerous and disease-ridden in most new mission fields to accommodate the young.

The advances and specialties that were born in the 20th century created a new and unique place for young people to join the global missions force. It started with the college age young people during the Student Volunteer movement, and eventually progressed to include young people of all ages. The growth of youth missions around the world continues in the 21st century.

But the greatest change of the Third wave was missionaries from the Two-Thirds World—from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia—rising to the place of

¹³³ Johnstone, 34-40.

prominence in world evangelization. It was as if a torch was being passed from the west to the south and east, and this would profoundly multiply the advance of the Good News.

Christianity Today ran a remarkable article in its March 2006 issue called “Missions Impossible.” Beginning with an analysis of Korean missions, Rob Moll makes the case that Third World missions came into their own in the last century. He says that in 1973 there were at least 3,411 non-Western, cross cultural missionaries in the world. That number has now exploded to 103,000, according to reliable estimates, though figures are difficult to determine in the majority world. That total nearly equals the number of U.S. and Canadian Protestant mission personnel, which stands at about 112,000.¹³⁴

Yes, an explosion of “Majority World” missionaries is taking place around the globe. But the best may be yet to come. If the Chinese “Back to Jerusalem” movement has its way, there may be ten million more Chinese believers added to the ranks of missions in the coming century.¹³⁵ The Westward movement of the Gospel, as set in motion by its Author, is about to penetrate the final frontiers of Central Asia and make its way back to where it all began two thousand years ago.

Civilization & Technology

We have already mentioned the vast people movements that have aided world evangelization in recent decades. Michael Pocock comments,

Historically, the spread of religions through migration may be seen in the expansion of Christianity in the first five centuries. In the year 2000, Christians of all kinds constituted one-third of the world’s 6 billion people. During the last decades of the 1900s, the Christian movement worldwide grew by 16.4 million people a year. At the same time an astonishing shift of the center of gravity in the non-Western world took place... The pendulum has swung from a majority of the world’s Christians living in the West to a majority of them now living outside it.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Rob Moll, “Missions Incredible,” *Christianity Today* (March 2006), 36.

¹³⁵ Brother Yun, 278-292.

¹³⁶ Pocock, 134.

That majority seems ready to take up the cause of world evangelization.

It is a technologically sophisticated world that they are inheriting--which creates tremendous possibilities for outreach. First of all, the development of commercial plane travel since 1950 has made it possible to travel quickly anywhere on earth. What used to take months or years walking on Roman roads or traveling on wind-propelled ships now takes a matter of hours by plane. Whereas David Livingstone traveled some 29,000 miles in his lifetime,¹³⁷ many missionaries accomplish that fact in a year—some in a month! Ease and speed of travel has made the world a much smaller place to reach.

The rapid developments in radio, television, cell phones, and the Internet have also created an opportunity to reach billions of people with Christ's Good News. Popock believes that greater creativity via the Internet means that a mind-boggling amount of information is available at the fingertips of anyone who can access the Web—and this has helped the missions community raise its standard of practice and strategic engagement.¹³⁸

Many waves of missions, including three waves of modern missions, have brought us to the climactic 21st century. Thousands have gone before and we stand on their courageous shoulders. Millions are positioned to complete the task of this Gospel of the Kingdom being preached in all the nations as a testimony to all peoples (Luke 24:14). Can it be done in this generation?

Steven Douglass, the current president of Campus Crusade for Christ says candidly: "Absolutely, the Great Commission can be fulfilled in our lifetimes; from the way God is

¹³⁷ Tucker, 111.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 302.

shoulders. Millions are positioned to complete the task of this Gospel of the Kingdom being preached in all the nations as a testimony to all peoples (Luke 24:14). Can it be done in this generation?

Steven Douglass, the current president of Campus Crusade for Christ says candidly: “Absolutely, the Great Commission can be fulfilled in our lifetimes; from the way God is moving today, even without some terrific eye of faith, I have been persuaded it will be fulfilled in our lifetimes and I personally think in the next decade.”¹³⁹

If that is true or possible within the short term, what will be the make-up of the global missions force that is necessary to bring it to pass?

ANALYSIS AND PROJECTIONS

Lessons and Accomplishments of the First Three Waves

Just as waves in a rising tide build upon one another and reach further onto the beach, the spiritual waves of modern missions we’ve examined built on the success of the previous ones to extend the Kingdom of God. Let’s now examine how the Early Church missions and the past three waves of modern missions, wave one to the coastlands, wave two to the interiors, and wave three to unreached peoples with specialization, have set the stage for the emerging Fourth Wave. I will analyze these spiritual movements again through the lenses of revival, prayer, unity, outreach, people & providence, and civilization & technology that fueled each missions surge.

Revival

I’ve noted how the Early Church was born in revival on the day of Pentecost and continued its missionary advances through regular outpourings and renewal by the Holy Spirit. After a time of spiritual decline during the Middle Ages, it was the Moravian Revival in 1727 that ignited a fresh call to reach the world with the Gospel, followed by the First Great

¹³⁹ Call2All, <http://www.call2all.org/Groups/1000014360/Call2All.aspx> [accessed 14 March 2010]).

Revival in the 1850s and 60s. These revivals directly birthed the Student Volunteer movement which sent scores of thousands of young missionaries all over the world, aiding the second wave of modern missions.

I agree with J. Edwin Orr that the 20th century, which spawned the Third Wave of Modern Missions, saw more movements of spiritual awakening than any other century—greatly increasing the tidal surge of world evangelization.¹⁴⁰ These included (but were not limited to) the Welsh revival of 1904, the Pentecostal Awakening (Azusa Street) of 1906, The Congo Revival of the 1930s, Evangelical Awakenings in Africa, the South Seas, Southern Asia, and Latin America,¹⁴¹ The Chinese Revival (early 1900s and 1949 to the present), the Hebrides Revival,¹⁴² The Korean Revival, the Indonesian Revival, and the global Charismatic Renewal.

History tells us that revival fires ignite and fuel people movements to Christ. The global outpourings of God's Spirit in the past two decades in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and even some Middle Eastern countries is a hopeful sign that the emerging Fourth Wave of Modern Missions will take place in a global flood tide of spiritual renewal.

Prayer

A ten-day prayer meeting birthed the original Pentecost. After the outpouring of God's Spirit in Jerusalem, the followers of Jesus gave priority to prayer (Acts 2:42, and 4:23-31) and their numbers grew. Prayer was foundational to the growth and outreach of the Church.

The Moravian 100-year twenty-four hour prayer watch was certainly a catalyst to move the heart of God in the 18th century, as was Jonathan Edwards' call for united Concerts of Prayer during the First Great Awakening.

¹⁴⁰ J. Edwin Orr, 1975, 200.

¹⁴¹ See the four volume series by J. Edwin Orr by the same titles list in the bibliography section.

¹⁴² See Andrew Woolsey, *Duncan Campbell-A Biography* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1974).

The famous Haystack Prayer Meeting in Williamstown, Massachusetts in 1806 was a strong booster of spiritual renewal and involvement of collegians in missions. I concur with historians who believe it was the lay-led prayer thrust by Jeremiah Lanphier and others that ushered in the Great Revival of the 1850s and 60s.¹⁴³

In the 20th century, the pulse of prayer has increased in many nations through national intercessory groups, national days of fasting and prayer, Korean prayer watches & mountains, Chinese prayer cells, wide-spread Concerts of Prayer, and large, international prayer days such as the Global Day of Prayer which was born out of Africa.¹⁴⁴

As the 21st century and its challenges dawn, the future chapter of missions history will certainly be written with the tears and supplications of those who pray. George W. Peters believes that the history of missions abounds with evidences of divine intervention because someone prayed and God acted.¹⁴⁵

Unity

The importance of Christian unity doesn't seem to draw extensive historical scrutiny even though Jesus Himself directly linked unity to world evangelization (John 17:21-23). We have noted that the Early Church moved in such a high degree of Christian unity. Because of this reality, when Ananias and Sapphira lied about a property purchase, God brought severe judgment during those revival days (Acts 5:1-11). Embracing the Gentiles as partners in the faith was another large barrier to overcome, but as the apostles made wise decisions about unity (e.g. Acts 15), and Jews and Gentiles began to partner in missions (e.g. Paul and Aquila & Priscilla), faith in Jesus Christ continued to grow in the Roman Empire.

¹⁴³ *America's Great Revivals*, 52-72.

¹⁴⁴ See Global Day of Prayer, <http://www.globaldayofprayer.com/>.

¹⁴⁵ George W. Peters, "Missionary Dynamic and Prayer," in *Giving Ourselves to Prayer*, ed. Dan R. Crawford (Terre Haute, IN: Prayer Shop Publishing, 2008), 541.

I would argue that the disunity of believers—seen in schisms and even wars-- was a major reason the Reformation period produced little impetus for missions. We have noted that the Moravian revival started on August 13, 1727 when people from many different backgrounds and nations confessed their sins and committed to live in together in unity. Later on various thrusts such as Concerts of Prayer united believers to pray for and reach out to the lost.

In the 19th century, God used D.L. Moody and the 1886 Mt. Hermon Conference to unite missions-minded Americans together, and John R. Mott took a further step in facilitating the strategic 1910 Edinburgh Conference which called the global Body of Christ to complete the Great Commission. Despite two world wars, the 20th century saw an even greater growth in Christian unity—especially on a global scale--via prayer thrusts, revivals, large scale crusades, training seminars, missions consultations, and other movements such as the Call2All and the Lausanne Congresses where leaders of many denominations and mission agencies committed to working together to reach every person on earth.¹⁴⁶ The October, 2010 Capetown Lausanne Congress will draw some 4500 delegates from over 200 nations.

The prayer of Jesus in John 17 is moving forward. The evidence suggests that 21st century unity among believers will be even more universal.

Outreach

The Early Church began with one hundred and twenty believers in an upper room that grew on the Day of Pentecost to over 3000. After the first seventy years of Christian outreach (100 AD), the US Center for World Missions estimates that the ratio of unbelievers to believers stood at roughly 360:1.¹⁴⁷ Spiritual darkness still covered much of the earth. Though records during the Middles Ages are scarce, historians agree that by the time of Constantine's conversion

¹⁴⁶ Call2All, <http://www.call2all.org/> and Lausanne Movement at <http://www.lausanne.org/>.

¹⁴⁷ Rick Wood, "Christianity: Waning or Growing," *Mission Frontiers Journal*, Jan/Feb 2003, 12.

stood at roughly 360:1.¹⁴⁷ Spiritual darkness still covered much of the earth. Though records during the Middle Ages are scarce, historians agree that by the time of Constantine's conversion in 312 AD, there were approximately nine million Christians in the Roman Empire, making up about 15% of the population.¹⁴⁸ Rodney Stark estimates that at a growth rate of 3.4 percent a year, by the beginning of the 4th century, the Church would have grown to over 31 million, making up 53% of the Empire.¹⁴⁹

When William Carey, the world's first "missions statistician," published his *Enquiry* treatise in 1792, he listed over one hundred countries in his book as virtually unreached by the Gospel.¹⁵⁰ By comparison, in 2010, contemporary missions researcher Todd Johnson lists 141 countries as "Christian" with fifty-nine nations over half evangelized and only thirty-eight countries that are less than 50% evangelized.¹⁵¹ As shown in Table 1 below, there have been a number of significant Christian missions movements over the past two thousand years.¹⁵²

Table 1 – Major Missions Movements AD 100 to AD 2000

| |
|--|
| 1. Early Church – 30-100 AD – Mediterranean to India |
| 2. Celtic Church – 500-900 AD – Western and Central Europe |
| 3. Nestorian Church – 450-1120 AD – Asia |
| 4. Orthodox Church – 800-1100 AD – Eastern Europe/Russia |
| 5. Catholic Church – 1100-1400 AD – Northern Europe |
| 6. Catholic Church – 1500-2000 AD – Americas, Asia |
| 7. Russian Orthodox – 1520-1680 – Siberia, Alaska |
| 8. Moravians – 1730-1860 AD – Americas, Africa |
| 9. Protestant/Evangelical – 1792 – 2000 – Global |
| 10. Global Evangelical - Global |

¹⁴⁷ Rick Wood, "Christianity: Waning or Growing," *Mission Frontiers Journal*, Jan/Feb 2003, 12.

¹⁴⁸ Stark, 312.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 313.

¹⁵⁰ Carey, 38-61.

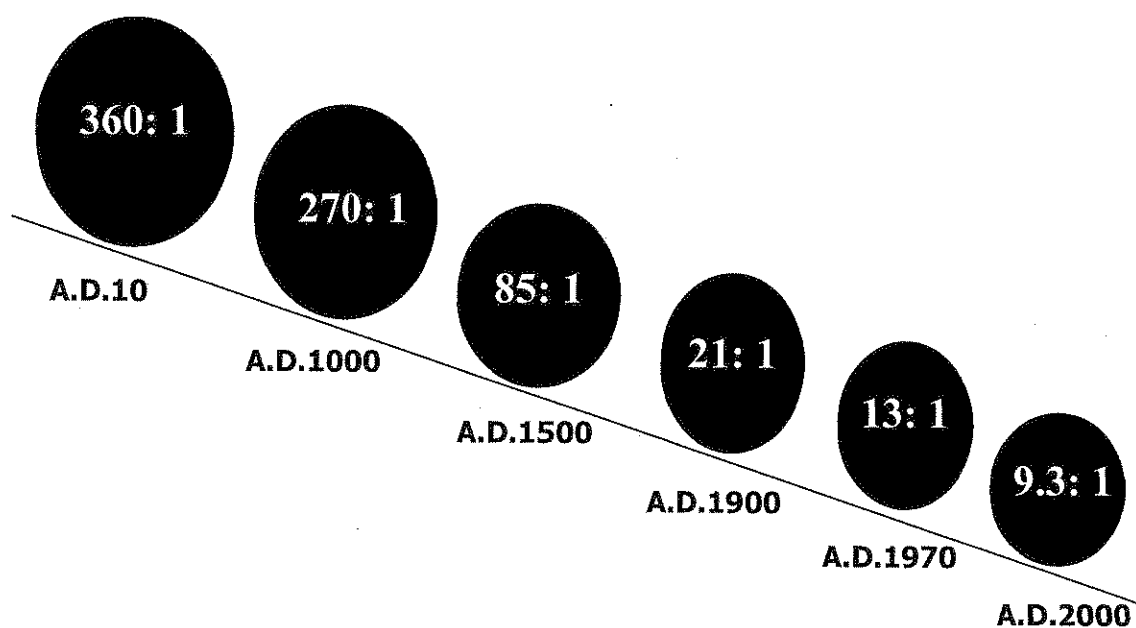
¹⁵¹ Todd Johnson, "World Missions Statistics," Center for the Study of Global Christianity, web-site: globalchristianity.org (accessed 14 April 2010).

¹⁵² Johnstone, 1998, 70.

Source: Patrick Johnstone, *The Church is Bigger Than You Think* (Pasadena: William Carey Library Publishers, 1998).

As Table 1 illustrates, the Second and Third Waves of Modern Missions mobilized primarily Protestants and Evangelicals to advance the Gospel in the 19th and 20th centuries. Many aspects of Christianity are growing worldwide in 2010, but the ones in the vanguard—foretasting the emerging Fourth Wave—are *evangelical* as shown in Table 2 below which shows the ratio of world population to number of evangelicals (360:1 in A.D. 100, 270:1 by A.D. 1000 and progressing to 9.3:1 by the year 2000).

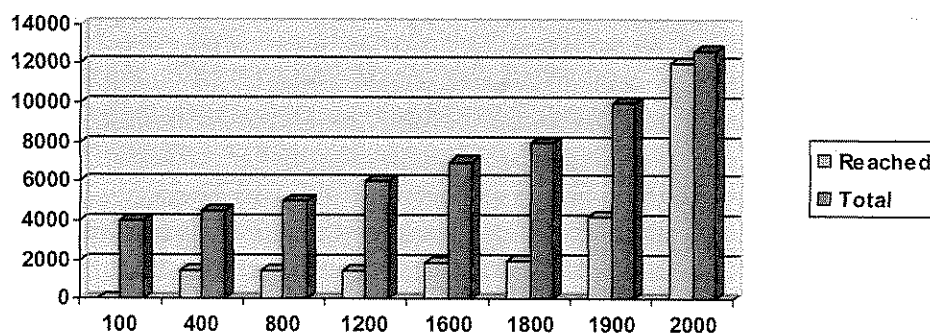
Table 2 - Growth of Evangelicals



Source: Rick Wood, "Christianity: Waning or Growing," *Mission Frontiers Journal*, Jan/Feb 2003, 12.

Rick Wood explains, “It took eighteen centuries for evangelicals to go from 0% of the world population to 2.5% in 1900, only 70 years to go from 2.5% to 5% in 1970, and just the last 22 years to go from 5% to 10% of the world population. What this means is that now, for the first time in history, there is one evangelical for every nine non-evangelicals world-wide.”¹⁵³ Ralph Winter adds, “Despite the rapid increase in world population, the number of faithful Bible-believing Christians is increasing faster than any other large movement or religion. It is doubling every ten and a half years.”¹⁵⁴ Adding to the momentum of world evangelization from the coastlands to their interiors was the Third Wave focus on reaching unreached or hidden peoples. This was the next logical step in completing the Great Commission.¹⁵⁵ Patrick Johnstone in *The Church is Bigger Than You Think* organizes the world’s peoples in roughly 13,000 groupings and showing the dramatic acceleration of reaching those groups with the Good News that has taken place over the past century as illustrated in Table 3 below.¹⁵⁶

Table 3 – 2000 Years of Evangelizing People Groups



¹⁵³ Rick Wood, “Christianity: Waning or Growing,” *Mission Frontiers Journal*, Jan/Feb 2003, 12.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 12.

¹⁵⁵ David Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1982), 19.

¹⁵⁶ Johnstone, 1998, 105.

Source: P, Patrick Johnstone, *The Church is Bigger Than You Think*. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Publishers, 1998), 105.

As Table 3 depicts, the end is in sight. During the past two years, *Finishing the Task* (FTT) an association of mission agencies and churches who want to see reproducing churches planted among every people group in the world, have worked in conjunction with the *Call2All* conferences to engage the last unreached peoples. Starting with the 6000 *Joshua Project* figure of yet-to-be-reached peoples, (of which 2700 of those groups have less than 100,000 people) FTT identified 639 larger groups that no one was targeting. At the time of this writing, 366 of these people groups have been selected, with church planting started in 234 of them. Leaders in these movements believe the rest will be engaged in just a few, short years.¹⁵⁷ The next task will be to enlist individuals, churches and organizations to evangelize the remaining 2700 smaller people groupings.

The final dramatic shift in missions outreach that is setting the stage for the Fourth Wave of Modern Missions is the changing face of the world's missionary force from First Worlders (Westerner or Caucasian peoples) to those of the Two-Thirds World (developing nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America—sometimes called the Majority World). For the first three hundred years of Christendom, missionaries were Jewish, North African, Middle Eastern and confined to the Roman Empire. For the next sixteen hundred years, the torch passed first to the Europeans and then the Americans who went global with the faith.

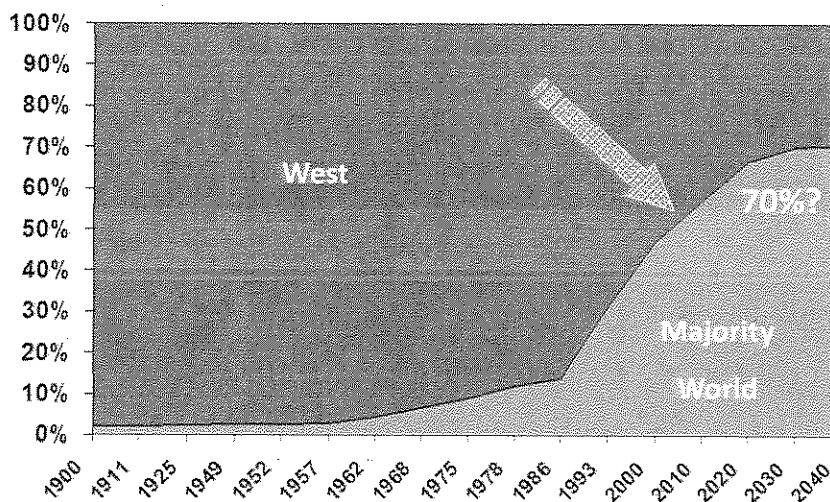
During the past fifty years, Christianity's center has shifted to the Two-Third's (Majority) World, especially centered in the southern Hemisphere. Rick Warren explains:

¹⁵⁷ Call2All: http://www.call2all.org/Groups/1000014484/Call2All/About_Us/Themes/UUPGs/UUPGs.aspx, [accessed 13 April 2010].

The last fifty years has seen the greatest redistribution of a religion ever in the history of the world. For instance, in 1900, 71% of all, 'Christians' lived in Europe; by 2000 it had declined to just 28% who claimed to be Christian. Conversely, in 1900, only 10% of all people in Africa (10 million) were Christians vs. over 50% (360 million) today. That is a complete turnaround on a continent that's never been seen or done in history. There are by far more Christians in China than in America. There are more Presbyterians in Ghana than in Scotland. There are more Baptists in the India state of Nagaland than in the American South. There are more Anglicans in Uganda or Rwanda or Nigeria than in England. That is a fundamental shift. If you want to know the future of Christianity, it is the developing world. It's Africa, Latin America and Asia.¹⁵⁸

Table 4 below shows the growing shift in the world's missions force:¹⁵⁹

Table 4 -The World's Mission Force



Source: Bob Waymire, Global Mapping International, <http://www.gmi.org> [accessed 17 April 2010].

The arrow highlights the amazing growth of Majority World missionaries in the past thirty years. Whereas very few missionaries in 1900 had been sent out from Two-Thirds World (TTW) nations, at the present time 306,000 TTW workers serve in “Christian” world

¹⁵⁸ Rick Warren, “The Future of Evangelicalism,” *Pew Forum Newsletter*, 20 November 2009, 3.

¹⁵⁹ Bob Waymire, Global Mapping International, <http://www.gmi.org> [accessed 17 April 2010].

nations (4,000 of those in twenty-nine restricted access nations), 103,000 TTWs are sharing their faith in evangelized nations, and 10,200 TTW missionaries are doing the work of Christ in twenty-six completely unevangelized countries.¹⁶⁰

Youth With A Mission is an example of this amazing change in the global missions force. When I joined the organization in 1974, YWAM had about three hundred full time missionaries of which 99% were Caucasian. Today, YWAM has 16,000 full-time staff serving in 150 nations around the world, and 60% of them are non-whites. Brazil is our second largest sending nation, and Korea is a fast rising third.¹⁶¹ This growth in Third-World sending nations is also true of missions overall. Table 5 shows the most current statistics:¹⁶²

Table 5 – Top Ten Missionary Sending Countries

(To the nearest thousand)

| RANK | COUNTRY | MISSIONARIES |
|------|---------------|--------------|
| 1 | United States | 127,000 |
| 2 | Brazil | 34,000 |
| 3 | France | 21,000 |
| 4 | Spain | 21,000 |
| 5 | Italy | 20,000 |
| 6 | South Korea | 20,000 |
| 7 | Britain | 15,000 |
| 8 | Germany | 14,000 |
| 9 | India | 10,000 |
| 10 | Canada | 8,500 |

Source: Atlas of Global Christianity, 2009.

¹⁶⁰ Todd Johnson, "World Missions Statistics," Center for the Study of Global Christianity, web-site: globalchristianity.org [accessed 14 April 2010].

¹⁶¹ Youth With a Mission,

http://old.ywam.org/notfound.asp?404;http%3A//old.ywam.org%3A80/contents/sta_res_stats.htm&bhcp=1.

¹⁶² Todd Johnson, *The Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 310.

People and Providence

Though I am a strong believer in free will, it is easy to look back over the past 2,000 years and see the *sovereign* hand of God in human history in taking the Good News of Jesus to the ends of the earth. I concur with Guyot that God had a plan for both continents and nations.¹⁶³ It was the Holy Spirit who directed Paul to go westward in the early stages of Christian mission (Acts 16:6-10), laying the foundation for what would become a Christianized Europe during the Middle Ages. Out of the “continent of development” came the concepts of Christian civil polity and self government, a flourishing of the arts and sciences, the world’s first universities (Christian based), a powerful Reformation of the Church and the first Protestant and Evangelical mission societies. Christian civilization “went global” during these centuries of discovery and colonization, with Europeans leading the way. The same was true of missions.

According to 19th century historian George Cheever, God also had providential plans for America in the next westward step of propagation. He wrote in 1848:

God suggested and excited in their hearts a prophecy of the missionary spirit that should come...for the propagating and advancing the gospel of the Kingdom of Christ in these remote parts of the world, yea, though they should be stepping stones unto others for the performing of so great a work.¹⁶⁴

The United States of America would rise with “Manifest Destiny” in the 18th to 20th centuries to become the greatest Christian society and missionary sending nation in history. By the mid-1980s, The US had the largest number of professing Christians of any nation, 22% of all evangelicals, 338,000 churches, 45,000 missionaries (representing 55% of the world’s total), and gave 76% of evangelical giving.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Arnold Guyot, 5.

¹⁶⁴ George B. Cheever, *The Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth* (New York: John Wiley, 1848), 150.

¹⁶⁵ Johnstone, 435.

But, as I've shown, the Gospel would take root in the Pacific Islands and Asia (west), and also in Africa (south) during the global expansion of the 19th century. The 20th century would see many Catholic nations in Latin America become increasingly evangelical¹⁶⁶ while revivals and evangelistic movements in some African nations, Korea, China, India and other nations would shift the center of global Christianity to the west and south.¹⁶⁷

The Chinese emphasis of "Back to Jerusalem" appears to be God's final piece in the westward movement of Christianity. The only territory left that is substantially unevangelized is the *10/40 Window*—Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim nations that lie between the 10th and 40th parallels from Japan to North Africa. Is the final act in God's Sovereign Plan that missionaries from the Two-Thirds World take leadership in sharing the Good News in the nations of the 10/40 Window—and complete the consummation of global missions back to Jerusalem?

I discussed the different groups of people that God used in various eras of missions. The first missionaries were Jews and then Gentile converts in the Roman Empire. From the Middle Ages on, white Europeans were the main missionary force—and then the Americans. It should be noted that up until the 1880s, the vast majority of these missionaries were also *men*. Women and children had very limited roles. But the loss of 600,000 men during the Civil War motivated American women to join the ranks of cross cultural missionaries. To this day they remain the dominant gender in the global missions force.

¹⁶⁶ Johnstone, 65.

¹⁶⁷ Todd Johnson's new work, *The Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), is a follow-up to the monumental *World Christian Encyclopedia* and especially chronicles the shift of global Christianity to the west and south.

Most recently, people of color from Africa, Latin America, the Pacific and Asia have been surging into missions leadership and expression. This trend will continue in the 21st century.

The last category of “new” participation in world evangelization is the growing involvement of children and youth as vital members of world missions. Up until fifty years ago, only *adults* could reasonably be a part of the missionary enterprise. Not anymore. Young children and teenagers are now vitally involved in short term mission trips, year-round missions projects, and are fasting and praying for unreached peoples. One of the largest divisions of YWAM—King’s Kids International begun in 1977—has sent thousands of children and youth into short-term missions opportunities in over one hundred nations.¹⁶⁸ Many other organizations have followed suit.

It’s taken two thousand years for people of all nations, ages, and stations in life to take their place in global missions. Jesus told *all* of his disciples to go into all of the world (Mark 16:15). It appears that *all* will finally be involved in the 21st century.

Civilization & Technology

I discussed how the Early Church used the vast network of Roman roads and wide usage of the Greek language to advance the Kingdom of God for centuries. During the 18th and 19th centuries, sea-faring ships ferried missionaries to the coastlands of the world and advances in printing and knowledge allowed a wider distribution of the Bible and other Christian books. The Industrial Revolution brought new machinery and higher standards of living that also aided in the growth of Christian missions. But the 20th century saw an explosion of wealth, technology, and people migration that brought an unparalleled surge in global harvest. Let’s look at those advances that are impacting missions.

¹⁶⁸ King’s Kids International, <http://www.kkint.net/> [accessed 14 April 2010].

First, the *urbanization* of the world brought millions of people into cities where it was easier to reach them for Christ. The nation of Mongolia is a case in point. Prior to 1920, Mongolia had been a region of tribal groups and nomads for centuries-- making it very difficult to unite and govern. When the communists came to power in the 1920s, they “created” five cities in the nation. Today, nearly half of the population of Mongolia lives in Ulaanbaatar, the capital and another third in its other major cities. Whereas in 1980 that was not one known Christian believer in Mongolia, today the spiritual leaders of that nation believe that the 50,000 believers and over 400 churches can be partially attributed to the ease of evangelization in the cities.¹⁶⁹ Despite the many problems associated with global urbanization, one of the amazing benefits has been sharing Christ’s Good News with millions of people.¹⁷⁰ Maybe this is one reason the Book of Revelation pictures the future Kingdom in the form of a Heavenly City—the New Jerusalem.¹⁷¹

Second, modern advances in *travel*—plane travel, the use of automobiles, helicopters, missionary aviation groups, railroads, and ocean-going ships, have allowed access to nations in a matter of hours or days, not weeks or years. Plane travel alone birthed the growing short term missions industry (estimated to be 540 in 1965 and as many as four million in 2004)¹⁷² which takes hundreds of thousands of young people to nearly every country on earth—with a significant portion of them returning later in life as long term missionaries.¹⁷³ For nineteen hundred years, most people could not travel safely or widely in

¹⁶⁹ I have worked extensively in Mongolia since 1997 and have heard this analysis from many of the pastors in that nation.

¹⁷⁰ John Dawson, *Taking Our Cities for God* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 1989), 63.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 39.

¹⁷² Roger Peterson, “What’s Happening in Short Term Mission?” *Lausanne World Pulse.com* (March 2010), 2.

¹⁷³ Warren Janzen, “The Springboard of Short Term Missions,” *Lausanne World Pulse.com* (March 2010), 2.

global missions. Today, almost any one, at any age, can “Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).

Third, the development of *modern medicine* and vaccines has greatly removed the fear of traveling to other cultures and lands. Pills can be taken to combat malaria; Clean water can be produced through tablets or purifiers; Antibiotics heal many diseases that once led to certain death; And many vaccines have halted the former plagues of polio, tuberculosis, typhoid, smallpox—even measles, mumps and whooping cough. Many of these formerly dreaded diseases have been nearly eradicated.¹⁷⁴ Modern medicines encourage missionaries to keep their children with them on the field, and allow anxious mothers and fathers to release their children on short term trips.

Fourth, and possibly of greatest potential is the emergence of the *Information Age* with its use of radio, television, cable, fiber optics, computers, micro-chips and the World Wide Web that has made much of the world a global village. The Jesus Film has been seen by several billion people.¹⁷⁵ Young people can chat about Christ on line via the Internet on SKYPE or text their friends that may be 20,000 miles away. With computer software technology, human languages can be translated in months and not years. We truly live in the first period of history where every single person on earth can be reached for Christ through some form of modern communication.

Finally, the reality of *globalization* is creating a world culture that can relate to each other in ways previously unimaginable. Though great dangers (such as a tyrannical world government) could be associated with this trend, it’s also true that globalization is producing

¹⁷⁴ A. Hinson, “Eradication of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases,” *Annual Review of Public Health*, located at <http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146%2Fannurev.publhealth.20.1.211> (accessed 15 April 2010).

¹⁷⁵ Jesus Film, a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, <http://www.jesusfilm.org/> [accessed 15 April 2010].

a commonality among the earth's people that make them extremely open to the claims of Christ and his Coming Kingdom.

It is into this 21st century world that I believe the Fourth Wave of Modern Missions is emerging as a spiritual tsunami to bring the blessings of Christ to every kindred, tribe, people and nation (Revelation 5:9).

THE EMERGING FOURTH WAVE

Based on the foregoing analysis, I would like to suggest what the face of missions may look like in the 21st century. It's too early to tell the exact shape of the Fourth Wave, but the following traits are likely:

1. *All ages* will be involved. For the first time in history, people of all ages--children, youth, families and adults will be a part of extending the Gospel worldwide. Missions used to be only for adult professional males. The many developments and advances of history—religiously, economically, and technologically—now allow people of all age groups to participate in the Christian missionary enterprise. God is calling *all* to get involved in one way or another.
2. *All nationalities* will go. The Two-Thirds (Majority) World will lead the next or final wave in world evangelization. The typical missionary is no longer a white Protestant. He or she is increasingly brown-skinned from Africa, Latin America, or Asia. Example: Youth With A Mission, like many other modern organizations, is made up of 107 nationalities, with the greatest growth taking place among people of color. Though this is the moment for the Majority World nations to lead the advance of the Great Commission, all nations will participate in the coming harvest.

3. *Each person* in the world will be given an opportunity to receive Christ. Hundreds of millions of believers, using many means of technology and communication, have the historic ability to reach billions of people with Christ's Good News. One strategy YWAM is using is Project 4K--an emerging paradigm of looking at the world.¹⁷⁶ It's a way of mapping that divides the globe in 4000 squares where towns, cities and nations are being targeted and won. This is the future wave: From Jerusalem, to the coastlands, to the interiors, to unreached peoples, to each neighborhood, to every person. As one of the many "complete the Commission" strategies, Project 4K has its sights set on reaching every man, woman and child for whom Christ died.
4. *Creative communications* will be used. Using the Internet, the arts, orality tools (60% of the world respond better to speech than reading)¹⁷⁷, radio, television, film, community development, mercy and relief ministries, and justice projects, today's generation will harness an amazing spectrum of tools, technologies and approaches to share the love of Jesus. Though preaching and teaching will always be a part of sharing God's Word, the most artsy and communication-oriented generation of all time will make use of a wide array of methods and tools to "fill the earth with the knowledge of God" (Habakkuk 2:14).
5. *Relational ministry* will be the norm. This is partly due to the fact that women and youth make up a growing percentage of today's missions force as well as missionaries from the Two-Thirds (Majority) World whose cultures are generally more hospitality or relationship-oriented than the West. Technology also encourages relational methods due to increased global one-on-one opportunities (texting?) and small group (chat rooms?)

¹⁷⁶ Project 4K, <http://www.4kworldmap.org/> [accessed 15 April 2010].

¹⁷⁷ Orality Strategies, <http://www.oralitvstrategies.org/> [accessed 16 April 2010].

methods to communicate with others. This is part of an overall trend where the Church is being de-institutionalized to be effective in our high touch, relational world. It appears that denominations and structures are out; Networking and cooperation are in. A worried and broken world needs a friend—not an institution or organization. The multi-colored friends of Jesus are coming.

6. *Different Spheres of Society* will be targeted for reformation. The past twenty years has seen a renewed focus on bringing the Lordship of Christ into every sphere of life including the family, government, education, business, the arts, and science and technology.¹⁷⁸ Christ's message doesn't just save individual souls. His Kingdom was meant to permeate and transform every area of human society as a foretaste of His reign and rule in the Eternal Kingdom of God. People in all walks of life are learning to view themselves as missionaries in their "domain" of work and calling.¹⁷⁹ This trend will grow and help to bring transformation to many societies and nations.
7. *Every Christian can be a missionary* – The bottom line of the Fourth Wave is that every believer on earth *can and should view themselves as a missionary—a World Christian—* who can pray for a specific nation, personally adopt an unreached people group, spend their vacations in their place of focus, or locate themselves permanently among a nation or people of their choosing. If millions of Christians would personally adopt an unreached people group, or commit to influence one of the 4,000 Omega Zones of Project 4K, then the completion of the Great Commission would be greatly enhanced. This is the potential tsunami effect of the Fourth Wave: Every believer on earth taking their

¹⁷⁸ Ron Boehme, *Leadership for the 21st Century* (Seattle: YWAM Publishing, 1989), 1-6.

¹⁷⁹ Darrow Miller, *Life Work* (Seattle: YWAM Publishing, 2009), 117-123.

“personal missions territory” for the advance of God’s Kingdom. Here are four of their stories:¹⁸⁰

- a. Hillary was eight years old girl when she started collecting change and clothing items for an unreached Chinese minority group. Though she was just in elementary school, God used her to motivate her church to send some short-term teams to China where people were saved and many families were blessed with clothing, supplies, and playground swing sets. *Hillary is a missionary.*
- b. Larry is a Puerto Rican basketball player with a Filipino wife. He is working in Mongolia in a sports ministry—starting a professional basketball team in the Mongolian Basketball Association (MBA) that will play games, teach young people the sport and lead people to Christ through-out this sport-crazed nation. *Larry is a missionary.*
- c. Nancy is a senior citizen who struggled with depression. A few years ago she got a burden for the Gypsies in Europe (especially Romania), and began taking short-term trips to teach practical skills and share her faith. Nancy now operates a website devoting to reaching and blessing the Gypsies. *Nancy is a missionary.*
- d. Sam was raised in India and decided to move to the Gambia with his wife, Vickie, to teach young Muslim children. They started a school in Memmeh, and are involved in a variety of evangelistic and humanitarian projects, primarily among the Wolof people. Their two children were raised in Africa. *Sam is a missionary.*

In the emerging Fourth Wave of Modern Missions, I believe large numbers of believers will join Hillary, Larry, Nancy, and Sam by adopting a people, praying for

¹⁸⁰ These examples are true stories of personal friends of the author.

them, and traveling to their location to complete the Great Commission. They will go because others have gone before. They will be successful because the world is reachable. They will use all tools a modern world has placed at their disposal. They may be the final generation of Christian missionaries. The World Christians are coming. In the Fourth Wave, everyone can become a missionary.

IMPLICATIONS

History is a hard thing to accurately predict. World upheaval, recessions and even deeper economic depressions could have a bearing on the forecasts made in this paper. We have not discussed the impact of persecution and suffering on 21st century missions trends. We also don't know exactly which nations and people will rise to the forefront of this emerging wave of missions. How much of it is dependent on human free will? What portion is set and determined by the sovereign plans of the Godhead?

What we do know is that the Fourth Wave of modern missions has already begun. New faces, races, nationalities and methods are all being used to reach people for Christ. There is something powerfully holistic about this fresh wave of God's Spirit as Sidle & Lewis explain:

The old definition of mission as the Western church imperialistically sending missionaries to distant places is no longer viable. Missions is everything the local-global church is sent into the world to be and do as a participant in God's mission and every person and gift the local-global church receives in Christ's name and way. The missional practice of the local-global church must be holistic, with activities of evangelism, compassionate service and social justice.¹⁸¹

Each local church, in every nation of the world, must no longer think of missions as simply supporting workers overseas or going to another country. "Mission," or

¹⁸¹ Patricia Lloyd-Sidle and Bonnie Sue Lewis, *Teaching Mission in a Global Context* (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 2001), 52.

”missions,” must become a *missional attitude* of using every means to reach every person everywhere. The local church must be missional in its neighborhood, missional in its state or nation, and missional in its global involvements. Missions is not something we do—it is something we *are* based on the commission of Jesus. Sidle and Lewis believe it is imperative that the church recognize its role as missionaries with God, through God and by God’s power. We must have “the mind of Christ” and be able to hear what God is saying to the church.¹⁸²

Local churches in every nation must imbibe this missional attitude in every small group, Sunday school, corporate service, and training opportunity. Local churches must see themselves as a living “cells” that must multiply their life both locally and globally. This fresh sense of global destiny should bring great growth and renewal to the churches of God in many nations around the world.

Christian colleges, universities and seminaries must also “re-load” to take their place in the Fourth Wave of Missions. They should encourage their students to think globally and channel their talents for use in the growing Kingdom of God in every sphere of life. Today’s Christian students should learn to think as Christian *missionary* photographers, teachers, scientists, computer programmers, film makers, auto mechanics, homemakers, lawyers, doctors, parliamentarians and every other trade and profession. They should be taught to fervently pray about *where* to use their skills for Christ in one of the 238 countries or thousands of people groups in the world. They were born for this time of global missions.

Educators must motivate them to take their place. They should encourage their students to see their lives through a comprehensive Christian worldview as it relates to their

¹⁸² Lloyd-Sidle and Lewis, 125.

life and vocation. They should sprinkle their course work with modern missions stories of people who are using their talents for God to advance his Kingdom. And they can pray and exhort their students to “go into all the world” to complete the Great Commission.

Because missional advance is predicated on fresh revivals of God’s people, the power and efficacy of prayer, the importance of unity, and use the use of modern technologies and godly strategies, every follower of Christ should seek to cooperate with God in all these vital arenas as never before. We should pray for a great global renewal of God’s people; We should support and encourage growing movements of prayer; We should downplay any remaining denominational and organizational barriers and promote unity in the Body of Christ for world evangelism; And we should encourage a Christian, missional entrepreneurial spirit to be unleashed for the glory of God.

This is also a season in history for Western Christians to willingly pass the torch of world evangelization to their brothers and sisters in the Two Thirds (Majority) World.¹⁸³ It doesn’t mean that Westerners don’t have a role to play—but rather that we recognize that a baton is being passed to Africans, Hispanics, Islanders, and Asians to take their place in God’s sovereign plan. We will pray for them, support them, learn from them, and join them into the final harvest fields. We want China and India to be free to send forth millions of laborers. We desire Africans and Hispanics to circle the globe. This is their time—their moment of God-ordained opportunity. We must be their champions and grateful co-laborers.

As individuals, we must accept our calling as a 21st century missionaries and throw our prayers and very lives into the people group or nation of God’s choosing. I believe every Christian on earth should adopt at least one people group or nation as an object of their love and attention.

¹⁸³ Miller, 2001, 271.

Twelve years ago, God directed me personally to focus on the nation of Mongolia. I studied their history and culture. I started praying regularly for them, and I took scores of short-term trips to that nation. I helped start businesses and churches there. Today I support long-term missionaries that are called to the land of the Khans.

When I first took on the burden for Mongolia the Church was very small and the nation mired in extreme poverty. Today, Mongolia has a developing economy and a Church that has grown to 50,000. Amazingly, as far as we know, Mongolia had no known Christians in 1980. Today it is the number one nation in the world for “Christians per sent missionary”¹⁸⁴ (It takes 222 Mongol Christians to send out one missionary. The United States is 30th on the list, needing 2148 senders for each missionary.)

I believe at the heart of the Fourth Wave, God desires hundreds of millions of 21st century Christians to adopt, engage, and share God’s heart for a people group or nation on earth. In the Fourth Wave of Modern Missions, every Christian on earth is destined to be a missionary.

CONCLUSION

Christian missions is not only the goal of history, but has played a vital role in its development over the centuries. The Early Christians leavened the Roman Empire then birthed a Christian civilization in Europe that produced major advances in science, civil government, education, the arts, and the exploration and development of nations.

The First Wave in Modern Missions was birthed near the turn of the 19th century by William Carey and others and carried many missionaries to the seaports and coastlands of the world. The Second Wave led by pioneers such as David Livingstone in Africa and Hudson

¹⁸⁴ Bob Waymire, Global Mapping International, <http://www.gmi.org> [accessed 17 April 2010].

Taylor in China extended the reach of the Gospel into the interiors of various nations. The Third wave of Modern Missions, aimed at reaching hidden or unreached peoples, was the next logical step in the 20th century led by missionary innovators such as Donald MacGavran, Cameron Townsend, and Ralph Winter. Great specialization in Christian mission accompanied this era—following the pathways of economic and technological development.

A new and exciting era of Christian missions is dawning in the 21st century. The center of global Christianity has shifted west and south, with the final focus of world evangelization being the 10/40 Window—from China across Central Asia and back to Jerusalem in the Middle East. Two-Thirds (Majority) World missionaries—from Africa, Latin America, the Pacific Islands, and Asia are being raised up by God to lead this next wave of evangelization.

I believe that for the first time in history, 21st century missions will see people of all ages and nationalities taking the Good News to every person on earth using creative communications and relational ministry in every sphere of society in every nation. The final frontiers to reach with the Good News are from the Far East, across Central Asia and back to Jerusalem. This final swath of Kingdom expansion could just be the consummation stage of world missions.

If we rise to that challenge, the Fourth Wave in Modern Missions just might be that sterling moment in history when the Great Commission is fulfilled and Jesus can return to set up his Eternal Kingdom (Matthew 24:14)..

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