

WORLD CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT



God's Redemptive History

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

God is "making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth."
Ephesians 1:9-10



QUOTES

"The Bible consists of a single drama: the entrance of the Kingdom, the power and glory of the living God in this enemy-occupied territory." Ralph Winter

"... my lack of a proper understanding of the Gospel was the result of the kind of evangelization that was fairly common in evangelical circles in my country—an evangelization that majors on *individual salvation*, oftentimes understood as a subjective experience of forgiveness of sins, but has little or nothing to say on *God's will to bring humankind back to Himself, to reconcile the members of the human race to one another, and to restore the whole of his creation, according to his original purpose.*" C. Rene Padilla



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As a result of the readings, discussion and activities in this session, the cross-cultural witness candidate should be able to:

- Understand the basic concepts of redemptive history.
- Realize that the history of the church's expansion is much more than just a history of Western Christianity.
- Realize that the history of the church's expansion is much more than just the first 300 years and the last 200 years.

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- Understand that the Christian movement is now truly worldwide.
- Apply lessons and principles learned from history.

GOD'S STORY – "HIS" STORY

The One True God who created the universe decided to create humans in His own image and give them His love. Amazingly, humanity rejected this offer and chose to try and become our own masters. After this initial sequence, the rest of human history is the story of how God is yearning and sacrificing to bring a lost humanity back to Himself.

Genesis 3:15 is the proto-gospel. God will redeem humanity by the Savior's victory over sin and Satan. In Genesis 9:8-10 we see the universal covenant with Noah and his family – with an implication that God will refrain from destroying humanity and allow a chance for a salvation history to unfold.

In Genesis 11, humanity once again seeks to replace God as they build the tower of Babel. God decides to scatter them to keep them from further pursuing pride and independence. As Paul tells us in Acts 17:26-27 that God created all the ethnos throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and He determined their boundaries. God scattered humanity and then has guided the times and places of each ethne (cultural-linguistic group, not nations) so that some would find their way to Him.

The rest of the Old Testament is the story of how God starts over again with one man and decides to build a chosen people from Abraham as a blessing to the world. The force of the Old Testament is centripetal as God seeks to create a faithful people who will be a testimony to the nations who will come to the Jews to learn about God. This does not, however, mean that God did not send. In Genesis 45:5-9 Joseph tells his brothers, "Don't be grieved for selling me ... God sent me." In Exodus 3 we see God sending Moses to Egypt to release the Jews from their bondage and we see miracles of the Exodus become a witness to the world. Jonah is sent to preach repentance to the most hated people of that age. The slave girl is a witness to Naaman the Syrian. Naomi the Jew goes to another people and, as a result, Ruth the Gentile is drawn to Israel.

Of course, the New Testament tells us of God's great reversal. The Gospel moves from being centripetal to being centrifugal. God Himself comes as a man and he then sends out his ragtag group of followers to turn the world upside down. Again, sometimes the going is voluntary as Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, Paul, and others go out in the power of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the going is involuntary as the persecution scatters the church from Jerusalem (perhaps because they were not yet obeying Acts 1:8?) We are living in Acts 29. The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the church has continued the redemption story. The stories of the World Christian movement from the first century to the current time are the stories of a sovereign God accomplishing His purposes as he is seeking to reverse the curse and bring humanity and all of creation back into right relationship with Him.

REFLECT #1

1. What is God's purpose in history?
2. What are biblical examples of God sending people across cultures? What can we learn from these examples?
3. How does God turn disadvantages into advantages?
4. How does God's purpose affect your life in practical ways?

CASE STUDY – LEARNING FROM HISTORY IN MODERN INDIAN MISSIONS

Condensed from “The Importance of Indigenous Leadership” by Victor John in The CPM Journal (Jan-Mar 2006:57)

In modern times, North India has been called the graveyard of missions. In the 1990s God started several amazing Gospel movements in this former graveyard. Victor John is a leader in one of these movements with over 40,000 churches planted and over 2 million people baptized. One reason this has happened is that Victor and his partners have learned from the mistakes of the past.

The challenges in India are tremendous. After 2000 years of mission work, not even 10% of the population call themselves Christian. The cultural crusaders of Hinduism are not shy to make a categorical allegation on Christianity, saying it is a western religion and has a hidden agenda of re-establishing western colonial rule. They point to the style of leadership, which is very foreign to Indian culture. The need to train indigenous leaders has become increasingly important.

Arrival of St. Thomas

Historically it is believed that St. Thomas brought the Gospel to India, but we don't know how he organized the church or its leadership. There is no recorded indigenous Christian activity for over two hundred years after Thomas' martyrdom.

Arrival of the Eastern Church from Syria

The fourth century brought the Eastern Church from Syria. This relationship with the small Christian community benefited mainly in the exchange of leaders and the migration of the Syrian Christians to India. It helped in the growth of the Syrian Christians in India but the church in India did not grow much until the sixteenth century with the arrival of the Portuguese. Neither the Syrians nor the Portuguese promoted the indigenous leadership and the Eastern Church became weaker without it.

Arrival of Roman Catholic Missions

The sixteenth century marked the arrival of Roman Catholic missionaries to India. Through their efforts, thousands of people joined the Roman Catholic Church (mostly in south India). In spite of thousands of indigenous people joining the Catholic Church, the missionaries failed to raise significant local leaders for the church.

Arrival of First Protestant Mission

The Protestant Mission came to India when King Frederick IV of Denmark sent missionaries to the Danish settlement of Tranquebar. Believing that people best hear and learn the Gospel in their own language and cultural context, the missionaries' first tasks were to learn Tamil

and to understand Hinduism. Ziegenbalg and Plütschau operated a school for reading and writing in Tamil, so that each convert could read the Scriptures. The missionaries encouraged indigenous leadership of Indian Christians but there was no emphasis on these Indian leaders training new leaders.

Arrival of William Carey

The next important mission is the Serampore Mission. William Carey, the Father of Modern Christian Missions initiated this mission. The Serampore Mission gave importance to leadership development by establishing schools and starting Bible translation. In 1818, the mission founded the Serampore College and trained local leaders for mission. Thus, this mission became a model for the modern missionary movements in leadership development.

Modern Missions

The nineteenth century brought a change in western missionaries' thinking and they began to give more importance to indigenous leadership and training of Indian leaders for leadership in churches and missions. However, the training methodologies and curriculum remained western and no indigenous way of training was developed. The preparation of indigenous leaders was done with a major conflict of interest. No natives, nationals, or local-workers could ever be called missionaries – this title was reserved for the whites only. These mission organizations focused on the replacement of existing leadership and not on movement or growth.

In short, this is what we learn from the history of the development of indigenous leaders in India:

- The early Eastern Church failed to develop indigenous leaders and indigenous methods of communication, which hindered the growth of its mission. This is evident from the Syrian Christians who got their leaders from the Eastern Church and used Syrian language in their worship.
- In spite of thousands of indigenous people joining the Roman Catholic Church in south India, they failed to raise significant local leaders for the church. Even though they used the local languages, their orders came from the outside. The church was too hierarchal and clergy-oriented. There was no procedure to appoint local leaders. In fact, such appointments were unthinkable.
- The Tranquebar mission failed to continue due to a lack of second line leadership development. Leaders did not learn how to develop other leaders.
- Not one of the above missions ever gave any importance to training grassroots-level workers or local leaders.

Purposeful Evangelism:

Looking at the history of missions in India, we learn that all evangelism must have a goal and the goal must be to see that every community is penetrated with the Gospel and a pregnant church has been started. A process of discipleship must begin as soon as possible. Whenever a church starts, indigenous leadership training and the salvation of the community must become the focus of our time and resources.

There are several advantages to indigenous leadership:

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1. Indigenous leaders understand the inner workings, conflicts, problems, and reactions of their fellow villagers.
2. Indigenous leaders do not have the problem of accumulating information. They use and apply what they learn on a day-to-day basis.
3. Transitioning from being a student to the teacher does not take a long time.
4. It is cost effective.
5. It is a simple lifestyle of leadership.

We've discovered several keys to developing effective indigenous leadership:

- The goal of leadership training and appointment of new leaders is to see that new churches are started on a regular basis.
- The training of indigenous leaders must be biblical, and it must focus on training church planters and pastors with a passion for missions.
- All new churches, from inception, must promote Every Member Discipleship.
- It must be understood that indigenous leaders are the lifelines in spiritual nurture, leadership, and stability of the local church.
- Equipping new potential indigenous leaders is vital to church multiplication in all sections of the community because if the trained person relocates for any reason, it results in evangelism and church planting.
- As much as possible, unpaid local leadership must be encouraged in all local churches. It eases the burden of raising funds for local leaders and sets the right priorities for effective ministry.
- The DNA of 2 Timothy 2:2 should be followed at all stages of leadership training. Developing biblical leadership is vital to the ongoing multiplication of the church.

THE "WAVES" OF GOD

There are a variety of ways to look at the history of God's Redemptive Story. We find ourselves discerning different waves of God's movements in the ebb and flow of His Gospel tide around the world and throughout history. We see the first waves of the church in Acts.

The Early Church

The Early Church fulfills Acts 1:8

- In Jerusalem, Acts 1-7
- Judea and Samaria, Acts 8-12
- To the ends of the earth, Acts 13-28

Acts 1-12

- Peter as leader
- Jerusalem is center
- Ministry mainly to Jews
- Message is "repent," Acts 2:38

Acts 13-28

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- Paul as leader
- Antioch and the world
- Ministry mainly to Gentiles
- Message is “believe,” Acts 16:31

Winter’s 10 Epochs

Ralph Winter uses a schematic to describe the 10 epochs of God’s redemptive history. Obviously, this is overly simplified, but it is an easy way to remember some of the key periods.

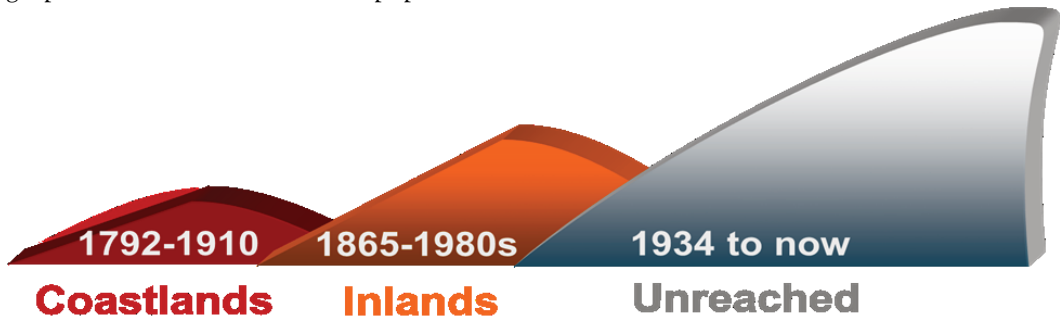
Winter identifies five major 400 year periods in the time before Christ.



Then he identifies five major 400 year periods after Christ.



Winter also characterizes the modern missions movement in three waves. Initial mission efforts were to the reachable coastlands. As that movement waned, a new wave arose to bring the gospel to the inland populations. A third wave began in the 1930s as an effort to bring the gospel to hidden and unreached populations.

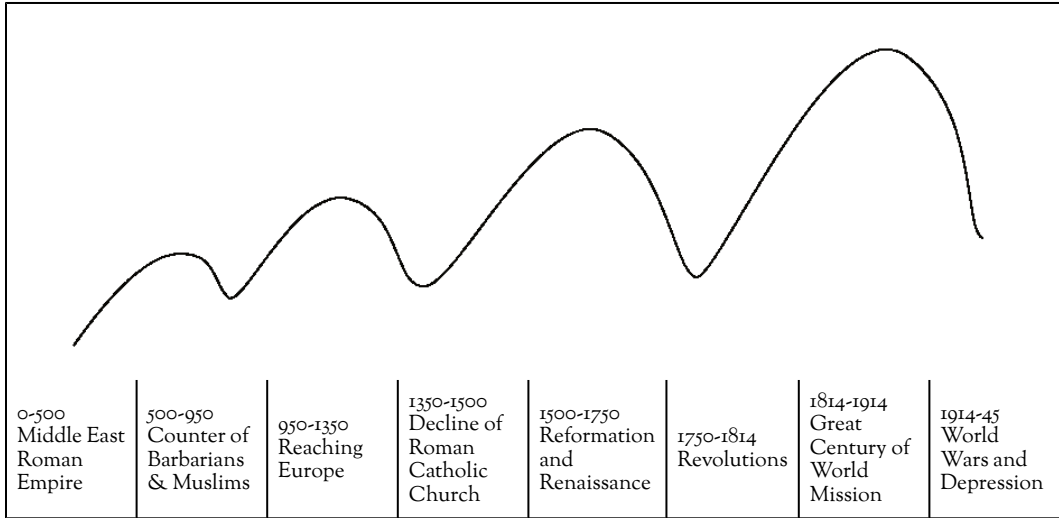


Coastlands	Inlands	Unreached
William Carey	Hudson Taylor	Cameron Townsend
Baptist Missionary Society	China Inland Mission	Donald McGavran
1806 “Haystack” Prayer Meeting of Students	Cambridge Seven 1883	AD2000 Movement
Youth surge overseas	1886 Student Volunteers	SFMF 1936/IVCF
	Youth surge	URBANA since 1946
		Youth surge overseas

Latourette’s Ebb and Flow

The dean of Christian mission historians is Kenneth Scott Latourette. He wrote a seven-volume study titled *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*. In his view the World Christian Movement had a series of resurgences and recessions.

Latourette discerned an overarching scheme in church history of ever-further advances followed by retreats of weakening force. He called this pattern the ebb and flow of the tide.



Latourette shows the initial surge of the church from Christ to AD 500. Then it suffered its greatest decline at the hands of the Barbarians from the north and Muslims from the Middle East.

However, it recovered and began to advance again from 950-1350 as the Roman Catholic Church solidified its control in Europe and Byzantine Empire nurtured the Eastern Church. Another decline followed in 1350-1500 during the end of the Medieval Era.

The Reformation and Renaissance stimulated another period of advance from 1500-1750, followed by the smallest retreat yet in 1750-1815.

Christianity enjoyed its greatest advance from 1815 to 1914 in what Latourette calls the Great Century. Finally, Latourette shows the inevitable decline during the World Wars and Great Depression.

If Latourette had been able to write the history of the final half of the twentieth century, it would have rivaled the Great Century. God has done amazing work in moving from using primarily Western missionaries to a truly global mission enterprise. Missionaries are sent from every continent to every continent. Each decade has seen a new center of Christian expansion:

- 1960s Africa
- 1970s Latin America
- 1980s East Asia
- 1990s Eastern Europe

REFLECT #2

1. Without looking at the article, write down a brief outline of God's redemptive history.
2. What are some key ideas that you see in these various historical outlines by Winter and Latourette?
3. Which period of history do you know the least about? Which one sounds the most interesting to you and why?

REACHING THE ETHNE

In the Great Commission, Jesus told his disciples to go and make disciples of all *ethne* (ethno-linguistic people groups). What does this mean? Why do we almost always use discipling to refer to individuals? We could debate how this is measured in a people group, but only God knows when that point of "discipling" an *ethne* is reached.

Another fascinating way to look at the World Christian movement is to see how different people groups were reached (given access to the Gospel) and disciplined (a sizeable number became followers of Jesus). The following is a look at the sweep of the gospel through various key people groups in the first 15 centuries of the church.

1st Century

- Aramaic-speaking Hebrews – Acts 2:7
- Greek-speaking Hellenists – Acts 6
- Greeks – Acts 11, 13-28
- Galatians (were they the Celts?)

2nd Century

- Latins in Rome & Gaul
- Celts in Gaul by Iranaeus
- Syrians – 1st N.T. translation
- Coptic Egyptians – Bible translation
- North Africa: Romans reached and 1st Latin N.T. but Punic & Berbers unreached!

3rd Century

- Spaniards beginning in South
- South Indians (perhaps an earlier beachhead by the Apostle Thomas?)
- Armenians by Gregory in a mass movement

4th- 5th Century

- Ethiopians by Athanasius & Frumentius
- Goths by Ulfilus
- Celts in Ireland by Patrick of England
- Franks – King Clovis & 3000 warriors baptized on Christmas Day 496

6th- 7th Century

- Picts of Scotland by Columba

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- Angles of England by Aidan and Cuthbert
- Saxons of England by Augustine of Canterbury

8th-10th Century

- Frisians of Holland by Willibrord
- Germans by Boniface
- Saxons on continent by Charlemagne
- Slavs by Cyril and Methodius
- Russians (Eastern Slavs) by royal initiative
- Czechs (Western Slavs), Bohemia

11th-12th Century

- Poles (Western Slavs) by royal initiative
- Magyars mass movement by royal initiative and missionaries
- Scandinavians groups by people movements, national conversions
- Wends (Western Slavs) by missionaries, knights, & colonists

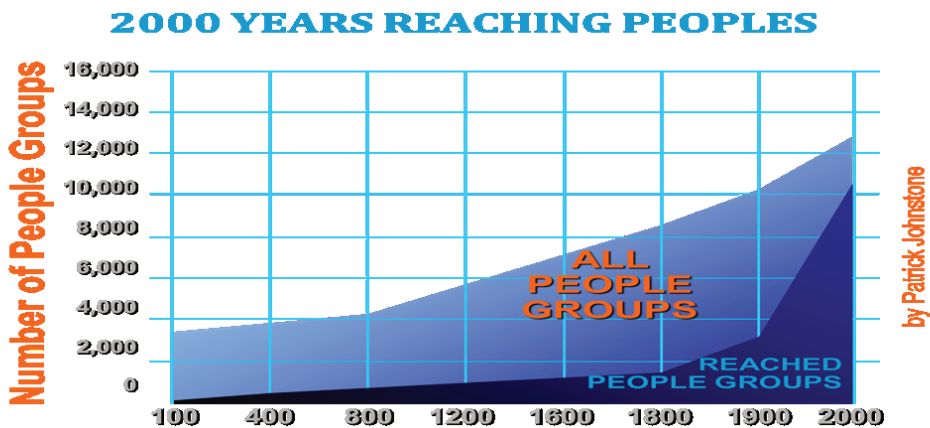
13th-14th Century

- Prussians by Christian conquest
- Finnish by Christian conquest
- Lithuanians by royal initiative

16th Century

- Lapps – last European unreached people – by Swedish Lutherans

The number of ethne has grown from an estimated 3500 groups in 100 A.D. to over 12,000 groups by A.D. 2000 as migration and political and cultural separation has divided groups into new ethnolinguistic groupings. The number of ethne grew faster than the number of reached ethne until approximately 1800. In the last 200 years, the progress in reaching ethne has been incredible. The following chart shows that growth.



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- By 1600 A.D. an estimated 1200 out of 7300 *ethne* were reached with the Gospel, or in other words, 16% of the world's people groups were reached with the Gospel.
- By 1800 an estimated 1700 of 8200 *ethne* were reached, or 20%.
- By 1900 after the surge of the "Great Century" we see that 3500 of 10,000 *ethne* were reached, or 35%.
- By 2000, over 10,000 of the 12,000+ *ethne* were reached for an astounding 83%! Of these groups, 6,000+ are majority Christian and 4,000 are minority Christian with a majority of their people having been given access to the Gospel.

LEARNING FROM HISTORY

Mission history can provide us clues for the future of missions. What are some of these lessons and clues?

1. The advance of the Gospel is a story of ebbs and flows. God will accomplish His purposes but there are no guarantees. A vibrant Christian movement in one generation does not ensure that future generations will follow Christ. The inevitable lapse into cultural Christian religion is as deadly as any other religion when it keeps people from a true faith in Christ. Persecution and conquest have extinguished the faith community in years past. We can clearly see this by the fact that all the churches named in Revelation are now located in Muslim areas.
2. As we are making progress, we need to realize that our very success is sowing the seeds of decline. For instance, the success of the early church in reaching the Roman Empire and the resulting marriage of church and state crippled the church in future years. In recent years, one reason that the American church has not suffered the precipitous decline of the European church is the separation of church and state – yet many American Christians want to embrace the state to solve problems that only God through the church can address.
3. In the history of the church's expansion, those without a stake in the current power structures were usually the key witnesses that reached beyond themselves. The outcasts and the marginalized are often the bearers of the Gospel. We write history by focusing on individuals and organizations, but usually the growth of the church is due to the unnamed masses living out their lives of faith.
4. Often God uses involuntary witness to accomplish His purposes – such as Patrick being enslaved and then after escaping, returning to Ireland to convert his former captors and much of that nation. Another example is the persecution in modern China which has unarguably been a key factor in the explosive growth of the church.
5. The church often grows at the margins and through the most unexpected people and communities. Who would think that today's most explosive church growth would be occurring in the North Indian "graveyard of missions?" Who would have planned for Filipino maids and other household servants to be reaching Saudi Arabians in an amazing way? We must keep our hearts and minds open to God's unusual ways and then join Him there.
6. Past success is not important – God is looking for those who are sold out to Him – He delights in choosing those without power and influence to shake the world and turn it upside down.

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7. Christianity is the only religion that is truly global in its appeal. Hinduism is tightly tied to South Asia. Buddhism is mainly strong in East Asia. Islam is strong in a belt across North Africa and central and southern Asia. Christianity has shown the ability to adapt and be embraced by people in many cultures. This is all the more reason we must work hard to shed our cultural baggage and be a united global Body of Christ.

Explore

In order to better understand the World Christian movement, read through these online articles:

Wikipedia Article on Christian Missions

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_mission)

Timeline of Christian missions

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Christian_missions)

REFLECT #3

1. What is an important lesson you can learn from the history of the World Christian movement? How will you apply it?
2. What unexpected moves of God are you seeing as you view the world?
3. What are pressures you face to fit into your "system" at the expense of being more effective in reaching the world?
4. How will this lesson change the way you pray in the future?

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

The history of God's redemptive purpose is full of celebrations and lessons. The following are some lessons we can learn from God's work in various situations of cross-cultural expansion of His witness.

Jonah (Jonah 1-4)

- God's call is clear.
- God calls individuals.
- Jonah could not run from God – go where God wants you.
- God's love is for all people.
- We are a witness no matter where we are.
- We have no idea how people will react – the Ninevites were one of the most brutal kingdoms on earth and yet they powerfully repented.
- God can use a reluctant, resistant person.
- God will accomplish His purposes.

Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3)

- Nicodemus sought Him out – Jesus' holy lifestyle drew people to Him
- Jesus was not judgmental because Nicodemus came at night
- He was from the ruler class and was asking questions. Jesus replied with questions as He often did with people – letting them discover truth.
- He discerned what Nicodemus was really asking and addressed that.

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- Nicodemus apparently was slow in responding as we see him in the Gospels – Jesus planted a seed that later grew.

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (John 4)

- He approached her to overcome her barriers and prejudices.
- Avoid being judgmental.
- No arrogance – facts and truth in love.
- He met her where she was – as she was.

Jesus at the Temple (Mark 11:15-17)

- God’s house has always been a house of prayer for all nations.
- Selling was happening in Gentile court and shutting out the Gentiles.
- He was angry with the injustice and sought to correct it, then teach why this was important.

Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10)

- Cornelius was an example of a God seeker – sometimes we don’t have to find the seeker – we just have to be willing to respond to God.
- Peter learned Jews were not superior – and that he needed to approach Gentiles without prejudice.
- Opportunity of salvation was for the whole family/household.

Paul at Mars Hill (Acts 17)

- Went to where people were.
- Started with where they were.
- Used means they were familiar with.
- Not confrontational although true to message.
- Spoke to leaders.

REFLECT #4

1. Read Philipians 2 – What can you learn from the Biblical example of Jesus as a missionary? 2. Read John 1 – How was John speaking to the Jews? To the non-Jews? 3. Read John 4 – What can you learn from Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman? 4. Read Acts 10 – What can you learn from Peter and Cornelius? 5. Read Acts 17 – What can you learn from Paul’s sermon?

EXAMPLES FOR US TO FOLLOW

Ruth A. Tucker has written a biographical view of Christian missions (see below) which uses the stories of individuals to tell the story of the global mission movement. One refreshing aspect of this study is that Tucker, again and again, shows that these were not “super saints” but ordinary people plagued by human frailties and failures, yet willing to make extraordinary sacrifices and be used by God in this greatest cause in all of human history. The following are a few examples of missionaries and missionary communities.

Heretic and Missionaries

If you have studied Christian history, you might be familiar with the Church councils that were convened to deal with major heresies. One little known dynamic is that the “heretics” who lost in these councils were expelled from the center of Christian power. The interesting thing is that sometimes as a result, these “heretics” became more missionary than the “orthodox” power holders. There is a parable here for those of us so concerned with right doctrine that right knowledge becomes more important than right practice and obedience.

Arians and the Germans

In the fourth century, Arius taught that Jesus was created by the Father and thus not equal to God. Athanasius led the counterforce to this theology that was rejected at the Nicene council. Ulfilas was a Gothic convert in the Arian community of Constantinople who was sent as a missionary to the Gothic barbarians across the Danube. This was partially done for political reasons at the initiative of emperor Constantius II. Ulfilas had significant success in seeing many Germanic people come to Christ, albeit in this heretical form of Christianity. Over the next 300-400 years the Germanic kingdoms were either conquered by Nicene neighbors (Ostrogoths, Vandals, Burgundians) or their rulers accepted Nicene Christianity (Visigoths, Lombards).

The Nestorians and the East



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Eastern Assyrians or Madinkhaye are primarily members of the Assyrian Church of the East. Though they do not usually call themselves “Nestorians”, they have been designated with the prefix Nestorians by the Roman Catholic Church, after Nestorius was condemned over a theological dispute. Nestorianism is the doctrine that Jesus exists as two persons, the man Jesus and the divine Son of God, or Logos, rather than as a unified person. This could have been a primarily cultural and linguistic split: the Greeks apparently had two words for person and this translated poorly into Syriac. At this point, the church of the East teaches that Christ has two qnome (essences) that are unmingled and eternally united in one parsopa (personality).

After Nestorius was banished, the Sassanid Persian kings, who were at constant war with Byzantium, saw the opportunity to assure the loyalty of their Christian subjects and supported the Nestorian schism by granting protection to the Nestorians in 462.

The Assyrian Church produced many zealous missionaries who traveled and preached throughout Persia and Central and East Asia in the seventh and eighth centuries. They reached the following areas:

- India in the fourth century
- Gundishapur, Persia and Muharraq, Bahrain in the fifth century
- China by 635 – the Nestorian Stele, set up on 7 January 781 at the then-capital of Chang’an (modern Xi’an), describes the introduction of Christianity into China from Persia in the reign of Tang Taizong, and documents found at the Mogao Caves near Dunhuang further describe the religion.
- Mongolia in the seventh century also.

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- Korea by the seventh or eighth century.
- In AD 797, a Japanese history Shoku Nihongi stated in AD 736 an envoy returned to Japan from China. He brought with him a Persian physician by the name of Limitsi, and Kohfu, a “dignitary of the church of the Luminous Religion”. The “Luminous religion” is (Nestorian) Christianity – because Christ is “the Light of the World”.

Emperor Wuzong of Tang reigned 840–846. He suppressed all foreign religions, including Buddhism and Christianity, which then declined sharply in China. A Syrian monk visiting China a few decades later described many churches in ruin.

Nestorianism was particularly active in the 12th century, being a state religion of Khitans in the times of Yelü Dashi. It was also one of the widespread religions in the empire of Genghis Khan, and several Nestorian gravestones written in Syriac survive in what is today Kyrgyzstan.

The Church experienced a significant revival during the Yuan dynasty. Marco Polo in the 1200s and other medieval Western writers indicate many Nestorian communities remaining in the Middle East, Central Asia, China and Mongolia. The Nestorian communities in China seem to have suffered during the Mongol invasions of Timur and then the weakened church slowly died out during the Ming. The legacy of the missionaries remains in the Assyrian churches still to be found in Iraq, Iran, and India.

PRAYER OF ST. PATRICK

As I arise today,
may the strength of God pilot me,
the power of God uphold me,
the wisdom of God guide me.
May the eye of God look before me,
the ear of God hear me
the word of God speak for me.
May the hand of God protect me,
the way of God lie before me,
the shield of God defend me,
the host of God save me.
May Christ shield me today.
Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit,
Christ when I stand,
Christ in the heart
of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth
of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.
Amen

A Missionary Slave

“Magonus Sucatus Patricius was born c. 385 in Kilpatrick, Scotland. His father was a deacon named Calpornius, and his grandfather was a priest named Pototus. Such a family grounded in the Church ensured that Patrick would be trained in the Church as well.” However, things did not go as planned. When Patrick was about 16 years old, raiders from Ireland attacked the shores of Great Britain. Patrick was captured and lived in slavery in Ireland for the next six years.



While in captivity, Patrick grew and matured in his faith. In Patrick’s confessions he wrote that “the love of God, and His fear increased in me more and more, and the faith grew in me, and the spirit was roused, so that in a single day, I have on the mountain, even before, the dawn, I was roused to prayer and felt no hurt from it, whether there was snow or ice or rain; nor was there any slothfulness in me such as I see now, because the spirit was then fervent within me”. Patrick also learned the Celtic language and learned about the Celtic religion of Druidism.

After he had been a slave for six years, Patrick heard a voice in his dreams that told him, “Soon you will go to your own country.” And a little later the voice declared, “See, your ship is ready.” The next morning, he arose and walked two hundred miles to the ocean and found a ship ready to leave. Following his escape from Ireland, Patrick went to France where he joined the monastery at Lerins. In Lerins, Patrick became a priest. Patrick spent several years studying at Auxerre and eventually became a bishop. Once again, the Lord visited him at night in a vision. A man whom he did not know named Victoricus came to Patrick with several letters.

As Patrick began to read, suddenly a group from Ireland began to speak in one voice, saying “We ask you, holy boy, come and walk among us once more.”

Although Patrick was sure that God was calling him, his family did not want him to go. It was well known that escaped slaves were woven into giant wicker baskets, suspended over fires, and roasted alive in sacrifice to the Druids gods. But Patrick was called of God and began his missionary work about 430 A.D. Palladius had already received the commission from the Pope to spread the Gospel in Ireland. However, he gave it up for fear of a barbaric chieftain in Ireland. So, Patrick took up the commission in 432.

Patrick went to Ireland with the goal of bringing the Gospel to the Irish. He knew the language and culture and communicated the Gospel in ways the Irish could understand. Despite this he faced staunch opposition from the Druids (priests). “He was subject to frequent trials at the hands of the Druids. . .no fewer than twelve times he and his companions were seized and carried off as captives, and on one occasion in particular. . .his death was decreed” (WCP).

However, despite the threats and suffering, Patrick moved through Ireland performing miracles and preaching the good news to the Irish, most of whom were hearing it for the first time. The major breakthrough occurred when he appeared before King Laoghaire. “After a

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display of miracles and disproving the Druids in the king's court, many of the king's followers, including his brother, became Christians within the next few days. Legend says that it was here that Patrick used the shamrock to teach the idea of the Holy Trinity." (WCP)

Patrick did not stop here, though. Bolstered by his success at the king's court, he continued to spread the Gospel throughout the provinces of Ulster, Munster, Meath, and Leinster, performing miracles and planting churches. By the time of Patrick's death in 461, he converted almost the entire island to Christianity and also consecrated over 350 bishops. St. Patrick made the Gospel something that the Irish people were receptive to. Perhaps it was because he spoke of it in their native tongue, or because he performed miracles, or because he disproved the Druids; whatever the case may be, Patrick brought Christianity to Ireland in a way no one else had done before him. (WCP)

THE BEGINNING OF PROTESTANT MISSIONS

For almost 200 years after the Reformation, the Protestant mission activity was almost non-existent. Part of this was their attempt to survive the political and military backlash from their opponents. Some of this was probably due to their rejection of monastic structures due to the abuses they saw. However, these monastic groups were often the ones who carried the Gospel to new areas. Ironically, the Roman Catholic Church responded with its own Counter-Reformation and spawned new missionary orders that began to bring the Gospel to the New World and also to the Old World in Asia.

William Carey has been called the father of modern missions. In reality, the Jesuits (such as Robert De Nobili and Matteo Ricci) were the forerunners of the movement that took Christianity from its European limits toward a worldwide faith. In the Protestant sphere, the modern missions movement was birthed in the Moravian community.



Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf

Nikolaus Ludwig was the Count of Zinzendorf and Pottendorf. He grew up in the Lutheran church and was influenced by the Pietist movement of Philipp Spener, who was his godfather.

In 1721 he purchased land from his grandmother to form an estate. In 1722 he married Countess Erdmuth Dorothea Reuss, a young woman of Pietist persuasion. Although outwardly conforming to expectations, the count yearned for some sort of religious service, an idea opposed by his family.

In June 1722, a group of refugees who were in the lineage of the martyr John Hus (1369-1415) crossed over from Bohemia to escape persecution. They were given refuge on Zinzendorf's land. This group overcame its own internal struggles and formed a community called Herrnhut. This community underwent some spiritual revival that began to spread as they sent out people to form Pietist communities in other places.

In 1731 Zinzendorf was in Copenhagen for the King's coronation and met Anthony, a black

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West Indian slave, who pleaded for Christians to present the Gospel to his people in the Caribbean islands. The Moravian community's response to this challenge sparked a missionary movement that by the time of Zinzendorf's death in 1760 saw the Moravians send out 226 missionaries with an impact of over 6,000 people saved.

Several key principles stand out in the Moravian movement:

1. They were focused on the simple Gospel of Christ and the need for a relationship with God.
2. Prayer was a key to all they did. They started a 24-hour prayer effort in 1727 that lasted for 100 years. It is no coincidence that the world Christian movement began to explode during this prayer movement.
3. They were willing to sacrifice. The first two Moravians who went to the Caribbean went thinking they would have to sell themselves as slaves to live among the slaves.
4. Most of them went as tradesmen and artisans. They supported themselves in their trades and businesses. At times, they had various businesses that helped each other survive and thrive.
5. This was the beginning of the concept in modern times of the whole church sending and supporting mission efforts as opposed to it being a decision and support of just church leaders. It also reintroduced the idea that a denomination or church is responsible for reaching the whole world not just their "local parish."

REFLECT #5

1. What can you learn and apply from the story of the Arian and Nestorian missionaries?
2. What can you learn and apply from the story of Patrick of Ireland?
3. What can you learn and apply from the story of the Moravians?

MODERN MIRACLE

The church is changing. The percentage of Protestants in Asia, Africa and Latin America is increasing. They have risen from 1% in 1800 to 77% in 2005. The church as a whole is growing, adding 100,000 new Christians every day and 4,500 new congregations every week. There are 227 million Christians in North America, 427 million in Latin America, 410 million in Western Europe, 123 million in Eastern Europe, 300 million in Asia, and 20 million in the Pacific. Some of the results can be startling.

Growth of the Body of Christ

- In 1900, there were no Protestant churches in South Korea. Today, South Korea is 30% Christian.
- In 1900, Africa was 3% Christian. Today, sub-Saharan Africa is 50% Christian with 25,000 new believers daily.
- In 1900, there were 50,000 Protestants in Latin America. In 1980, there were 20 million. By 2000, the number had risen to 100 million.

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- In 1950 in China, there were 1 million Christians. Today, there are more than 70 million believers, and there are 35,000 new believers daily.
- In 1900, Great Commission Christians (those interested in evangelism and missions) amounted to 14% of all Christians. In 2005, they were 32%.
- The Christian “center of gravity” has shifted to the Global South (now having 62.5% of all Christians). It is also shifting east: East Asia has about 115 million Christians.

The “history” of God’s redemptive story in our future is very much going to be a global story. We are privileged to live in a day that most of our ancestors could only hope for. Will we do our part or will God have to pass us by and find more willing servants?

SELF-AWARENESS, SURVIVAL, AND SOLUTION

So, what does history mean for you? Can you learn lessons from missions history that will help you be more effective in cross-cultural gospeling? Here are a few thoughts on lessons you can learn and apply in your life and ministry.

Lessons from the Moravians

1. Passion for Christ
2. Prayer
3. Community life
4. Spontaneous obedience
5. Humility
6. Courage in the face of danger
7. Tenacity of Purpose

Lessons from William Carey

William Carey was an under-educated shoemaker who was poor in business and teaching. He was initially a boring preacher from a marginal denomination. Yet he went on to make a tremendous impact on the world by being a catalyst in the modern mission movement. From Carey, we can learn:

1. Mission is the heart of God, the message of the Bible.
2. Study and know the world situation as it really is.
3. Create the mechanisms to initiate and sustain missions.
4. Put your ideas into practice, set the example for others.
5. Persevere in any adversity.

Lessons from Hudson Taylor

Taylor is the best-known leader of the second wave of modern missions as these pioneers began to take the Gospel beyond the coasts to the inland areas. He was an amazing missionary and has much to teach us.

1. Live by faith.
2. Become like the people (he was criticized for dressing and looking like a Chinese).

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3. Learn the language – including dialects.
4. Go where the Gospel is not.
5. Treat no person as inferior.
6. Be willing to pay any price.
7. Mobilize laborers through prayer recruitment and deployment.

Lessons from Roland Allen and the Apostle Paul

Roland Allen (1868 – 1947) was not a particularly “successful” missionary. But his writings in books such as *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* and *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church* showed a willingness to radically reassess cultural and conventional mission wisdom in light of the Bible. Allen emphasized:

1. The importance of the Holy Spirit in missions
2. The need for a truly indigenous church – all a new church needs is the Bible and the resulting ministries and sacraments.
3. Congregational cooperation with the founder to call out the leaders and equip its people to perform the functions of the church.
4. The spontaneous expansion of the church – the church should naturally share the Good News with their neighbors.
5. A voluntary clergy to avoid dependency on outsiders.
6. The outside Bishop and his co-laborers need to help as overseers and as links to the larger Church.

As he wrote he also challenged missionaries to consider their “mission activities.” How many activities do we carry out that do not result in evangelism or salvation or church multiplication? If they do not lead to the primary result, then we must reassess our activities and change them to be in line with God’s primary purposes.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Our mission is not just man’s mission, it is God’s mission. God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. There are many people in history who have called themselves Christians who have not truly followed Christ. The true church are those people who place their faith in Jesus and seek to obey Him. This Body of Christ has throughout history been the agent of God’s redemptive purposes.

God has now revealed to us His mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill His own good pleasure. And this is the plan: At the right time, He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth (Ephesians 1:9-10).

In a sense, the Holy Spirit is the missionary. The Spirit indwells and uses us as His agents. In turn, He is at work preparing the hearts of those who will respond to the Gospel. Despite all our failures and disobedience, God is accomplishing His purpose to redeem the world.

The Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world so that all nations will hear it, and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14). For the first time in history, we can see the possibility of this verse coming true. May it be in this generation!

LEARNING ACTIVITIES ~ BEFORE YOU GO

The following activities will help you to actively and intentionally prepare to serve God more effectively. As you try these activities, record your difficulties, struggles, and successes in your Learning Journal. Or if you have already done these, either in your home culture or cross-culturally, recall the difficulties, struggles, and successes you encountered.

Imagine

What could it look like to see your focus group reached with the gospel? Imagine you are X years in the future and God has transformed your focus group. How did it happen? Write a timeline with some events and processes that happened.

Lifestyle

Forget all the patterns of missionaries and missionary lifestyles you have known. If you were to look at the patterns of those involved in God's redemptive history, what lifestyle choices could you copy?

Formation

How will you apply the lifestyle examples from the last question?

Language and Customs

How much do you know about the cultural history of your focus group? How much do you know about their spiritual history? What will you do to learn more?

Stretch Life-on-Life

As you have been studying this lesson together, what will your group do to apply the lessons learned? Pick one lesson as a group and apply it at a deep level.

RESOURCES FOR *WORLD CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT*

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