

PART 10

MISSION STRATEGIES



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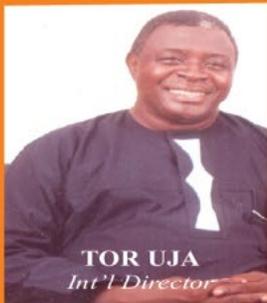


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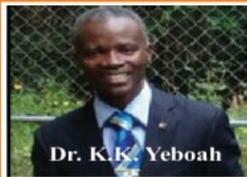


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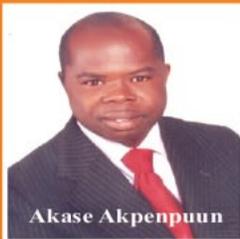
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Akase Akpenpuun
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Finally beloved, it is common knowledge that everything a believer does and has is expected to open a door for the cause of soul winning. Let us, in our various spheres of endeavours, education, medication, civil service, Business, Military, Para Military, Administration etc. Let it be a tool in soul winning and missions.

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A NEW DAWN—EFFECTIVE WAYS TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH NEIGHBOURING FAITHS

Haruna Y. Mogtari

Introduction

During the summer of 1910 in Edinburgh, for the first time, a globally ‘powered’ body of religious significance of the era acknowledged and showed an intentional sense of respect for neighbouring faiths for the role they played in tribal societies. This turning point was at the initial gathering of the World Missionary Conference whose major agenda was ‘continuity with the pre-Christian past and the affirmation of indigenous religious tradition.’^[1] Before this time, these religions were disregarded, stereotyped, and prejudiced against. In Edinburgh 1910, these archaic negative attitudes towards religions of non-Christians were addressed.^[2] It is noteworthy that an attitudinal change towards the religions of other people is necessary for Christian missions in divergent faith communities.^[3]

Likewise, neighbouring faiths are not to be wished away. We need to understand them as traditions of a people’s response to that awareness of, and claims of the Transcendent God upon their lives and cultures. With this understanding, the gospel must be used as the Interpreter of all cultures, traditions, and neighbouring faiths. For this reason, the next subsequent sections will briefly explain some neighbouring religions and sects in our world today; these include African Traditional Religion (ATR), Islam, the Mormons, Baha’i Faith, Eckankar, Hare Krishna, and Jehovah’s Witnesses. The core of this paper highlights key points that are basal tools necessary in sharing the Good News with people who already possess an established faith different from the Christian.

Introducing Neighbouring Faiths

Primal faiths – African Traditional Religion (ATR)

ATR is the substructure of the world’s religious faiths including both Christianity and Islam. It is the oldest religion in Africa, it has no revealed book as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Its scripture is orally committed to memory and passed down from one generation to the other, maintaining the customs and traditions of African people. ATR acknowledges the existence of the Supreme Being, the Ultimate; divinities; benevolent and malevolent spirits that work in favour or against humankind. The spiritual and physical world are perceived as inseparable; meaning whatever happens in the spirit world manifests in the physical. Therefore, sickness and death are a result of the realities in the spiritual. In primal societies of the African man is ‘akin to nature, a child of Mother Earth and brother to plants and animals which have their own place in the universe may enter into a totemic spiritual relationship with men in the way the environment is used; with...respect and reverence, without exploitation. Thus, wanton destruction is often regarded as evil...’^[4] The life of traditional Africans is economically and socially dependent on the environment.

Islam

Islam was founded on the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century AD. Life was chaotic known as

^[1] J. Stanley Friesen, *Missionary Responses to the Tribal Religions at Edinburgh, 1910* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1996), p1.

^[2] Friesen, *Missionary Responses to the Tribal Religions at Edinburgh, 1910*, pp. 135, 139.

^[3] Haruna Y. Mogtari, *The Redeemed; A Journey of Conversion from Islam to Christianity* (SonLife Ghana Limited: Accra, 2017), pp. 51-55.

^[4] Harold Turner, ‘The Primal Religions of the World and their Study’. In V. Hayes (ed.), *Australian Essays in World Religions* (Bedford Park: Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1977), pp. 27-37(30)

jahiliyya, an age of ignorance.^[5] After Muhammad was born, he experienced spiritual ecstasy and received a supposed revelation from God. This event was perceived as a sign of the supernatural from God. Indeed, it marked a turning point that culminated in the development of Islam. Muhammad began to preach with confidence about his new religious ideas. He did not think he was beginning a new religion because the Arabs already believed in One God, Allah, but never had had a prophet before the time. Muhammad’s clan, the Quraysh, believed it was Allah who created the world and He would sit as Judge in the Last Days.^[6] Muhammad was based in Mecca but moved to Medina because of persecution. This movement is known as *Hijra* and marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. Muhammad established a theocratic system of governance—the religio-politico, judicial, and military framework, that would shape and influence the spread of Islam beyond the shores of Arabia.^[7] After Muhammed died in 632 AD, Islam spread to North Africa, Asia, and parts of Europe through conquest but in Africa, south of the Sahara, Islam was spread through Africa’s own terms and conditions, the policy of tolerance and accommodation.^[8]

The terms ‘Islam,’ ‘Muslim,’ and ‘Salaam’ are rooted in the Arabic letters translated into English SLM meaning surrender or submission. It is here that Islam coined its essence—submission to the will of Allah.^[9] Muslims demonstrate their submission to Allah by prostrating before Him in the five daily ritual prayers (*Salat*).

Below are the core beliefs in Islam and the Five Pillars of Islam. The whole Islamic Faith is hinged on these beliefs and practices.

Six beliefs^[10]

- Tawhid – The Oneness of God
- The holy Qur’an – the Word of Allah
- The messengers of Allah – who include Adam,



Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, and Muhammad

- Allah’s agents – angels (*jinn*)
- The Last Day – the resurrection of the dead, judgment – paradise or hell
- Divine preordained happenings in life under Allah’s authority and will

The Five Pillars^[11]

- Kalima Shahadah – Faith – Islamic creed that there is only one God
- Salat – Ritual prayer – five times a day turn towards the Ka’aba in Mecca
- Zakat – Mandatory charity – almsgiving – care for elderly, widows, orphans
- Sawm – Fasting – observance of Ramadan
- Hajj – Pilgrimage to Mecca

The core teaching of Islam is *tawhid*, the Oneness of God. Muhammad emphasized the need to care for

^[5] Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1994), P. 45

^[6] Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1994), P. 52.

^[7] John Azumah, *My Neighbour’s Faith; Islam Explained for Christians* (Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 2008), pp. 15-20.

^[8] Lamin Sanneh, *Beyond Jihad; The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 10-13.

^[9] Gerhard Nehls & Walter Erics, *Islam Basic Aspects; As it sees itself, As others see it, As it is* (Life Challenge Africa, SIM: Nairobi, Kenya, 2009), p. 5.

^[10] Ahmad Agyei, *Sharing the Love of Christ with your Muslim Neighbours*, (Straight-Way Chapel International: Kumasi, 2015), pp. 83-86.

^[11] Ahmad Agyei, *Sharing the Love of Christ with your Muslim Neighbours*, (Straight-Way Chapel International: Kumasi, 2015), pp. 87-88.

the elderly, widows, and orphans. He warned people who did not believe and worship One God about the existence of hell. It is important to note also that Islam is a call to submission rather than to an intimate relationship with God which Christianity proclaims.

Hare Krishna^[12]

‘Hare Krishna’ are the words that members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness chant when they meet for worship. The movement was begun in the United States of America around 1966 by A.C. Bhaktivedanta (Swami Probhupada) after he emigrated from India. Hare Krishna is a renewed form of Hinduism in the West but it makes claims to ancient roots. The deity Krishna, the lover-deity, is the incarnation or human avatar of a solar deity called Vishnu in the sacred scripture of *Bhagavadgita*.

Hare Krishna recognizes the four-caste system whose place is decided by aptitude and not birth. They believe human beings are souls possessing Krishna’s highest energy. To attain peace and happiness, a person needs to return to their original relationship with Krishna called Krishna

Consciousness through bhakti-yoga. This involves acknowledging Krishna as the highest personality of the godhead. Krishna’s servants work for him without expecting reward and surrender to Krishna and his representative, the spiritual master on earth. Hare Krishna prohibits gambling, use of intoxicants, eating meat, and engaging in illicit sex. Believers chant in a congregation and in private to purify themselves.

Hare Krishna is an authoritarian and conservative movement that appeals to young people. The men shave their heads except for the topknot. Men and women devotees wrap themselves in Hindu style clothes. Their chant in worship is ‘Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Lord Krishna, Hail Krishna.

The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints (LDS)–The Mormons^[13]

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) was established in 1830 by Joseph Smith, in New York City, USA. When Joseph Smith turned 14 years old, he prayed to God to know the Church with which he was to fellowship. He believed God and Jesus came to Him and told him that the true Church of Jesus Christ was not yet in the world, that all the other Church denominations were wrong, and they had chosen him to restore the Church on earth.

Smith believed an angel called Moroni who appeared to him and prophesied about how God was going to judge the world. Smith was given gold plates, on which he claimed were written the ‘fullness of the everlasting Gospel...’ In 1829, he began to translate this ‘Gospel’ into what became known as the book of Mormon with Oliver Cowdery assisting him as the scribe. Mormon teaching is based on the King James English Version of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenant (revelations given to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young), and the Pearl of Great Price, a book of writings believed to be from Smith and some of his contemporaries.

Smith worked to establish LDS as the true Church. The LDS believe that Jesus called Joseph Smith as



^[12] International Consciousness for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). “Founder-Acharya”, <https://www.iskcon.org/What-is-iskcon/>, 2014.

^[13] Lindsley, David & Parson, Del (eds.), *The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Intellectual Reserve, Inc.: USA, 1999). *An Introduction to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Intellectual Reserve, Inc.: USA, 2014). Walter Martin & Ravi Zacharias (eds.), *The Kingdom of the Cults* (Bloomington, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 2003), pp. 193-260.



the prophet to direct the Church on earth through revelation.

Members of the church are popularly called Mormons. The church has spread throughout the world. Currently, LDS has sent over 1.1 million missionaries and they claim to have over 15.6 million members with more than half living outside the USA. Generally, their missionaries are well-trained and self-funded.

Mormons teach that the Godhead is comprised of three distinct gods, that the Father and Jesus Christ are physical persons, men who transformed into gods with a united purpose. They also believe that Jesus was the by-product of sexual union between God and Mary and that Jesus was married during his lifetime on earth.

LDS prohibits the use of stimulants and depressants such as alcohol, coffee, tea, tobacco, and caffeinated soft drinks. Non-Mormons are not allowed to enter beyond the outer court of the Mormon temple.

Baha'i Faith^[14]

The Baha'i Faith was founded by Mirza Hussein-Ali-Nuri (1817-1892) in 1863 in Iran (then Persia). He took the name Bahauallah meaning the 'Splendor of

Allah' and said he was a messenger from God with a new revelation. Their central text is Kitáb-i-Aqdas or Aqdas ("the Book of Laws" or the Book of Aqdas). There are other sacred texts.

Baha'i is a unification of all the major religions including Hinduism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. They teach that all religions are worthy and that all people are equal. The Baha'i faith has no clergy. It is directed by the Universal House of Justice, comprising of nine elected-leaders who oversee the spiritual and secular activities for five years while each Baha'i community is also similarly supervised by an annual sub-elected leader. Hussein-Ali-Nuri attained the title 'Radiation from God' claiming his teaching was universal while promoting mutual love and good works—a universal language of all religions. He also claimed to be the 'returning Christ, the reincarnation of Krishna, the fifth Buddha, and the embodiment of Hussein, the grandson of Muhammad. Baha'i Faith believes that God is an "Unknowable Essence" and incomprehensible. And to enable us to know him at all, he appears to us in a human form. Thus Baha'i faith is the most recent of God's manifestations. They believe that God created the world, and everything in it reflects some attributes of Him. So, the immortal soul of man contains all the attributes of God but these cannot be tapped unless they are developed through the effort of the individual as his/her spiritual responsibility. Neither the devil can stop the fulfillment of that duty nor can any external force redeem him/her from the punishment that comes with failure. Similarly, heaven is the reward for the one who attains the quest for that spiritual advancement by daily studying the sacred writings and performing their regular prayers but failure will end that person in hell. Three of these prayers are compulsory each day, while hundreds of prayers are for occasions. They also hold annual ritual fasting.

The Baha'i faith claims the words of the founder contain laws and moral imperatives that have the power to free the human spirit from worldly wickedness and that it is the duty of seekers to aspire for these ideals.

In attempting to unite the world's major faiths to deal with their adverse effects on human beings,

^[14] Nehls et al, *Islam Basic Aspects; As it sees itself, As others see it, As it is* (Life Challenge Africa, SIM: Nairobi, Kenya, 2009), pp. 65-67. Walter Martin & Ravi Zacharias (eds.), *The Kingdom of the Cults* (Bloomington, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 2003), pp. 321-350.

Bahau'llah oversimplified the distinctiveness of each faith. He did not acknowledge Christ's redemptive work for the world.

Jehovah's Witnesses^[15]

The founding of the Jehovah's Witnesses is linked to predictions of the end of the world and Christ's second coming that occurred in the 1840s and then again in 1874 in the USA. As the world did not end in 1874, some believed that Christ had returned as an invisible being in what was known as the "Secret Rapture".

Jehovah's Witnesses teach that after the death of the last apostle, John, the Church of Jesus Christ became corrupt and was restored in the 1800s by Charles T. Russell, who would prepare the world for Armageddon. This battle of the righteous forces against evil ones will annihilate all non-Jehovah's Witnesses and usher in the millennial reign of Christ during which time there is an opportunity for others to be resurrected alongside Jehovah's witnesses. At the end of the millennial reign, the earth will be cleansed and restored into paradise. Those who are victorious will be crowned with everlasting life. Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the restored kingdom of God will be divided into two, the heavenly and earthly classes. The most righteous people will live forever on earth just like in Eden and 144, 000 will enter into heaven and live with God or Christ and rule over the earth.

If Jehovah's Witnesses wish to come through the Armageddon they have to preach the good news to those that are lost, but if they refuse they will lose their salvation just as those who will perish without hearing.

The Jehovah's Witnesses accept the Bible as the inspired word of God but they consider the original Old and New Testaments as exclusively for the Hebrews and Greeks. However, they use their own translation of the Bible: the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. The name 'Jehovah Witnesses' comes from Isaiah 43:11, 'ye are my witnesses saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen.' They

chose the English word 'Jehovah' as the proper name for God even though the original Hebrew name is Yahweh.

The JWs believe that they are the only ones who possess the Christian truth through the divine authority of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. They reject the doctrine of the Trinity and do not also recognize Jesus and the Holy Spirit as divine. Thus refer to Jesus as a creation of God, and the Holy Spirit as God's active power on earth which they refer to as 'it'. Their beliefs suggest that Hell is not real and that sinners will only cease to exist in any form. They teach that everlasting life is conditional on the individual's obedience. Jehovah's Witnesses adhere to rigid moral behavior such as no divorce except for infidelity. They disallow blood transfusion because it is a sin that leads to eternal destruction. Witnesses do not salute the flag of any kind, celebrate holidays, enlist into the armed forces, attend college, vote, run for public office, sing the national anthem and engage in any political activity. Similarly, they regard other religions and even traditional Christianity as the work of Satan and do not worship with non-Witnesses which they regard as sinful. Their place of worship is called 'kingdom hall' rather than church and they believe Jesus was crucified on a straight stake and not the cross; thus they forbid the cross.

Eckankar^[16]

Eckankar (ECK) means 'Co-worker with God'. Paul Twitchell founded this religious movement in 1965 yet Eckists believe that their spiritual teachings date beyond the beginnings of human existence. Eckankar possibly draws some of its teachings from Hindu and Sikh teachings. Twitchell is believed to have studied under numerous ECK masters and was the living ECK master until he died in 1971. The present living ECK Master is Sri Harold Klemp. Eckankar spiritual headquarters is in Minnesota, USA. It has members in 100 countries.

The spiritual purpose of the living ECK is to assist people to connect to the light and sound of God – to find their way to God. Eckists believe that they

^[15] Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults; Christian Science – Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism – Seventh-Adventism* (Exeter, Devon, England: The Paternoster Press Ltd., 1979), pp. 223-239. Walter Martin & Ravi Zacharias (eds.), *The Kingdom of the Cults* (Bloomington, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 2003), pp. 321-350.

^[16] Moor, Mary Carroll, Joan Klempt & Anthony Moore (eds.), *Eckankar – Ancient Wisdom for Today* (Quality Books Inc.: USA, 1995).

are connected to God through Divine Spirit (the ECK). The ECK can be seen as light and heard as sound. To become a co-worker with God, a person has to be spiritually purified through contact with the ECK. They do this through spiritual exercises such as singing *Hu*, a love-song to God, organised by the Eckankar community and guided by the living ECK master. Their holy scripture is *Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad* (“Way of the Eternal”)

Eckankar teaches that the soul is eternal and it exists because God loves it. It is also on a journey of self and God-realization. They also teach that one can explore the spiritual world through soul travels and dreams.

At the core of Eckankar, beliefs are karma (sin) and reincarnation. The ECK cleans one’s karma to make it possible for the person to understand and receive the fullness of God’s love. The law of karma says: a person’s reincarnate life either here on earth or in the ‘hereafter’ is determined by his/her good or bad deeds.

Sri Harold Klemp teaches that children have a better knowledge of God than adults who outgrow or reject their childhood understanding of God. For him, children at a very tender age still carry the knowledge and perception of God from their previous life into present life through incarnation.

Witness in Neighbouring Contexts

To begin with, we must understand that it is Christ who saves not Christianity and that in such contexts it is appropriate that missionaries live out their

faith among those whom they seek to witness about Christ. So far, we have been exploring the religions–ATR, Islam, Baha’i Faith, and Eckankar; as well as the sects–Mormons and JW’s. These religious faiths and sects are unique in themselves in the sense of their beliefs and practices though they have some affinities. For this reason, in dealing with how to reach out to adherents of each group with the gospel, it would have been more comprehensive should we have tackled each case independently from the other. However, limitations regarding this paper would only allow us to common grounds upon which they can be reached.

Some Common threads through Neighbouring Faiths

The ‘sparks of truth’ and the Gospel	
Neighbouring Faiths	The Gospel
Belief in the Ultimate Being	God has revealed Himself through the son; All ultimacy is in Christ. Heb. 1:1-5; Col. 1:13-22
Aspiration for relationship with the divine	God has provided a means for a relationship with him through Jesus His Son- John 1:12-13
Belief in retribution/karma	Sin has consequences and there is judgment. 1 John; Heb. 2:2-3; John 5:22-25
Purification / ablution	Reconciliation through Jesus Christ for ALL creation Col. 1:19-20; Heb. 10: 1-9; Heb. 1:3;
Belief in hereafter/afterlife/ Incarnation; reincarnation	Resurrection on the last day - John 14: 1-3; John 5: 25-28. We don’t keep coming back

Steps to Sharing the Gospel in Multi-faith Environment

1. Be conscious of the general misconceptions about Christianity among people of Neighbouring Faiths and address them directly or indirectly
2. Pray for those you have identified to witness to. Note that this initial phase can be adopted as a ministry to unbelievers and the duration can vary from several days to years. Specifically, pray for them to have a supernatural encounter with Jesus. Many Muslims have had a turning point in their lives through dreams and supernatural interventions.
3. Begin your preliminary physical contact by building a genuine and godly friendship with their interest at heart.
4. Our ministry among neighbouring faiths should be built around issues of structural injustice affecting their communities economically, socially, and politically. These will help our ministry and missions become relevant in their contexts.
5. Understand the social norms and observe those that do not contradict your Christian faith to avoid unnecessary offenses. Paul testified to

this when he said: ‘I have become all things to all men that I might, by all means, save some.’

6. Appropriate your ministry gift in ways that make it useful to them as a means of opportunity in your witness.
7. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit to identify wandering souls that are seeking spiritual truth like Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman in the book of John. This is a subtle doorway to witness to people of other faith.
8. Note that Witness among neighbouring faith is not a one-touch event but a long haul and so we must pace ourselves and approach it to step by step.
9. Establishing trust with people of other faiths is an indispensable ingredient in our ministry to them.
10. The crux of our witness is the ability to identify bridges, core values, and beliefs, between the Gospel and other faiths as bases for generating fruitful conversations leading to the affirmation of the unique person and ministry of our Lord Jesus.

The Challenges in Reaching Neighbouring Faiths

Personal problems

- Lack of conviction
- Fear and shyness – fear people will ask questions they can’t answer
- Lack of understanding both of the Gospel and the neighbouring faith

Social problems

- Our lifestyle
- In your area, people know you very well
- Work – you don’t have time
- Family issues getting in the way– daily household chores

Approach problems

- Lack of creativity in our witness approach
- Failure to recognize that witness comes through responding to life – home, work, school, community, issues of injustice, problems in the environment

Conclusion

In conclusion, in the field of souls, it is important to recognize the three important personalities who are involved—God who causes the fruit of our labour, the sower who plants the Word of God, and the reaper who sees to it that the final harvest is brought in. It is a work in partnership which suggests that in Multi-Faith witness Christian workers in different fields must network in sharing vital information and skills. This is the only way by which the Lord uses our strengths in perfecting the weakness of each other.



Haruna Y. Mogtari is a missionary to the Ummah (the faith community of Islam), an independent researcher and scholar. His research interests include the Fulani, Islam in Africa and South Asia. He is the Director of twin organizations—Step Missions International and

Centre for Research and Islamic Studies in Akropong-Akuapem. Author of two insightful, and groundbreaking books for mission workers and researchers—Pulaaku: Towards A Holistic View of Fulani (A Christian Response to the Nomads Situation in Ghana) and The Redeemed: A Journey of Conversion from Islam to Christianity. His most recent articles published include: “Fulani Herdsmen Traditions and Care for the Land” and The Ahmadiyya Movement in Ghana”.

Seven Quick Guidelines To Discern A Fake Muslim-Convert

Haruna Y. Mogtari

INTRODUCTION

It is disheartening in recent times that while the global Church is welcoming unprecedented numbers of Muslims turning to Jesus al-Masih for salvation, there are other unscrupulous ones who have formed the habit of moving around our Christian community professing to be Christians when they are not. They would feign that their families or Ummah is seeking for their lives. Indeed, there are a few instances where Muslim-Converts go through such an experience. Nevertheless, these are scammers who take advantage of the situation. They are well versed in the art of deception -- knowledgeable in the Qur'an and familiar with Christian spirituality and terminologies, these help them to easily prey on unsuspecting Christians and Congregations.

It is for this reason that, it is necessary to set some few guidelines to discern these fake Muslim-converts. There are some common traits you would find in the behaviour of these scammers who don't want salvation but your money and anything that will satisfy their greed. These have been outlined below:

1. Motivation for their conversion

They narrate an instant conversion story through some supernatural happenings or angelic visitation in real/physical life. Some claim to have supernatural powers when they haven't even learnt some basic Christian living.

2. They are not established in a local Church.

They will sometimes try to give the impression that they are now searching for a local Church to fellowship with, or tell you they have been to a number of Churches (popular ones) but nobody

was willing to help. They make the situation so complex that you can't find a genuine Believer or even a Muslim to validate their conversion story. It is like-

ly that this person may be connected to a team of scammers who aid this person in his deception.

3. Very demanding

They are always making demands from their unsuspecting victims for money to meet urgent needs in their lives or a business deal they can't afford to lose. Some create the impression of being under divine instructions which make it difficult if not impossible to guide and counsel them (common sense doesn't work for them). They are always on the run with someone on their heels to harm them. They make outrageous or frequent financial demands for their false expenses. They succeed by playing psychologically on people's minds and emotions or the guilty feelings.

4. Loss of Privileges

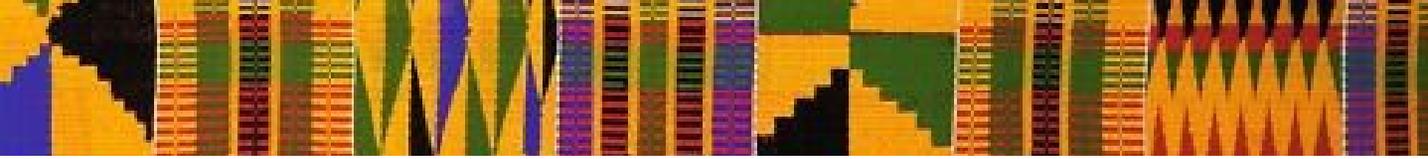
They create the impression that they come from privileged Muslim families and because of their conversion they have lost all these privileges. They cover any possible trace to their real families and where they come from. They might lead you to false locations if you insist to go and know where they actually live.

5. Excessive Excuses

They always have excuses or reasons they can't settle down with a local Church. They are simply difficult people to help and who are not opened for advice because all that they want is your money. Your help is only good when it will meet their demand.

6. Have the habit of moving from one Church to another

Fake Muslim-Converts are in the habit of 'hopping' from one Church to another to take advantage of un-



suspecting Christians. They will attend your Church for a while but when they don't get what they want they will suddenly disappear. Or when they realize you are being critical of their real intentions they get uncomfortable with you and describe you as not spiritually sensitive.

7. They will attempt to discredit any person (genuine Muslim converts connected to their victims) who expresses doubt about their genuineness.

Please Note: If you are not sure of the genuineness of a recent Muslim-Convert please seek for help from Network of Muslim-Converts who are well known within your Christian Community.

THE PRECIOUS FULANI: EMERGING MISSION POSSIBILITIES AND APPROACHES

Haruna Y. Mogtari

Introduction

In Ghana, there has not been a people so discriminated against because of their ethnicity than the Fulani. Yet, embedded in this culturally diverse group are sparks of truth and beauty worth studying. The paradoxical nature of the Fulani is the motivation for this article. At one point they appear antagonistic, and on another side, they are perceived positive by those who work closely with them in mission. The Fulani are the most widely spread ethnic group in the whole of West Africa. They are properly called *Fulbe* or *Pulo* and speak *Fulfulde* as their mother tongue. They are also referred to, in another context, as *fellata* or *Peul*.^[1]

The origin of the Fulani has remained a ‘mystery’ for most Africans for decades because they are highly mobile in nature for generations. It was not until the middle of the 20th Century that reliable documents were discovered to prove that the Fulani are indigenous to Africa, Senegambia region, to be precise.^[2] They arrived in the northern parts of Ghana around 1911 and since then their numbers have soared, and in the 2000 population and housing census they had reached 300,000.^[3] Since the last census and per available information, the Fulani population currently stands at an estimated figure of approximately 800,000.

Conflicts involving a few Fulani herdsmen and local farmers have been the major news items on media houses for decades casting negative perception on the general Fulani community and the resulting consequences are bigotry, ethnic labelling, stigma and ostracism. More to this, there is a general *Fulaniphobia* among a large section of Ghanaians because of their pastoral farming activities. For these reasons the Church appears to have shied away from the Fulani and for years they have been out of the reach of the gospel. Therefore, this article explores the emerging mission possibilities and approaches to Christian mission with the Fulani in focus, as a contribution to global mission in a Ghanaian context. Studies in the *21st Century; Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* reveal five key areas with which contemporary mission must not compromise.^[4] The importance of these five marks cannot be overemphasized, as this paper is basically hinged on them.

What are the Five Marks of Contemporary Global Mission?

Mission, exemplified by Jesus in Scripture, has been rediscovered with fresh understanding, the scope expanded and clearly explained, in the Five Marks of Global Mission by the contributors of the above book. In brief, these marks cover five significant elements and these are as follows: first, ‘To Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom’^[5], secondly, ‘To Teach,

^[1] H.R. Palmer & H.H Johnston, ‘“The Fulas” and their Language’ *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 22, No. 86 (1923), pp. 121, 128, Accessed 15 January 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/715991>.

^[2] Derrick J. Stenning, *Savannah Nomads; A Study of the Wodaabe Pastoral Fulani of Western Bornu Province Northern Region, Nigeria* (Munster; Hamburg: Lit, 1994), p. 20.

^[3] Steve Tonah, *Fulani in Ghana: Migration History, Integration and Resistance* (Legon-Accra: The Research and Publication Unit, Department of Sociology, University of Ghana, 2005), pp. 2-3.

^[4] Andrew F. Walls & Cathy Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century; Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008).

^[5] Ken Gnanakan, ‘To Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom’, in Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century; Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), pp. 3-10; D. Zac Niringiye, ‘To Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom’, in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*; pp. 11-24.

Baptise, and Nurture New Believers'^[6], third, 'To Respond to Human Need by loving Service'^[7], fourth, to 'To Seek to Transform Unjust Structures of Society'^[8], and last, 'To Strive to Safeguard the Integrity of Creation and Sustain and Renew the Life of the Earth'.^[9] These Five marks address mission in different contexts that call for interfaith approach, the proclamation of the Word, discipleship, contextualizing theological curricula, care for creation, compassionate Christian service, and theological reflection on structural injustice. Subsequently, we shall engage these marks with a Christian mission to the Fulani.

Socio-economic Difficulties of Fulani and challenges in Christian mission

The root cause of Fulani discrimination, marginalization, and suffering is the long-standing perception that they are foreigners and for that reason, they have no right within the jurisdiction of Ghana. Scuffle between herdsmen and farmers remain the headlines in the Ghanaian media space since the 1990's causing rage among citizens.^[10] In addressing these farmer-herder conflicts, we often bury our heads in the sand and ignore the facts. So, as a nation, we are not able to get to the crux of the matter to resolve these conflicts. One truth stands out, the majority of these cattle that are cared for by many Fulani households are for Ghanaian farmers, the privileged and ruling class. But the poor Fulani families become the object of attacks and castigation. Many Fulani who are not even herdsmen become victims of ethnic victimization in the hands of the media, the state, and local people. Still, the hard truth we must face is that there are significant numbers of Fulani in Ghana who are citizens. The Citizenship Act, 2000 (Acts 591), section 1-7 of Ghana's constitution, affirms descendants of early Fulani migrants (before and after 1957) who either by birth or naturalization and registration have

since made Ghana their home. However, the majority of them maintain that they are foreign nationals.^[11]

As a result of the stigmatization, preconceptions, and hatred, many poor Fulani households would want to keep out of trouble by isolating themselves and are thereby denied access to social and economic amenities in their host communities. This accounts to some extent, the lack of education and inaccessibility to healthcare and socio-economic opportunities. However, some households who have good relations with their indigenous neighbours can use their facilities.

The stigma that ordinary Fulani face among their neighbours and their own seclusion from people foreign to them are obstacles that require conscious attention from and response to by Christian missionaries. If the Fulani are acknowledged as full members of the societies in which they live and those in Christian mission work with them to face life's challenges, then there are great possibilities for opening up the Fulani community to Christ in the long term. The warmth and neighbourliness that Christ teaches Christians especially through the story of the good Samaritan in Luke 10:33-36 informs Christian mission about the significance of relationship and love to the suffering and stigmatized Fulani, as reflected in Jesus' statement:

But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.^[12]

Responding to the health needs and basic necessities of life is paramount to uplifting the dignity of the Fulani. As Christian workers engage the Fulani

^[6] Emmanuel Egbunu, 'To Teach, Baptise, and Nurture New Believers', in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 25-36; Ande Titre, 'To Teach, Baptise, and Nurture New Believers', in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 37-45

^[7] Melba Maggay, 'To Respond to Human Need by Loving Service', in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 46-52; Haami Chapman, 'To Respond to Human Need by Loving Service', in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 53-61.

^[8] Valdir Raul Steurnagel, 'To seek to Transform Unjust Structures of Society', in Andrew Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 62-76; Bev Haddad, 'To seek to Transform Unjust Structures of Society', in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 77-83.

^[9] Calvin B. DeWitt, 'To Strive to Safeguard the Integrity of Creation and Sustain and Renew the Life of the Earth', in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 84-93; Dave Bookless, 'To Strive to Safeguard the Integrity of Creation and Sustain and Renew the Life of the Earth', in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp.94-104.

^[10] Tonah, *Fulani in Ghana*, pp. 3-4.

^[11] Haruna Y. Mogtari, 'Fulani Herdsmen Traditions and Care for the Land' in Benjamin Abotchie Ntreh et al (eds.), *Essays on the Land, Ecotheology, and Traditions in Africa* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019), pp. 178-191.

^[12] Luke 10:33-36 (NIV)

community in mission holistically, in a manner that addresses their felt needs; this may eventually provide subtle opportunities for witness and discipleship. Mission organizations need to study the annual and periodic migration patterns of nomads to inform them on how to design a mission approach that considers the mobile nature of the Fulani in general. For instance, one possibility may be to institute Christ-centred education and health programmes that suit Fulani migratory nature. It is important to consider how these educational programmes are funded and what incentives there are to attract their attention and seriousness.

In the third mark of mission, ‘To respond to human need by loving service’^[13], Melba Maggay and Haami Chapman help us to understand the essence of our Christian duty of caring for the needy and the vulnerable in society. According to Maggay, ‘to follow God is to love him with passion, and, similarly, to love our neighbour with the same care and total attention that we shower on ourselves.’^[14] She implies that our love for God is demonstrated in a physical expression of love and care for others, ‘those who are swept to the margins and are rendered vulnerable because of scarce resources, outright lack of means for survival, or not having the right ethnicity or nationality.’^[15] In the course of my research, this was a statement a Fulani made about their quest for someone to ‘release’ them from their unbearable condition:

It is how God can help us or use someone to come and help us so that we can leave taking care of people’s cattle- a tedious and unprofitable work so we can be a part of society and become human beings.^[16]

This statement is very revealing; I perceive it is a strong call for a holistic and integrated mission among the Fulani. Serving the Fulani with loving and compassionate care will not only help to meet the needs of Fulani but become an entry point



for Christian mission among the Fulani who are deprived socially, economically, and politically. Generally, in Ghana, Fulani have been unjustly treated due to the misconception, prejudice and stereotypes many Ghanaians hold about them and their occupation, even though sometimes the misbehaviour of some of the Fulani account for this. It is pertinent that missionaries who work among Fulani take interest in their problems because the mission of the Church is holistic and thus should be involved in transforming these social injustices through the peace and love of God that it claims. In the fourth mark of mission, Valdir Raul Steuernagel affirms the integration of the ‘five marks of mission.’^[17] He emphasizes that ‘we affirm justice as a fundamental expression of God’s search for transformation, as a mark of mission and the need to integrate it into our portfolio of mission.’^[18] He also demonstrates from the Scriptures that Jesus’ ministry was holistic and that the Gospel denounces enslavement to idolatry, oppression and injustice, and also identifies with the poor and the suffering by bringing liberation, wholeness, and peace to them. From Steuernagel’s argument, therefore, it is clear that mission to Fulani cannot ignore the need to transform injustice in their communities. Challenges in Fulani ministry are many and therefore the few discussed here may not be exhaustive.

^[13] Haami Chapman, ‘To Respond to Human Need by Loving Service’, in Andrew Walls & Cathy Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, ; *Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), pp. 53-61; Melba Maggay, ‘To Respond to Human Need by Loving Service’, in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 46-52

^[14] Maggay, ‘To Respond to Human Need by Loving Service’, in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 46-52.

^[15] Maggay, ‘To Respond to Human Need by Loving Service’, in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 48.

^[16] Amadu Sambu, Interview, 31st July 2015, Sakpalua.

^[17] Valdir Raul Steuernagel, ‘To seek to Transform Unjust Structures of Society’, in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 62-76.

^[18] Steuernagel, ‘To seek to Transform Unjust Structures of Society’, p. 64.

It is common for a Pulo to hide behind the curtain and pose as a Muslim against any attempt of being evangelized even though he may not be a practicing Muslim. Though missionaries can communicate with the Fulani in Ghanaian languages, most of the missionaries cannot speak Fulfulde. Communication and relationships sometimes can hit the rocks especially in an attempt for missionaries to share the gospel for the Fulani to understand. Similarly, it is very difficult for missionaries to develop a deep connection with the Fulani without the mother tongue Fulfulde. George Warrik, a missionary among the Fulani in Niger, recounted that even though he is learning to communicate the gospel in Fulfulde, he regards it as a difficult language to learn.^[19] This may be so for many missionaries reaching out to Fulani outside of their own cultural milieu.

Emerging Mission Possibilities and Approaches

This section is most crucial for mission practitioners. It points them to the heart of fruitful and meaningful engagement in Fulani Christian mission in the context of Ghana and some theological issues that one may have to consider if we are to be successful in this endeavour. Particularly, the fifth mark of mission, ‘To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth’ is critical for Christian mission among the Fulani. Calvin B. DeWitt and Dave Bookless point out the relevance of Genesis 1-11; these are God’s call to Adam to dress and keep the Garden, and the story of Noah’s Ark emphasizing the need to preserve creation. Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15 also provide a theological basis for Christian involvement in an environmental mission for if the nations (ethnic groups) are to be spiritually nur-

tured, that discipleship involves discovering what it means to care for God’s creation. In a related article, Kwame Bediako commented especially on the Great Commission, “... Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...”^[20] that:

The Great Commission is not about numbers, nor statistics, important as these are. The Great Commission is not about percentages of national populations that we may consider to have been ‘reached’ or remain ‘unreached’ with the Gospel, important as these considerations are... The Great Commission, therefore, is about the discipline of the nations, the conversion of the things that make people into nations - the shared processes of thinking, shared and common attitudes, world views, perspectives, languages, cultural and social and economic habits of thought and behaviour and practice... true evangelization and conversion is turning to Christ all that He finds when He meets us, and asking that He cleanse, purify and sanctify us and all that we are, eliminating what He considers incompatible with Him. That is what the Great Commission is about...^[21]

He implies that the emphasis of the Great Commission is not about the number of individuals and people groups or nations we have been able or unable to evangelize but essentially about discipleship and transformation of the worldviews and all those things that define the nations or ethnic groups of the world. What this means is that every aspect of Fulani worldview including their environment and identity needs to be transformed by Christ. In Ghana, there have been allegations that Fulani exploit natural vegetation and water resources. These have contributed to the perennial

^[19]Warrik George, Interview, 11 September 2015, Fada N’Gourma, Burkina Faso.

^[20]Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

^[21]Kwame Bediako, ‘What is the Gospel?’, *Asempa Jubilee Lectures*, September 1995 (Manuscript, Akrofi-Christaller Institute, Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana), p. 5.

^[22]George Afolley, ‘Fulanis clash with Kwahus: Four Death’, *Daily Graphic*, January 28 2015.

farmer-herder conflicts which have resulted in both the death of humans and cattle, and the destruction of farms.^[22] Thus, the Christian mission among the Fulani cannot avoid responding to this very important aspect of their lives. Here, missionaries have the option and responsibility to help the Fulani to realize God's intention for His creation and how to preserve and renew it.

The Fulani can learn to speak their host language quickly and easily adapt to their culture. This second language of Fulani is a potential communication entry point for local ministries or any mission that understands the language of their host culture. Missionaries also have the option of engaging with some of them in Hausa or Twi. However, even though the bilingual potential of Fulani can be appropriated in sharing the Gospel with them and used for discipleship purposes, nevertheless, these second and third languages are no real substitute for communicating in the Fulfulde language. This is because it is almost impossible for one to engage meaningfully in any depth with the Fulani culture using a borrowed language, and for them to feel at home.

The positive utility of the use of Fulfulde in Christian mission to Fulani is that missionaries find reception among a rather self-contained society that hardly opens up easily to outsiders. Most especially, through the initial communication of the Gospel in Fulfulde, the missionaries consciously or unconsciously can establish links with their host culture. Allison Howell buttresses this

point when she remarks that 'If you want to learn a person's culture and the way he sees his world, you will need to learn his language...because language and culture are inseparable.'^[23] Here, we learn that for the Gospel to appeal to a people's worldview, learning their language and culture is inevitable. For Howell, this orientation shows that we have high regard for the people we want to reach with the Gospel.^[24]

On discipleship, Emmanuel Egbunu identifies some core ingredients of discipleship which is the second mark of mission. Egbunu shows that Christian discipleship is imperative for those who receive the Gospel and also suggests the need for Christian mission to contextualize discipleship to make African new converts feel at home within their traditions.^[25] Among some of the reasons why the clergy and laity are not well resourced for ministry and mission, Ande Titre suggests, the 'lack of an appropriate theological education.'^[26] According to him, 'theological and Bible schools do not have sufficient infrastructure and curricula for contextual training for mission and ministerial formation.'^[27] A careful study of Fulani culture shows that there are meanings behind their customs and practices that need scriptural interpretations to align them with God's designed purpose. Therefore, Scripture is crucial to engage these customs to affirm those that point to Christ and modify the inconsistencies.

The Fulani have great potential, and they are ardent agro-pastoralists. They live very

^[23]Allison M. Howell, *A Daily Guide For Culture and Language Learning*, Third Revised Edition (Abokobi, Accra: AmaraZaane Consulting Services Limited, 2014), p. 8.

^[24]Howell, *A Daily Guide For Culture and Language Learning*, p. 12.

^[25]Emmanuel Egbunu, 'To Teach, Baptise, and Nurture New Believers', pp. 25-36, in Andrew Walls & Cathy Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 25-36. Ande Titre, 'To Teach, Baptise, and Nurture New Believers', in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 37-45

^[26]Titre, 'To Teach, Baptise, and Nurture New Believers', p. 39.

^[27]Titre, 'To Teach, Baptise, and Nurture New Believers', p. 39.

simple lives and can survive on very little. They are very resourceful people and responsible towards their families. Fulani pastoralists have wide geographical knowledge of most areas in sub-Saharan Africa and have interacted with different ethnic groups, and for those that come to embrace education, they excel tremendously in school. Missionaries who work with them in Ghana, Niger, Mali, Nigeria, Benin and Burkina Faso recommend agriculture, health and education as possible ways through which the Gospel can enter into the Fulani community and be a great blessing to them. The Fulani have beautiful indigenous stories that easily catch their attention. Learning the form of these stories can be a helpful tool in conveying the Gospel to them.

In observing the Fulani, it is obvious that one cannot share the Gospel with them without having a deep interest in them and their preoccupation with cattle. Adding to this, the Fulani are generous people and this opens possibilities for missionaries to give and receive from Fulani as one interacts with them.

From the understanding of the effort of Christian mission among Fulani in Ghana, as well as the challenges and difficulties, a number of possible approaches emerge for Christian mission among them. In looking at these approaches, it is important to think through the benefits and difficulties of each. First, one possibility is for mission organizations to consider beginning where other missions have laid the foundation and need reinforcement as well as open new mission fields. This may involve supporting existing missions to revive some of their collapsed



Fulani ministries or to begin fresh ministries with the support of these existing ministries. One of the possible difficulties in this approach that could emerge in the future is: if an organisation decides to begin their own independent Fulani ministry with the support of these existing ministries in these areas, there may be a conflict of interest as to where the new converts will be assigned for fellowship. Will it be the existing organization or the supporting ministries? These would be details would need to be clarified at the outset to avoid conflict.

Second, where Fulani herdsmen live among other ethnic groups that are predominantly Christian, they often seem sympathetic towards Christianity. Some Fulani have testified about how good their 'Christian' cattle owners have been to them and their families; these good relationships have led some Fulani to form good opinions about Christians. In the course of the research, all the Christian workers expressed the opinion that it is easier for a Pulo who herds the cattle of a Christian to become a Christian than a Fulani who herds the cattle of a Muslim. In cases where the cattle owner is a Muslim, the Pulo may fear to convert to

Christianity because his Muslim cattle owner would collect his cattle and render him jobless. In a situation like this, clearly, the Christian mission would need to reach out to both the Fulani and his cattle owner. One difficulty that can also arise is where a cattle owner who identifies himself as a Christian does not live and practice the Christian life or acts in ways that are contrary to Fulani moral values. Though the cattle owner may be good towards the Fulani, yet his moral life becomes a stumbling block to their salvation and this will not help the missionary's effort in reaching out to the Fulani.

Third, it is clear that there are possibilities for Christian mission to the Fulani in situations where there have been no Christian works among them. The Christian mission would need to identify what is required in terms of: first, capacity building, training of Christian workers and financial investment. Second, understanding the nature of the area is crucial. If it is a Muslim-dominated area, reception among the Fulani may be very difficult, and mission work may take considerable time to yield fruit. If it is not a Muslim-dominated area, there may still be challenges to face related to the attitudes of non-Muslims towards the Fulani, especially if there has been conflict in that area. In terms of actual details of the approach, from the experiences of missionaries among the Fulani, the evenings are more ideal for accessing them, since they take their cattle for feeding and return at night to their home or campsite. Resources such as the film, the Passion of Christ, and audio

Gospel messages in Fulfulde are helpful tools that have contributed to the efforts of missionaries in proclaiming the Gospel among the Fulani in Northern Ghana.

Ken Gnanakan^[28] and D. Zac Niringiye^[29] agree that the core message and task of the Gospel is the proclamation of the kingdom of God in which Jesus, his person and ministry, is central and also fulfils the Old Covenant. The nature of how the kingdom of God operates is demonstrated in Jesus' mission in Luke 4:17-19 as holistic. According to Gnanakan, the proclamation of the message of Christ needs not be provocative especially in Islamic and Hindu contexts. For him 'There is an urgent need for seeing continuities between those to whom we present the Gospel and the Lord Jesus...and...explore models of proclamation where Christ fits into local cultures.'^[30] He was of the view that Muslims still hold Jesus in high esteem. Missionaries, who work in religiously pluralistic contexts such as Northern Ghana where there is an imposing Muslim presence, need to seriously consider



^[23]Allison M. Howell, *A Daily Guide For Culture and Language Learning*, Third Revised Edition (Abokobi, Accra: AmaraZaane Consulting Services Limited, 2014), p. 8.

^[24]Howell, *A Daily Guide For Culture and Language Learning*, p. 12.

^[25]Emmanuel Egbunu, 'To Teach, Baptise, and Nurture New Believers', pp. 25-36, in Andrew Walls & Cathy Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 25-36. Ande Titre, 'To Teach, Baptise, and Nurture New Believers', in Walls & Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century*, pp. 37-45

^[26]Titre, 'To Teach, Baptise, and Nurture New Believers', p. 39.

^[27]Titre, 'To Teach, Baptise, and Nurture New Believers', p. 39.

an interfaith approach in their programme by exploring more affinities.

Conclusion

In this paper, we noted some emerging possibilities and approaches that are relevant for Christian mission to Fulani in Ghana. These include creative proclamation of the Gospel in Fulfulde among Fulani households; serving Fulani with loving and compassionate care; responding to injustice related to Fulani and indigenous people; and caring for creation.

Of the key features for Christian mission that emerged in this paper, language is a crucial aspect which cannot be overlooked. Though the Fulani are a people of many languages and missionaries may decide to share the Gospel with them in a lingua franca depending on the location, yet this is no real substitute for communicating the good news in Fulfulde. Another feature we noted is that there are cultural and religious peculiarities that missionaries need to comprehend so that they can engage well with them within this cultural and religious milieu. When it comes to Christian mission among the Fulani, it is clear that it requires an interfaith approach in witnessing for Christ, whether the Fulani are devout Mus-

lims, or have a mixture of primal and Islamic beliefs and practices. Within this context, Christian mission clearly needs to consider approaches that de-stigmatize the Fulani identity. This will require not just mission to the Fulani but also Christian mission among the ethnic groups with whom they work. The Christian workers among the Fulani in West Africa are optimistic about the prospects of Fulani mission and ministry in Ghana. However, these prospects will become a reality and many Fulani will accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour if we involve these five marks of global mission in our mission praxis.



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PRAYER IS STILL THE KEY - The Importance of Prayer in Missions

Daniel Hyde Appiah

“In our lifetime, wouldn’t it be sad if we spent more TIME having meetings or attending conferences or being busy with a Facebook post or watching movies... *(emphasis is mine)* than praying for world missions?” *Dave Davidson*

The Psalmist declared in Psalm 2:8 “*Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.*” We should pray about missions until it becomes a priority! We may not personally be able to take the good news abroad, but we can all pray in such a way that regions in Ghana and abroad are affected. **Prayer needs no passport, visa or work permit.**

Much of the history of missions could be written in terms of God moving in response to persistent prayer. Elijah prayed seven times before the little cloud appeared in the dry sky, signaling the coming “great rain” upon their famished land (1 Kings 18:41-45). Which of the seven prayers brought the rain? Was it the first or the fifth or the seventh prayer? What if Elijah had given up after Prayer number 6? Would there have been a seventh prayer without a sixth? Could the first six prayers have been wasted prayers without the seventh? How many prayers will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession?

This also applies to our prayers for God’s intervention in the COVID-19 pandemic. Maybe we have seen the number of infections rise especially in Europe and the United States and other places as we have continued to pray. That is, instead of the rate of infection decreasing it is rather increasing at top speed across the world. Nevertheless, we cannot throw in the towel or be discouraged in our fervent prayer and fasting. Like Elijah, we have to pray till there is a manifestation of what we have been praying for.

Peter, therefore, was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for

him (Acts 12:5). If it says that the Church had been praying “without ceasing,” that would mean that the prayer vigil in Acts 12 had been merely one in a series of other prayers. That vigil was probably the eventual last lap in a continuing prayer relay in which the praying women at Mark’s mother’s house had been the finishers.

What if, after the many previous prayers by other saints, those women had not been there to finish their lap that night? What might have happened to Peter if that prayer watch that night had been blank? Would Peter have been killed the following day, meaning a waste of all the previous prayer investments? Until the UPG’s turn at our doors we should not cease to pray. We may have to give to the nations through intense spiritual labour. “... *Will the earth be brought forth in one day? Or will a nation be born at once? For Zion travailed and also brought forth her sons.*” Isaiah 66:8

Prayer as Rebellion

Jesus’ parable in Luke 18:1-8 talks about a woman who made ***not just a petition but ceaseless petitions to her judge, and eventually got a favourable hearing.*** The judge responded at last, not to her petition but her persistence. Prayers will go far, but ceaseless prayers go farther. This is how Jesus concludes that parable: “*And shall not God avenge his elect, which cries day and night unto him, though He bears long with them?*”

I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

“What, then, is the nature of petitionary prayer? In essence, it is a rebellion against the status quo. It is the absolute and undying refusal to accept as normal what is completely abnormal. It is the rejection of every agenda, every scheme, every opinion that clashes with the norms that God originally established. (*Christianity Today, Vol. XVII*). I hereby invite the Church in Ghana in particular to rebel against the status quo of the state evangelization of the country. We still have 19 least-reached people groups in Ghana (*source: GEMA research*). We must express an unbridgeable chasm to separate good from evil.

Let the church have few organizers, but more organizers to move the frontiers of mission.



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MEDICAL EVANGELISM IN GHANA: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TOWARDS MISSIONS

J. Kwame Oyata

Introduction

The quest to fulfil what we have all come to accept as the Great Commission has been going on since the ascent of our Lord Jesus and the descent of the blessed Holy Spirit. The task at hand appears to be small. However, for more than 2000 years, its fulfilment has been slow and gruesome. There are several factors which contributed to the above which we may not be able to presently discuss into details in this paper. Prominent among the factors, however, is the way earlier generations approached missionary activities, something that has spilled into present generation. Here, I am referring to the notion of missions been the exclusive preserve of the ordained.

The idea of missions being the exclusive preserve of the ordained has indeed contributed greatly towards the delay in the fulfilment of the great commission. It has highly wasted the resources of the church and impoverished the world of the blessings allotted them by Christ. Many who may have been saved as a result may end up somewhere else, should the grace and mercy of the Lord be totally withheld from them.

In this article, I attempt to suggest that the only way we can fulfil the great commission is to adopt a holistic approach towards missions. I will endeavour to explain what I mean by a holistic approach and use medical evangelism as an example in the foregoing.

Approaching Missions Holistically

It is very important that in the times we find ourselves, missions do not become the exclusive preserve of some selected few in Christianity. Missionary activities must embrace all and sundry. The apostle Paul commenting on such an approach used the analogy of the body in 1 Corinthians 12 to describe how effectively the church must work to fulfil God's agenda. 1 Cor 12:14-19 reads;

Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact, God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

William Carey has also intimated that we must use and deploy all available channels in reaching the lost for Christ. When we fail to identify, adopt, and use these available channels, our ability to fulfil the missionary mandate will be stunted.

Holistic missions in this sense must therefore be seen from the following angles. First, allowing all persons who have received Jesus as their Lord and Saviour to grow in Christ, develop and mature with the sense that they are missionaries. In this way, missionary work will not be thought of as the privilege of the ordained - even though ordained ministry is very important - but a call from God to all those who have received Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Hence the Christian will have a fruitful engagement with God.

Second, approaching missions holistically implies using all the available gifts, talents, and skills for the propagation of the gospel. Every gift that promotes life and wellbeing must be harnessed and used for the propagation of the Gospel. It is generally accepted that there are spiritual gifts and natural gifts. People who are said to possess spiritual gifts become better candidates when it comes to proclaiming the gospel and are mostly selected over those with natural gifts. The general assumption is that only those with spiritual gifts can proclaim the gospel. It is as though the one with natural (or physical) gift is not inspired by the Holy Spirit in its usage. However, as

Christians we all share in the same Holy Spirit, Word of God, Baptism, etc. And though our assignments, callings and giftedness are different, they are to compliment the body of Christ, demonstrating the incarnation – the union of the divine and human natures – bringing glory to our God who created us diversely and loves this diversity. Therefore, the spiritually gifted believer, must also work with his or her physical compatriots to get the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the unsaved.

Hence, the ordained, thought to be the only one spiritually qualified to embark on missions, will learn not to discriminate against Christians who are called into other professions. Christians in other professions must also acknowledge that they are also being inspired by the Holy Spirit and must work as such. Such an attitude is what will get the gospel into secular atmospheres and pull the unsaved, those locked in darkness, to Christ - helping them to reflect the glory of God. Hence people in other professions like medicine, teaching, engineering, law etc., may all be engaged for the fulfilment of the great commission. We may therefore be looking at Medical Evangelism, Teaching Evangelism, etc., where Christians of different professions can use both their spiritual, physical or natural skills, talents and endowments for sharing the Gospel. Their gifts become a bridge that draws and points the people to Christ. This is part of the reason why the missionaries who brought the gospel to Ghana established schools, hospitals, and church halls. They had in mind to use all available channels to communicate the Word of God. The above therefore serves as the background for the book *Medical Evangelism in Ghana: A Holistic Approach Towards Missions*.

Medical Evangelism

This kind of evangelism may mean the use of medicine as a tool for evangelistic activities. Persons embarking on such missions, the medivangelists, use medicine as a tool for outreach and in addition proclaims the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a holistic kind of mission because it embraces the use of all avenues that confirms the salvation work of Christ in a human being. Salvation is a holistic activity. It is not just the saving of the spirit but the totality of the human person. This kind of evangelism is therefore an attempt to minister to the totality of the human person, who is a spirit, has a soul and lives in a body. As the word of God

reaches and ministers to the spirit and the soul and “sometimes” the body, the medical aspect reaches out to the body.

Secondly, it is a kind of mission, as outlined in the book, that embraces the gifts, talents, and callings of different Christians from varying professions. Hence, in this mission, we see the ordained reverend minister working together with psychologists, ophthalmologists, surgeons, dentists, nurses, engineers, etc. All these professionals engage the unsaved through an intricate system which makes it impossible not to hear the word because of one’s importunity, which eventually leads to his or her salvation.

Thirdly, medical evangelism becomes the bridge that attracts people to God. Health needs are common everywhere. And our health care systems are increasingly becoming expensive. Surgeries are expensive. Hence if a person receives such a ministration for free, it is a kind of deliverance that has enough power to minister and confirm the love of God to him or her. Personally, I have witnessed people who turn to Christ after receiving surgical treatment. Hence as an evangelistic tool, it confirms the love of God to the unsaved, serving as a bridge, opening their heart and allowing them to receive the gospel.

Categories of Medical Evangelism

Medical evangelism falls under two broad categories. We have the long term category, whereby clinics, hospitals are established in strategic areas for missionary purposes. Long term indicates a period 90 days and above. The Catholic Health Services, Methodist Church Ghana Hospitals and Clinics, the Presbyterian Health Services, the Church of Pentecost Hospitals and Clinics, Assemblies of God Hospitals at Nyankpaduri and Saboba, Manna Missions Inc. Hospital in Teshie, Lighthouse Missions Hospital & Fertility Center and many others, have established permanent structures for long term medical evangelistic purposes. These structures contributes more than 40% to the total Ghanaian healthcare systems and they work jointly with the government. This shows, how much the church in Ghana contributes to society.

The second category is short term missions. In this category, missionary activities contribute from one day to about 90 days. Those who engage in this

category use mobile clinics for their outreaches. The Scripture Union of Ghana, the Ghana Fellowship of Evangelical Students, the Christian Missions Resource Foundation (CMRF) are examples of agencies who employ this or fall under this category. Members found in the long term category may also use their bases as deployment centres for short terms missions. The purpose of short term medical outreaches is to reach out to strategic areas, especially places with religious strong holds, with the gospel. For the sake of this paper we shall focus our attention on the Christian Missions Resource Foundation (CMRF) and its model of Medical Evangelism.

The Christian Missions Resource Foundation (CMRF) Model

The CMRF was founded by Group Captain Sam A. Annankra in 1993 as a result of the need to practicalize the Word of God. It exists to mobilize Christians and resources worldwide to send forth God's love through God's Word and acts of good deeds. Since its inception, the foundation, together with its partners, have ministered to more than six hundred and sixty communities, which are mostly deprived and marginalized in Ghana and the world over. The Foundation has conducted over a thousand surgeries of which beneficiaries did not contribute a pesewa or cent.

The model used by the foundation, which we affectionately call the "CMRF Model" is thus a useful one, whose details cannot be dealt with in this paper. However, it is noteworthy that together with her partners, CMRF has been able to penetrate Islamic

strongholds with the word of God and medicine and through that act, several people received the gospel and their healing. Churches and fellowships eventually sprung up in these areas. Herein lies the power of medical evangelism: its ability to break through religious strongholds, unify the body of Christ towards a common goal and minister to the whole person.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we need to make it clear that medical evangelism is expensive. It is never our regular kind of mission. We must undertake careful planning, ensuring that its delicate details are well catered for before each mission.

However, it should be supported. We must give generously to bodies that embark on medical evangelism, supporting the development of health workers and institutions. Christians must endeavour to even explore various ways of generating vaccines and cures which is also part of our responsibility. We must appreciate the fact that most people who possess the gifts of healing do minister in season. However, the one who manufactures a mosquito net to deal with malaria and other insects will save more lives. Though both are inspired by God and must work together for the betterment of society, the latter's work will last longer and save more lives. However, on the mission field, the two should work together, to demonstrate the beauty of the incarnation and the love of Christ to others. The church must take medical evangelism seriously and use its tool to her advantage.

MEMBER CARE: IT IS MUCH MORE NEEDED THAN YOU THINK

Adaobi Ruby Nartey

Jewel was a single missionary serving in another culture and country. She had been a missionary in 2 countries, and this was her third. She had been involved in a lot of pioneer and frontier work and was known to be hardworking, resilient and focused. After a fruitful ministry of about 18 years as a missionary, she found herself losing interest in her work. In between times, she had suffered a health condition which took about 9 months to be diagnosed. Her experience during the 9 months of hospital visits for tests and treatments was traumatic, so much so that she dreaded seeing a hospital even from afar! In the midst of her current struggle, she received a message from her International leaders asking her to take up a higher responsibility. Jewel burst into tears! She was not interested in any leadership position. She didn't even know what she wanted! Jewel didn't understand that she was having a burnout experience; neither did anybody notice the crisis she was going through. After all, Jewel is known to be resilient.

What was the problem with Jewel? She needed help; she needed member care.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is not to provide training in member care. It is rather to highlight the need or key role of member care in missionary work and to make proposals as to how each organization can initiate a member care structure. The ideas in this paper are derived from personal experience, training and materials on member care.

They are of course not exhaustive.

What is Member Care?

Let us take a look at some definitions. Kelly O'Donnell defined Member Care as the "ongoing investment of resources by mission agencies, churches and other missions organizations for the nurture and development of personnel. It focuses on every one in missions (missionaries, support staff, children and families) and does so over the course of the missionary life cycle, from recruitment to retirement".^[1]

Another definition is that "member care is the ongoing preparation, equipping and empowering of missions personnel for effective and sustainable life, ministry and work"

THE ROLE OF MEMBER CARE IN MISSIONS

Ronald L. Kotesky explained that missionary member care is done to help missionaries develop so they will have an effective and sustainable ministry.^[3] From the above, we can see that the definition of member care and the reason why it has to be done is related. What can be seen to be important in the two are the missionary's wellbeing as well as his or her effectiveness and sustainability on the field. The paucity of missionaries against the great need in missions as our Lord noted in Matthew 9:37 is still a reality today. It will therefore be wise to ensure that these few missionaries are well enough to do their work equally well and last long on the mission field. The question then arises as to how these can be ensured. I'll approach the subject by first highlighting what could constitute hindrances to the wellbeing, effectiveness and sustainability of the missionary, and then suggest how member care

^[1] Kelly O'Donnell, "Introduction: To the Ends of the Earth, to the End of the Age" in *Doing Member Care Well: Perspectives and Practices from Around the World*, ed. Kelly O'Donnell (California: William Carey Library, 2002), 1

^[2] Definition agreed by the Global Member Care Network of the WEA Mission Commission in 2008 in *Guidelines for Good Practice in Member Care*. Unpublished

^[3] Ronald L. Kotesky, *Missionary Member Care: An Introduction*, PDF Version, 2013, 40

can play a role in addressing such issues.

Things That Could Work Against the Missionaries' Effectiveness and Sustainability on the Field

1. Lack of Self Care or Poor Self Stewardship

The missionary call requires a life of sacrifice; he is expected to give up some comfort to be able to take the gospel to remote areas. This is in line with the Scriptures as Jesus in Luke 9:23-24 demanded self-denial for fruitful discipleship. At the same time, the first part of the greatest commandment as recorded in Matthew 22:39 - love yourself - is a commandment to take care of self. Yet, many missionaries fail to treat their bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit - that is, having enough rest, eating well and exercising regularly. As such, the missionaries "set themselves up for a premature departure from the work to which God has called them".

[4] Ronald Kotesky and Mary Seitz noted also that just as athletes take care of themselves so that they can do their best, missionaries must maintain themselves so that they can be most effective in bearing God's message.^[5] But unfortunately, sometimes missionaries fall into the trap of performance; they not only drive themselves but others in unhealthy ways to achieve their goals.^[6] Productivity certainly decreases when areas of stress increase. The story of Jewel above is an illustration of this fact. Jewel overworked herself and exhausted her physical and emotional reservoir and was no longer functioning well.

Member Care comes in here to encourage missionaries to see the need to strike a balance between their work and personal health. Member care could ensure that every missionary, whether on the field or in the office takes a day off every week, strictly for

rest. In addition to this, every missionary must take a period of leave annually, during which he should undertake a medical checkup. Missionaries should also be encouraged to regularly check their spiritual, physical, and emotional gauges by using inventories.^[7]

2. Lack of or Inadequate Member Care from Sending Organizations

There are times when an organization's focus is much more on the success of ministry and projects such that the physical and emotional health of its staff takes a back seat. This might not be a deliberate act, but such an oversight can be costly and lead to discouragement on the part of the missionary and possibly lead to a high attrition rate. The lack of home support - that is support from the sending missions organization - as one of the reasons for the attrition of missionary.^[8]

The Bible shows that Jesus expressed personal interest in the wellbeing of his apostles. In Mark 6:31, Jesus took his disciples out for rest after they had returned from preaching. Again, the Gospel of John recorded that Jesus even prepared breakfast for them (John 21:10-13)! Kotesky pointed out that the Corinthian Church was very sensitive to Paul and his companions' need for member care that they sent Titus to provide it (II Corinthians 7:6-7)^[9]. These are enough biblical bases for organizations to take a personal interest in the wellbeing of their missionaries. As such, the role of member care here will be to ensure that annual or quarterly retreats are organized, where missionaries will have the time to be refreshed spiritually, physically, and emotionally, excluding a time of long fasting. Member care will also ensure that constant communication with missionaries on the field

[4] Ibid.,58

[5] Ron Kotesky and Mary Seitz, "Stewardship of Care and for Christian Workers: Biblical Basis" in *Missionary Care: Mission and Mental Health Resources* accessed May 10, 2020, <http://www.missionarycare.com/brochure.html>

[6] Ajith Fernando, "Joy and Sacrifice in the Lord" in *Doing Member Care Well*,234.

[7] See examples of inventories provided by Mobile Member Care Team.

[8] William D. Taylor, "Introduction: Examining the Iceberg Called Attrition" in *Too Valuable to Lose*, ed. William D. Taylor, (ebook, World Evangelism Missions Commission), 1997.

[9] Kotesky, 28

is maintained concerning their wellbeing and not just their work.

3. Lack of or Insufficient Financial Support:

A noticeable reason why African labourers are few on the mission field is not the lack of call but insufficient financial support. Raising funds for upkeep and ministry to the unreached can be a major source of stress and distraction for the missionary due to poor response from the Body of Christ. It is an added stress when missionaries spend all their leave period trying to raise funds instead of finding time to rest. The resultant effect is that these missionaries return to their respective fields exhausted. It becomes a distraction when a pastor amongst an unreached people spends most of his time on the farm instead of on the pastoral work, due to his denomination's financial policy to get his salary from the church, even a church amongst unreached peoples! Romans 10:14-15 highlights the importance of being sent by the Body of Christ to the unreached, and this sending includes a supportive financial responsibility. The role of member care here would be to encourage missionaries who work with mission organizations to maintain a continued relationship with their respective local churches, from where they could be financially supported. These local churches would see these missionaries as equally working for the kingdom of God and not against it. Member Care could also advocate for a review of the financial policy of some denominations to encourage productivity on the field.

4. Square Peg in a Round Hole:

This is an idiom expressed to refer to someone in a situation unsuitable to his abilities or character.^[10] When a missionary is serving outside his or her gift area, it can be quite a struggle. Bill Hybells noted that when spiritual gifts are identified and are used under the direction of

Jesus Christ, there is an affirmation from God and the person will feel more energized. Conversely, serving outside your gift area can drain the person out^[11] I know a case of a missionary who suffered a nervous breakdown because of such a situation. Some of these cases arise because of a lack of labourers, in which case postings could be done without consideration of gift areas. The role of Member care here would be to help in the screening of candidates, helping to evaluate how they may serve best so that such problems can be prevented.

5. Interpersonal Relationship Problems among Colleagues:

Philippians 4:23, we see Paul pleading with Eudia and Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord and even requested the Philippian Church to help deal with the relationship rift. Paul noted that the women were hardworking, but at the same time, they had relationship problems.

Interpersonal relationship problems can be a major source of stress on the mission field. Some of the underlying causes could be poor personal self-care leading to transferred aggression, inordinate desire for recognition and fame leading to unhealthy competition, abusive leadership and a general lack of mutual respect - just to mention a few. Some of these conflicts make the atmosphere so toxic thereby hindering proper fellowship and effective ministry. Chronic cases in some mission organizations have resulted in withdrawing the "troublesome" missionaries from the field.

Admittedly, missionaries are expected to know the word of God concerning good interpersonal relationships, but because we have such problems on the field, it goes without saying that applies to real-life can still elude them. They will therefore need external help from others who are gifted in the area of counseling and conflict mediation to handle such issues and this is where member care can

^[10] Definition from Google Dictionary accessed May 26, 2020.

^[11] Bill Hybells, "Reading Your Gauges", Leadership Spring, 1991, in "Crisis Response Training Manual, (Workshop for Leaders and Peer Responders in Cross-cultural Service, 118, 2015)

play an important role.

Other Areas of Coverage

Apart from the above, there are other areas in missions where member care is very much needed

1. MKs (Missionary Kids or Children of Missionaries):

Children whose missionary parents keep moving from place to place, have their own share of crisis. Their constant change of schools and leaving of old friends sometimes affect them psychologically. Some of them even have problems with their parents being missionaries! Member Care could design programmes to help them cope with such struggles and also to make them feel special.

2. Transition:

Missionaries who move to new fields or countries generally feel out of place in their new service area and could go through struggles and even frustration in settling down. They therefore need to be welcomed and made to feel at home. They need to be integrated via an orientation on how things work in the new place.

Another aspect of transition is reentry into one’s country. Missionaries who have spent long service years outside their country would also need a programme of reintegration into their own country.

3. Losses:

Missionaries lose relatives, spouses, converts, colleagues and so go through a period of grief. Member care personnel should then be available to help them go through the grief process so as to facilitate recovery from the loss.

4. Retirement:

Most mission organizations start with zealous young people as their staff. The idea of a pension scheme for them is therefore far removed; until they start aging. The realization of this might come late. The role of Member care here will be to suggest workable pension schemes for their missions organizations and to prepare missionaries to start well ahead of time for retirement, to guard against redundancy and depression.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Who is to provide member care?

The practice in some organizations is that member care is provided by the immediate leader of the missionary, However, this leader is at the same time loaded with other responsibilities such as administration, ministry to the unreached or the Body of Christ as well as family responsibilities. This leaves little or no time for the leader to provide care for those he is leading. Most of the time he assumes they are doing quite well spiritually until a crisis such as a missionary beating up his wife draws his attention! He will at this time face a lot of criticism for his shepherding skills.

To avoid such overload and embarrassing situations therefore, it will be advisable for each mission organization/ church to delegate the ministry of member care as the sole responsibility of the chosen staff. The staff should be composed of member care facilitators and providers.^[12]

Member care facilitators are those who have administrative gifts and apply them in arranging and playing the logistic roles involved in member care mentioned above, which are ensuring that missionaries go for medical checkups, organization retreats, vacations, retirement schemes, maintaining contact with the local churches of missionaries and for “missionary showers”^[13] and any other thing that will bring refreshment to missionaries. Member care providers are mostly those who are sensitive to emotional needs and serve as counselors. They can come alongside missionaries in crisis.

^[12] Harry Hoffman, Member Care Foundation and Pyramid of Care, accessed on Youtube, April 27,2020.

^[13] Some denominations organize pastor showers once a year, during which church members are encouraged to bless their pastor with gifts. Missionary showers can be done as well.

An important qualification is that both categories should be experienced missionaries, being in a better place to understand the special needs of missionaries.^[14]

CONCLUSION

Member Care ministry involves the investment of resources, just as other ministries on the mission field. The labourers are the ones doing the ministry; without them, the harvest cannot be reaped. The importance of caring for them therefore cannot be overemphasized. Every role that member care has to play involves finances. As such, member care should have some priority in our ministry budgets, and that is if we agree that the missionary should be well enough to be effective and sustainable on the field.

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^[14] Kotesky, Member Care, 17

WOMEN IN MISSIONS

Naana Nkrumah, Rhoda Oluwakemi Appiah & Yesutor Gumenu

Introduction

Women all over the world continue to contribute significantly to the development of their nations in the socio-economic and political arenas among other things. Even more significant is their eternal impact demonstrated in their contribution to the spread of the Gospel. Although the missionary landscape has for a long time been dominated by men, women have in no small measure contributed to the cause of Missions.

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines mission(s) as “an organized effort for the propagation of the Christian faith”.

In Mathew 28:19-20 & Mark 16:15, Missions is conceived as the lifelong commitment of Christian individuals and groups to actively obey the command of Jesus Christ to go into the world and raise disciples (i.e. obedient followers or devotees) from every tribe and nation through the preaching of the Gospel and to do so in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Since our article focuses on Women and Missions, it is important that we biblically define who a woman is in the light of the Creator’s intention and design. The Bible states in Genesis 1:26-27 that God created human beings (man and woman) in His image and after His likeness to rule over His creation. In Genesis 5:1-2 (KJV) we are told that Adam is both the name of the first man and the name for humanity (i.e. both men and women). In effect, a woman is God’s creation made in His image and likeness with the responsibility of stewardship and rule over God’s creation as God Himself intended in the beginning. The woman’s role as a helper to the man is concerning the husband-wife relationship called marriage.

In exploring Women in Missions, we are careful to include both the direct and indirect roles played by women with special attention to their uniqueness. We have attempted to look at the Woman in Missions as a Mother, Wife, Spinster, Widow, and even as a little girl. Additionally, we have juxtaposed Bib-

lical examples of such women with their contemporary ones. It is our fervent hope that every reader, especially today’s Christian woman would see her indispensable place as a vessel for the spread of the Gospel in raising obedient followers (disciples) for Jesus in every tribe and nation.

Biblical & Contemporary Examples of Women in Missions.

- *Mary, The Mother of Jesus Christ & Susana Wesley, The Mother of John and Charles Wesley.*

All through the Bible; from Genesis to Revelation, we see a God who loves community and is constantly looking for ways to draw people to Himself. As Rev. Samson Dorkunor, a former President of the Ghana Evangelical Missions Association (GEMA) rightly puts it, “God’s strategy has always been men.” That is to say that human beings have always been God’s channel for perpetuating His will on earth including missions.

To this end, the Bible is replete with examples of women who were used by God in the business of raising people for the kingdom of God. One of such women is Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, the world’s only Savior. Before the coming of Christ to earth, God greatly used the nation of Israel to portray Himself to the rest of the world in addition to working in various cultures to draw people’s attention to Himself.

The writer of Hebrews puts it aptly: “*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things...*” Hebrews 1:1-2 (NKJV). Although God, in times past, sought to make Himself known in various ways, the coming to earth of Jesus Christ was and still remains the greatest blessing ever, in that His birth, death, burial, and resurrection paved the way for all humanity to have access to God by believing the Gospel.

It is no mean thing that the Savior of the whole world was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of a woman and was birthed by her for the salvation of mankind. The ridicule which she bore as the Virgin with child coupled with the nuances of pregnancy among other things cannot be overlooked. Mary's contribution to the missionary enterprise is indelible especially when one considers the kind of Child she birthed and how that in the absence of her "Child", there would be no salvation for mankind nor a worldwide missions movement to start with. We are aware that such an example of missionary contribution may not be fully appreciated by everyone but this in no wise lessens its weight as a worthy example.

Along with Mary, let us also consider Susanna Wesley, the mother of Charles and John Wesley. She, like Mary, is another example of a godly mother who birthed and raised godly children whose impact continues to reverberate around the globe. An article by Joseph W. Martin titled "Susanna Wesley, Mother of Methodism" featured in the Charisma Magazine says this about Susanna, "*Most historians consider John and Charles Wesley, the two founders of the Methodist Church. But behind these men stood a strong mother whose influence molded and shaped their destinies. In addition to her regular domestic duties, she handled the religious and educational training of her children...*"

The training Susanna Wesley gave her children has resulted in some 40.5 million Methodists in 138 countries today. Her life testifies to the truth that "train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it". Proverbs 22:6 (ESV). Indeed, "she earned the title, mother of Methodism without ever (directly) planting a church".

Women in Ghana Missions

- *Mary Steele, (1928 – 2017) a nurse-midwife turned missionary & Rev. Edith Eyoman Larbi, A missionary to Klonu.*

Mary Steele, a professional nurse-midwife, in 1962 took a bold decision to leave her family, friends, and career to respond to her true calling. Her resolution to relocate and work as a Bible Translator in Ghana defined her life. Mary came to Ghana in 1962, the same year that GILLBT was founded and she retired in 2016. Mary served with GILLBT for 52 consecutive years, making her GILLBT's longest-serving

member. Her time in Ghana was dedicated to the development of the Konkomba and Bimoba languages into written form.

Mary Steele promoted literacy and translated the complete Bible into these two languages. She also supervised the revision of the Konkomba and Bimoba Bibles, making them the first GILLBT-sponsored language groups to have revised versions of the complete Bible. Her faith in God and her contribution to Bible translation were outstanding. Mary was widely loved and greatly respected in the UK and also in Ghana. Mary's contributions could only have been achieved by an institution. In the field of Mother Tongue Bible Translation, Mary's work can simply be described as superhuman. It takes an institution to do what she did.

The significance, as well as impact of Mary's work in Ghana, was captured by a former President of Ghana, when he conferred on her, a National Award-Member of the Order of the Volta (MV) – on December 11, 2015. This is an extract of the citation given to her:

"...Your personal successes in literacy and community development in Ghana have been laudable. You successfully carried out Linguistics Research and Translated the New Testament into the Konkomba language in 1977. You translated the New Testament into the Bimoba language in 1985 and translated the Bible into Konkomba in 1999. You also produced the Bimoba Bible in 2004. You, Miss Mary Steele, were very instrumental in the publication of the Phonology and Grammar of Konkomba and the Dictionary of Konkomba. You authored Anthropological papers on aspects of the Konkomba and Bimoba languages, thereby transforming these two previously oral only languages to written forms as well. Your work in language development and literacy programmes provided building blocks for collective self-mobilization of the people in the two communities and enabled them to participate substantially in national development. Through the numerous literacy programmes organized in many communities, harmful social practices have been abandoned, while empowering the citizens socially, economically, and spiritually."

Rev. Edith Eyoman Larbi

This missionary to the Klonu people is also unequivocally a shining example and living legend today. Her love for God became evident at a very young age. She joined the Volta Evangelical Association (VEA) traveling with them for crusades, dawn broadcasts, and night vigils. Put in her own words *“I mingled with every creature on the floor: snakes, scorpions, mosquitoes, you name it but all these did not deter me from serving the Lord with excitement.”* Missionary Larbi in her early 20s left Accra without been sent by either a church or mission agency. What prompted this rare decision was a call she received. According to her, she went to a funeral in the said village and the Lord spoke to her in an audible voice *“I will send you to this village.”* Just like Paul the Apostle Paul, after his dramatic encounter on the way to Damascus, she never looked back. Her employers were willing to double her salary in a bid to dissuade her from her decision but this enticement did not stop her, her mind was made, not even discouraging words from a Pastor, who told her that there is nothing in the village, could dampen her spirit.

Ms. Larbi, with no experience or first-hand information about mission outreach except for the little knowledge, gleaned from books; spent nine solid years in the Klonu village, as a single missionary. Her decision to serve God in this uncharted course was not without challenges. She overcame both physical and spiritual attacks. According to her, 6 pythons sent to attack her were killed around her house. Her life was a riddle to both young and old in the village who could not understand why a single young lady will leave comfortable Accra and come and dwell among them in a typical village. To their curious mind, her answer was always *“I came here because of you.”* To the glory of God, her selfless labor among the people of Klonu resulted in the salvation of many. Prominent idol worshippers abandoned their idols and turned to the Lord together with their families as a result of her commitment. Today, Klonu village has produced many servants of God and there is a growing church planted among them.

Ms. Larbi led a simple life among the people, she became all things to them that she might win some. One of the favorite songs which the Lord used to encourage her in those days was *“Make the Lord your delight and your want will be His care”*

Challenges of women in Mission

In contemporary times, women in Africa have defied and overcome many odds to excel and stand out in many fields of endeavors hitherto considered to be male-dominated, from academia to the political field, to heading multinational companies, to entrepreneurship, just to mention a few. However, when it comes to missions, though Ghanaian women like Edith Larbi, (missionary to Klonu) Madam Florence Yeboah, (founded GHACOE Women’s Ministry), Mrs. Georgina Mensah, Dr. Margaret Mensah (who both served in Mauritania), Mrs. Cynthia Mensah (who served in Botswana) and others stand out as living legends, there are still many more lands to be covered. The greatest barrier to women excelling in the field of mission has to do to a large extent, our mindset and the narrow perception of the mission enterprise.

Just as women have taken the bull by the horns and excelled in other fields of human endeavors, the same can be done in the field of missions, both in the marketplace and in frontline missions. If women will rightly conceive mission as *“Kingdom Expansion,”* and see every career as an opportunity to spread the gospel, then the task of the Great Commission will be accomplished in no time. The world of Christian women needs a reorientation into understanding that as stated in one of the materials of *“Simply Mobilizing”*, mission is now *“From everywhere to everywhere.”* God is looking for women to stand for Him as Esther did in the palace, like Deborah in the battlefield; or the young captive girl who introduced Naaman to the God of Isreal, (2 Kings 5:1-5). God is looking for women to expand His kingdom among children in the schools, on the campuses, in the corridors of power to stand against ungodly policies with uncommon passion in the parliament, in the health sector; the list is endless, the only qualification needed by such women is a passionate heart for the expansion of the kingdom of the King of Kings.

- **The way forward: How to sustain the work of women in missions.**

The way forward, we believe is to raise our daughters from the home front to the churches with a Kingdom mindset. The bible says *“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”* (Prov. 22:6 NKJV). Mothers, Sunday school teachers, church leaders, and other should

intentionally sow the seed of missions in the minds of our daughters and disciple them to become kingdom-minded believers. Just as we want them to excel as lawyers, bankers, educationists, entrepreneurs, etc. daughters should be raised with the mind that they can be Christ representatives in any field of endeavor. Let us plant the seed of the 3Gs' in their minds "Going, (going to the field as a frontline missionary like Mary Slessor), Giving (giving of their money, time and talent to extend the kingdom), Groaning (praying for missions).

The truth is that women much more than their male counterparts face enormous challenges when they respond to the call of God. Sad to say, they are even discouraged by their Christian family and friends. The system of the world has always been and will always be anti-God, hence the need for the body of Christ to support with all the available resources,

women, both young and old with a heart for kingdom expansion. We are even in need of affirmative action on the side of women in ministry.

To conclude, we posit that women are great and are an indispensable instrument in God's hand. Given the right upbringing, the right information, the right training, a supportive and encouraging environment, women can do great exploits for God. As Myles Munroe observed, "*Women are multipliers; give her a seed, and she will give you a baby*". Women are incubators, women are burden bearers. Women have a womb. Let the Christian community plant the right seed in those wombs and wait to see the birth of a mighty kingdom workforce that will turn many to the Lord from their sheltered homes to the open field fearlessly.

RETHINKING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IN MINISTRY IN THE FACE OF COVID-19 AND BEYOND

Vincent Anane Denteh

Digital technology has been very critical for humanity in the face of the novel coronavirus, taking into account its usefulness in dealing with several issues relating to the pandemic. The coronavirus is so infectious that it has become necessary for governments and policymakers to introduce new policies such as lockdowns, social distancing, and restrictions on public gathering to prevent the pandemic from spreading further in our communities.

Thus, with the advent of lockdowns and social distancing, the normal way of communication has become a major challenge and that has necessitated the use of digital technology in communication in a more robust way than in the past. Governments, religious institutions, health institutions, and civil society organizations have all adopted digital technology as the most reliable and efficient way of communicating critical information in times like these.

This development appears to have added impetus to a new paradigm shift in communication that has already been caused by digital technology which, in turn, has significant effects on religious activities. In this article, it is appropriate to discuss the importance of digital technology in Christian ministry and the need to reset our minds towards it even beyond COVID-19. It is also needful to be educated on the characteristics of digital technology and the dynamic nature of the digital space.

The Dynamic Nature of the Digital World

Digital technology has introduced new terms such as digital age, digital culture, digital space, digital media, and digital community, resulting in a new global order known as the “digital world.” The intriguing aspect of this development is that the digital world has developed into new cultural perspectives that writers refer to as “digital society, information age, technoculture, technocapitalism, global media culture or globalization” (UN Global Situation of

Young People, 2003:311). Some use “compunity” to denote “the merger of computers and community.” Some scholars call it “digital natives” in reference to those born into the digital world. Their generation began from 1985, while those born before this era and making effort to stay abreast with the digital age are referred to as “digital immigrants.” The older generation is still in its adventive stage in the digital space and thus needs to learn very fast to settle down.

Digital technology involves the use of devices such as radio, television, megaphones, digital cameras, cellular phones, video projectors, satellite systems, internet, and computers. This development has not only accelerated communication; it has also recast our cultural values and societal norms in terms of communication, relationships and worship in the church. These days, the gospel can be communicated to people in any part of the world using digital technology. Ways of giving offerings in church, partaking of the holy communion and marking church register have in most cases been calibrated into the digital technology.

Digital technology has also enhanced collaboration and innovation in ministry and the impact is obvious, particularly during our present situation of the coronavirus pandemic. The church has responded to the challenges of COVID-19 during lockdowns and restrictions on public gatherings for church services and other social activities. Church members are able to access church programmes through the digital space, such as television, radio, internet, and mobile phones. This development provides us with a very clear picture of the importance of digital technology in Christian ministry.

As the church seeks to address the challenges posed to ministry in the context of postmodern epistemology, Christians need to thoroughly understand the technological trends that have been driving the various developments around the world. For example, the world came under rapid transformation during

the inventions of steam engine, electricity generator, and the printing press; the church was not exempted from that transformation. Each of these three scientific innovations brought many benefits to humanity but only one out of these three – printing press – will be briefly highlighted in this article.

The Church's Engagement with Digital Technology

Adopting paradigm shifts that are triggered by new technology is not a new phenomenon to the church. In the medieval world, the church adopted the print technology of Johannes Gutenberg (1395-1468) and that replaced the traditional way of producing literature in which books were either written by hand or printed from engraved wooden blocks. This new technology enabled Gutenberg to finish the publication of the Holy Bible by 1455 (Denteh 2013:102). Today, the Bible and other Christian literature are also gradually being shifted from hard copies or printed formats to electronic devices. Are we, therefore, to resist this development or readily embrace it as the past Christians incorporated the use of printed Bibles into the church?

The fascinating aspect of this progress is that, while the advent of the printing press characterized the shift from pre-modernity to modernity, the use of digital technology today has become another shift from modernity to postmodernity. The crucial point with this latest trend is that digital technology, which has come to stay with humanity, is easily accessible to many people. By digital technology, people can communicate with one another in every part of the world in real time without being physically present. The onus now lies on the church to access the digital space as a new ministry environment.

For Dawson (2014), "Life in cyberspace is in continuity of the so-called 'real life' situation of the world and it is rapidly changing the 'face of religion worldwide.'" Jacobson (1999 in Cassey 2001:32) states, "It seems that God has arrived on the internet" and as a result the internet has "become a major purveyor of spiritual expression at a time when spiritual hunger is growing in the West." Cassey (p. 32) identifies the digital technology, particularly the internet, as "a medium that can transcend both spatial and temporal boundaries," thus giving people the opportunity to "enter into a completely new set of relationships... that can be close or distant, yet inherently

all (in principle) interactive." Cassey avers that this development has widened "the social foundation of religious life as it diminishes the relevance of location for religious identities."

The foregoing reflections confirm the indispensability of digital technology in the world and, for that matter, it has become a strategic medium through which the church can reach all nations and all people groups. With digital technology, the age-long gap between the church and unreached groups have been drawn closer than ever before. The issue is no longer about the difficulty in identifying the location of the people but rather how to identify the most relevant type of digital technology to use at a given time. The church has to contextualize the digital systems at its disposal to enhance its ministry activities.

Biblical Perspective on Technology

Some Christians keep asking whether the Bible endorses the use of technology in ministry, particularly the new phenomenon of reading the Bible from electronic devices. Others question the ethical and moral implications of this practice in the light of Christian ethics and morality. To some extent, their concerns appear legitimate though not an absolute. To address this dilemma, Christians need to grasp thoroughly the meaning of technology. We spend a lot of time arguing about technology, but we seem to fail to examine its meaning through the lens of Scripture.

Waddell (2013) defines technology as the "Application of knowledge to the practical aims of human life or to changing and manipulating the human environment." Waddell further states that technology "includes the use of materials, tools, techniques, and resources of power to make life easier or... more productive." There is a big question here. Which of the concepts stated in Waddell's definition is alien to the Bible? The above definition implies that the practice of using "tools," "devices," and "materials" by humankind constitutes the concept of technology. If this is the case, then should we accept technology as part of God's provision for humankind or reject it as an evil thing?

Although there is no direct mention of technology in the Bible, from the above definition, it is implied that technological devices were used by people either upon direct instructions of God or through

their own innovations for personal use. Some useful examples are the building of a city by Cain (Gen. 4:17), and the forging of all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron by Tubal-Cain (Gen. 4:22). Bezalel and Oholiab were divinely endowed with knowledge, craftsmanship, and skills to “devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft” (Ex. 31:3-6, ESV). They were to use this technology towards the construction of the tabernacle during the exodus. The import is that the construction of the tabernacle did not just contain aspects of technology, but was in itself a system of technology, if we are to consider Waddell’s definition.

The Psalmist’s warning of people in his day who trusted in chariots (Ps. 20:7) is an evidence of the use of technology at the time. Another instance is that, the apostle Paul wrote many letters which may also be described as technology enhanced. Jesus used tools in Joseph’s carpentry shop. The import of this argument is that, the sovereignty of God is so overwhelming that knowledge given to His people is not only for their personal use, but also to serve His purpose in His own glory. The world must know this fact so that humanity can use technology in a very responsible manner to serve the purpose of God for His creation.

Ministry with Responsible Technology

Our discussion thus far indicates that the use of digital technology is vital for ministry, but the church has to be proactive with the way it conducts ministry in the digital space. There is the need for the responsible use of digital technology by Christians. From a broader perspective, the effective use of digital space ministry can be attained through the formulation of missiological models and relevant approaches by the church. Developing a missiological approach towards digital space ministry will help to enhance the knowledge of Christians in terms of the most appropriate digital systems to use at any given time. There should be a framework about how to harness digital technology for ministry in a manner that glorifies the name of the Lord.

The church should learn to understand digital technology and explore the culture of the digital community so that it can relevantly fashion out the gospel message in an appealing manner to the church’s audience. Naturally humans are supposed to shape

their tools for their own use, but digital technology is so pervasive that it rather appears to be shaping us and that has both positive and negative effects on society. The caveat, however, is that if the church fails to dominate the digital space, there is the likelihood of it being overwhelmed by the ungodly acts of some people. It is when the church becomes proactive in developing a missiological framework for the use of digital technology that the issue of using it wrongly and the abuses associated with can be addressed thoroughly.

Conclusion

The overriding point, however, is that every Christian who is able to access any kind of digital technology or electronic device should have the potential to witness the gospel to the digital community. There is no need to hesitate because the more we delay the more souls will die without Christ. Thus, we all ought to see ourselves as labourers in the Lord’s vineyard called to fulfill God’s mission mandate in our lifetime. Finally, let us inform ourselves that the pace into digital space ministry has been expedited by the advent of COVID-19 and it is obvious that, approaches towards ministry will never remain the same even after the coronavirus pandemic.

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MEDIA IN MISSIONS: POTENTIAL FOR MOVEMENT

Peter Higham

My passion is for training people to use media and technology as a ministry tool in missions. More than eight years ago in a remote Aboriginal community, in the outback of Australia, I sat with an Aboriginal elder using a tablet and a solar power player. Both devices were filled with God's Word in various languages. I firmly believed that as a missionary one of the most effective tools that could be used to reach the community was God's Word being packaged in a way that could be understood in an audio/visual format. I witnessed countless times how gospel media, which was being played to people in their local language, brought tears to their eyes, softened the proud hearts, and challenged many to consider allowing God the chance to transform their life.

Years later I am in Ghana and the same passion remains in me to see media being used as a tool to reach people with a message of hope and truth. My approach to using media in the mission's context has changed slightly as the focus is now on training others to use the tools of this day and age to reach the audiences around them.

The COVID-19 lockdown period in Ghana stirred my heart to action and I knew I needed to do something more to help individual missionaries and churches in regards to using Media in Ministry. Now more than ever technology has shown the importance of connections. God made us to relate to each other through whatever means possible. Therefore connections are vital, connections are lasting, and connections allow new doors of opportunities to reach the unreached. Connections bring forth a blessing that goes both ways in giving and receiving.

So, along with the assistance of two other field missionaries, I created an online series called 'Media in Missions' which was focused on educating, encouraging and equipping people to do their ministry via media. I thought the participants would be a small group of Ghanaians but soon there were registrations from 10 African countries.

Over the years, the Lord has allowed me to have close connections with the Mobile Ministry Forum (MMF) team, which is a network of missional innovators representing more than 250 ministries. Media ministry leaders from this network over the past 2 years reviewed thousands of online resources in order to produce a comprehensive introductory-level media ministry curriculum. The design of the 'Mobiles, Media, and Ministry: Lessons for Trainers and Learners' curriculum suited me well with my desire to help train and empower individuals and small teams to connect with the lost through media devices.

Having had a small involvement in putting the lessons together, I knew this material would be the best starting point. I got to work preparing a 'Road Map' for training over a 7-week period that would be suitable for an African context. The training was to cover the following: *Foundations of Media Ministry ~ Mobile Ministry ~ Social Media ~ Photography ~ Video & Audio & Communications.*

Countless hours behind the computer were put into preparation for each lesson but as the team logged onto zoom each week, we knew it was worth it. Those participating in the training were missionaries on the field, mission agency representatives, pastors, students, media creatives and more. Each person represented tremendous potential for taking media ministry to the next level.

Early in the training the following question was asked: **How do you think mission agencies, missionaries, and the church should help feed the digital hunger that is growing?** Digital hunger can be explained in this way: Just like when one is hungry or thirsty, they will do everything possible to fill that thirst or desire. It is the same with digital hunger. We live in a world with a population of 7.7 billion. Nearly 60% of the world is connected to the Internet and roughly 50% of the world's population are connected via social media. **The world has come such a long way in an incredibly short time!** People have become so accustomed to using their devices with on

average people spending more than 2 hours a day on social media alone. When one is not 'connected' as such, they feel isolated and disconnected. People are consuming media more than ever before and the church can definitely build on this and make use of this opportunity.

Therefore, now more than ever the Gospel must be present and visual on all levels. Believers must be investing into using media strategically to reach the lost, strengthen the church, restore hope, reinforce truth, which in the end translates into lives being transformed. The participants in the course responded to this obvious challenge by stating, *'We need to start doing more digital evangelism. We need to be more present on social media. We need to be involved in creating Gospel media. We need to be involved in distributing Gospel Media.'* What an opportunity!

Our media world is driven by visual and audio stories. This can be anything from film and television to podcasts to stories on social media. Because this is a means by which most people in the world communicate, it's important for ministries to learn to do it well.

I believe that media ministry can be summed up in one word: 'communication'. Everything we do is a form of communication, whether it be sending or receiving. God is a Communicator; it is a part of his ultimate nature, so he expects us to be communicators as well. When communicating, we must seriously consider the following three words: **Who, What, Where!**

Who – Who are we really trying to reach? We cannot reach everyone, but we can all reach someone. Many times, our focus is too wide on reaching the whole world, when maybe God is just trying to encourage us for example to use WhatsApp to reach university students.

What – What am I communicating? Our message is critical as it must be tailored to meet the needs of our audience. As well as being clear on our message, we need to be certain on what response we are expecting from our audience. For example, before we create a design with a scripture on it and post it on our Facebook page, we need to consider what we want people to understand from it. Equally important is to think of what do we want people to do as a result of seeing the content we have created. Maybe we just want to encourage someone by

our media message but we need to make sure that the message they receive is the same than what we intended.

Where – Where will we connect with our audience? Do we know where our audience is? Are they on social media or messaging platforms, or will they be found at events, or only at the individual face to face level?

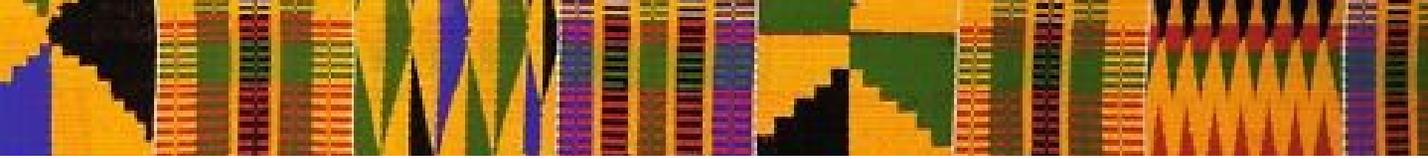
The 3W's keep the focus right!

Halfway during the training, I wondered if the team was truly educating, encouraging and equipping people to do ministry via email. Doing all the training online via zoom brought its challenges - mainly with the fact that interactive aspect was limited. So, a survey was run and the couple of comments below confirmed that a need was being met:

- *I am grateful how it is done so far. God bless you and strengthen you for offering this useful training.*
- *Thank you for the sessions, they are really broadening my knowledge, perspective and passion with regards to media in missions.*
- *But of recent I've been a bit dissatisfied, a sense of unfulfillment you might say, I felt I ran out of ideas in a way...but these sessions have been so inspiring and have me going back to the drawing board.*
- *The information is challenging and exposes us to the many ways we can send the gospel out.*
- *I am encouraged. And I am planning to introduce some of the things I learnt in "my social ministry".*
- *A lot of eye-opening stuff.*
- *I am challenged to do something with the information I have received. My passion is awakened.*

The training may have finished but in a sense it's only the beginning. Many have committed to a further round of bonus training sessions because they understand the huge potential technology brings. **'For such a time as this our desire is to use what God has given us to be a blessing to others.'**

My name is Pete and I am passionate about seeing God's name proclaimed in this world. I recognise in this very moment of time that we need to get seri-



ous about reaching people with a message of ‘Hope, Truth and Love’ that connects with their hearts.

So, now is the time more than ever to refocus our approach to using Media in Ministry. The opportunities are endless, the potential for movement is huge, but what will be our response.

“Lord Jesus, help us to be in tune with your voice so that we know what we need to do in this time and season so that your name is glorified. Amen.”

Peter Higham, from New Zealand serves as a Missionary in Ghana with ACTS 13, a ministry of WEC. Pete is creative and highly skilled in various media tools and is passionate about utilizing media to fulfil the Great Commission. Peter voluntarily serves on the Communication Team of GEMA and also offers media training to interested churches and mission organisations. Pete is married to Tiina and they are blessed with two kids.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION...?

David Yebuah

Truth be told, the digital revolution has long been with us. In the 1940s, complex machines were used in radio transmission by code-breakers, weapon designers, and rocket scientists to manipulate complex calculations in World War 2. These were the beginning of our digital age, although a far cry from where we have gotten to today with machine learning and possibly artificial intelligence. However, this article is not about the complexities of our digital age. Hopefully, it will not be another “digital-burlesque” meant to tickle your curiosity or entertain you.

Interestingly, articles on digital innovations have become novel. It excites curiosity and engages perplexed audiences; a form of digitronic-sensuality of the soul. We have become like early consumers of film and television, almost worshipping the screen and believing outlandish prospects of images on walls. Most societies have this outlandish idea that we can manipulate the past, present, and future through the power of digital systems. In some cases, some Christians believe with broad strokes of digital tools, we can orchestra the souls of men. Less I bore you with more words, let me cut to the chase. My simple question is; the digital revolution is here with us. Are you ready for it?

There is a widely held notion that technology answers everything, and that, with the right technology we can solve the most complex problems in society today. In their book “The New Digital Age: Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business,” Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen outline in great detail and scope all the promise and peril awaiting us with new forms of technological innovations - from technologies that will change lives to the widespread political change that will transform the globe; to the ever-present threats to our privacy and security. Referencing Internet incidents galore, they warn of a perpetual “code war” between attackers and defenders and expand upon this type of conflict within authoritarian and democratic states. Citing

the Arab Spring as an example, Schmidt and Cohen predict that its online propagation presages an easier initiation of future revolutions, which nevertheless face uncertain outcomes when they encounter, as they eventually must, the state’s material powers.

Take note of these two words, pessimism and optimism. These two words are the cornerstones of this article, and where you stand regarding these two words when it comes to the Church and new media technologies. It does not have to be a dichotomous relationship or an ‘either-or’ scenario. However, this article is about understanding the polarities of optimism and pessimism and how they conflict with how Christians or the Church engage with new media technologies. At the end of this article, the primary question is, “How ready are you to engage with the digital revolution?”

The world might have its standards when it comes to new media technologies. Does the Church have its standards? If anything, the present pandemic might not only ask us to re-think how effectively we engage with new media technologies; it implores a careful introspection of engaging and using these new forms of technologies.

Christian apologists like C.S Lewis, Neil Postman, Jacques Ellul, and Marshall McLuhan, to more recent authors like Quentin Schulze, have all held views regarding how we as Christians engage with new forms of technology and how we could serve man and ultimately honor God.

I am only another individual trying to understand where my forebears in the faith versus technology discourse have walked.

Re-Engaging Media

The present pandemic has exposed us to the need to delve more into new media technologies. It has exposed the condition and lack of our churches. The pandemic took many organizations by surprise. Most,

including the Church, are scrambling to put in place systems to keep them afloat. Some have encouraged opening up and embracing the new world order – after all, humans were made for technology and technology for humans. We are communicating like never before from our homes comfortably, having training and conferences across borders. The use of ZOOM software jumped 30-fold in April, as the coronavirus pandemic forced millions to work, learn and socialize remotely. At its peak, the firm counted more than 300 million daily participants in virtual meetings, while paying customers have more than tripled. Zoom said it expects sales as high as \$1.8bn in 2020 - roughly double what it forecast in March. The pandemic, in many ways, has fast-tracked what Schmidt and Cohen predicted will happen in the very next ten years; only it has come faster than we thought. Man has become one with technology or is becoming more tech-savvy. Where do we go from here? However, most will be amazed to know that many Christian communications scholars are wary of the dangers of unreflective indulgence in new media technologies.

The call to re-engage media is a call to Christians to prepare institutions and logistics better to engage with the world. We cannot afford to do business as usual. The next generation of missionaries and missionary support groups will be engaged in Churches and on tonline platforms, which is happening at an exponential rate. We cannot relegate to the background the media team or department, whatever you call them. We cannot treat media and new technologies as an appendage of our ministries or tools in a dusty tool-box that is used and tossed away anymore. Like other ministries, we all need to embrace that the tech and media space is a force for change and an essential department in missions. As such, funding and resourcing individuals or the Church in these areas is imperative. This is a call for re-engagement. Are you ready for the digital revolution, Christian leader?

From the editorial pages of USA Today, The Week, and even Wired - which devoted an entire issue to this topic in 2017 - commentators agonize over the societal destabilization caused by the ongoing tech onslaught and grasp at possible solutions: decentralize the Web; create apps to limit our time online or reclaim our lost sleep cycles; improve encryption technology; break up the Big Tech companies or require them to make their algorithms more transparent or more racially sensitive; and so on. Telling-

ly, most of these solutions involve more technology (Lurie, 2019, p., 49). Some dangers need to be noted as we embrace these new technologies and adapt to the “new-normal.”

Reflective media

With the idea of re-engagement out of the way, I will focus on this article’s core - Reflective media. Reflection is an idea that calls for searching heart, soul, and spirit - asking ourselves why and how we engage with these forms of new media technologies. It is a search for authenticity and truth in how we employ new media technologies and, in effect, fellowship with our neighbors. Reflective media reminds us that we engage with these tools not to satisfy our own parochial and self-centered desires, but first to glorify God and serve others. Finishing the task, discipling the nations, or even reaching the lost with the gospel is a far cry from the ultimate purpose of our use of digital media. The fundamental purpose of all forms of communication has been and will forever be GOD and HIM glorified. If the purpose of all we want to achieve with digital tools is not grounded on the foundation of God’s glory, then we have lost it. Are you ready for the digital revolution? What will it take?

It is a call for sacrifice and worship. It is about asking whether technology controls us or we control technology. It is about asking whether technology is another tool to raise smoke-screens and translucent windows to the world. At the same time, we project a counterfeit hologram of our lives to our neighbors. Suppose we have not paused to engage in such a reflective posture to engaging new media technologies. In that case, we have no business in re-engaging in the first place because our desires and aspirations will all be misplaced, or at worst, self-gratifying.

Responsible media

Let me conclude with my third point. Responsible media. The world is changing at a breakneck pace. Technology is impacting everything from governance to commerce. The rate of migration and movement of individuals across the world has never been the same. The Church needs to understand these changes and equip itself for reaching the world. This includes understanding how access to new forms of technologies creates other forms of technological inequalities.

This pandemic has exposed the varying levels of technological inequalities we face across the world. Not only is COVID-19 killing demography that is underprivileged and marginalized, but our churches have also created an elitist click of individuals who believe the world can so easily be solved online. While we get lost in our pseudo-online churches and meeting rooms, millions do not only lack access to the internet; they still lack life necessities. Issues we take for granted, food, clothing, access to quality and affordable health care, and access to clean drinking water, are still challenges. These individuals wake up each day and do not worry about how much bandwidth they have, but where the next meal will come from or water they will drink. Responsibly engaging with media reminds us that the reason we engage with media is not because of the novelty of fast online meetings and fancy apps that can connect us across the globe. The purpose of these apps and technologies about the voiceless and the marginalized - those who will never understand what it means to be online and most likely cannot have any form of church service because they have been cut off from the rest of the online world. Proverbs 31:8-9 admonishes us with these words:

“Open your mouth for those with no voice, for the cause of all the dispossessed. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the cause of the poor and needy.”

Responsible media, coupled with **reflective media**, will produce the right frame for **re-engaging media**. God has blessed those of us with access to new technologies because the vast majority out there do not know Christ or have no voice in society. Let us not get lost in the technologies’ novelty to forget the real intention of such power. Let us not get lost in the avalanche of *technique* and forget the essence of authentic fellowship, virtuous communication, and responsibly engaging with media.

We are only ready to partake of the digital banquet’s power, only when we know and understand that the one who set forth the banquet is God himself. We are to find Him and understand how we can glorify Him amidst all the cacophony of innovations being thrown at us. Until we catch that vision, none of us is ready to partake of the digital revolution, and the world will ride over us because its default position is to glorify the God of this age. Are you ready for the digital revolution, Christian?

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THE CHURCHES, MISSION AGENCIES, AND THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS: A TRIANGULAR PARTNERSHIP TO REACH GHANA AND BEYOND FOR CHRIST

David N.A. Kpobi

Introduction

The Christian Church has found a home in Africa. This is the glaring fact of our time. Having heard the Gospel in their languages, Africans have taken it to greater heights and adopted it as an African religion capable of dealing with their existential realities. The advent of the Christian Gospel in Africa beginning in the 15th century was in reality, nothing more than a re-introduction after a break of many centuries. Indeed, Christianity reached North Africa in the very early beginnings of the spread of the Gospel, and Christian Churches had flourished in major north African cities of the time. When the Gospel was reintroduced in the 19th century, it was with much scepticism and hesitation because for many people in the West, it was inconceivable that 'pagan Africa' could be won for Christ. Over the years, the scepticism has proved to be unfounded and the Christian Church has flourished all around sub-Saharan Africa, made possible by many fruitful forms of partnerships which have been mutually beneficial, and which many African churches have come to regard as true expressions of Christian fellowship and cooperation. Undoubtedly, mission partnerships have had their fair share of challenges, usually emanating from factors far beyond the grasp of the partners. It is therefore important to inquire into the future direction of mission partnerships to determine which aspects can reasonably be expected to continue, and those that require restructuring. Even more important is the necessity to forge new forms of partnership to facilitate greater and more enduring outcomes.

In this presentation, we pay attention to partnership and cooperation across three different players in Christian mission, namely, the churches, mission agencies, and theological institutions in Ghana. For the presentation, a church is defined as a body of Christians formed into a worshipping community with an identifiable place and form of worship that

upholds the doctrine of the Trinity (God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). A mission agency is here defined as a Christian organisation established to complement and enhance the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ through varied means and which may or may not be linked to a church. A theological institution refers to an educational facility established for training leaders (academic and professional, lay and ordained) for the work of the churches. The common thread that binds all three is the concentration on propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in fulfillment of the Great Commission. How can these entities join forces to reach various sectors of Ghanaian society and Africa generally which have either not yet been impacted by the Christian gospel or where the gospel is losing its central place in the lives of people?

Rediscovering the local church

The history of many mainline churches in Ghana shows that the first few congregations that were established were soon grouped into the local, district, and regional bodies and eventually into national synods or assemblies. It was a natural progression that ensured good administration and contributed immensely to the cohesion that the churches enjoyed for many years. The process of evangelization and impacting with the gospel was however a task largely undertaken by the local congregation or local Christian community. This was important because the local congregation was the most visible representation of Christ and its zeal or lack of it contributed much to the success or failure of mission work. Unfortunately, many local congregations have lost this all-important character and have become subject to 'instructions' from above which somehow tends to kill initiatives at the local level and deprive such congregations of time and opportunity to develop their local mission. The importance

of the local church must however not be obscured because the relevance of the church is most impactful because of what happens at the local level. It has become necessary for churches that continue to perpetuate structures that diminish the prominence of the local church to reconceptualise their mission and start dreaming new dreams. This is where the development of various forms of partnership becomes necessary between all entities for whom the success of the Christian mission is a priority. These include the three that we are considering, namely, churches, mission agencies, and theological institutions. All three may not be visibly present at every local level but various forms of cooperation are possible, such that each is encouraged to bring its contribution to the table. Many years of experience with church and para-church partnership relationships have shown how easy it is to develop them but also how difficult it is to sustain them with continuing relevance. Mission partnership is a journey of faith and must always include contingency plans to deal with whatever might happen along the way. The partnership may therefore begin at the local level although it may not remain there all the time.

The Biblical Basis

Like any other concept in Christian mission, a partnership must have a clear biblical basis that energises the process and gives it direction and form. There are abundant indications of this in the Old Testament whose fulfillment we find later in the New Testament. Just one example will suffice. The well-known Biblical prophecy spoken by the prophet Joel points to an important activity that would be part of God's salvation plan for humanity.

Afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people

Your sons and daughters will prophesy

The old people will dream dreams

The young people will see visions...

And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Joel 2:28,32)

Here is a clear indication that God had planned the salvation mission well in advance and it was only a matter of time before its implementation would take place. Here also is an indication that God is the owner and source of mission. The concept of *Missio Dei* seeks to emphasise this and to give God his place as

the initiator of mission. It is he who decides when to pour his spirit on all people and it is he who decides what the effect would be (i.e., the prophesying, dreaming, and seeing of visions).

When Joel spoke these words, he was most probably thinking of what all Israelites believed would happen before the 'Day of the Lord' when God would exalt Israel and bring judgment on her enemies. It would be a catastrophic period for the enemies of Israel, but a day of victory and vindication for God's people. In this passage, visions and dreams are indicated as constituting an important step in realizing God's plan, but these should be understood in much broader terms than the normal meaning of these words. It is a prophecy that includes the new enlightenment that God would endow his people to enable them to carry out the mission to which he would call them. Part of this enlightenment is still at work today, enabling us to forge new relationships and partnerships as this paper seeks to propose. I, therefore, have no doubt that what we are doing today (i.e., proposing partnerships and other forms of cooperation is part of the "prophesying, dreaming and visions" promised long ago.

Significantly, this prophecy was quoted by the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, and it was for him a prophecy that had become reality not in the military or triumphalistic understanding of the ancient Israelites but in the sense of God breaking into history "in the fullness of time". As far as Peter was concerned, the future dimension of the prophecy had been exhausted and he and the other disciples were experiencing the dreaming, prophesying, and visions in their time. In other words, Peter was conceptualising mission from a perspective that he had never considered previously. He had acquired a new understanding of salvation that was not based on the efforts and capabilities of human beings, but the enablement of the spirit of the risen Christ (the Holy Spirit). Therefore, when we quote these words today, we must also do so in the spirit of Peter on the Day of Pentecost. Our dreaming, prophesying, and seeing of visions must occur simultaneously with their implementation or possible realization. I, therefore, wish to adopt the words of the crowd on the Day of Pentecost who after hearing Peter's sermon, asked the disciples: "What shall we do?" (Ac.2:37) and to further offer the same answer that Peter gave to the crowd:

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your

sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord will call. (Ac.2:38-39).

Peter directs the crowd on what to do - *'Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus'*

He assures them of what to expect - *'You will receive the Holy Spirit'*

He shows them how broad the promise is - *for you, your children, even those far off*

I refer to this Scripture passage because repentance, or rather the lack of it, appears to be at the heart of the crisis facing the mission of the Church today. Repentance, in its real sense, is about changing directions and adopting new attitudes and postures that will lead to God-inspired action. Such a change of attitude and direction is possible only when the Church begins to accept its proper place in mission by recovering the truth that the Church is not the sender but the one being sent. "*Missio ecclesiae*" (the mission of the church) issues out of the "*Missio Dei*" (God's mission). God sends the institutional church into the world to proclaim the Gospel, but the church may not be the only messenger out there. Other Christian bodies are called to ministry in other ways different from the church's chosen paths and methods. The great truth, repeated over the ages and also in our time, is that the essence of the church's existence (*raison d'être*) is the fact of being sent with a message that is not hers. As David Bosch, the celebrated missiologist has emphasised, the church "exists for the sake of those who are not members of it". (D. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 1991, p.375).

The church exists for those to whom it has been sent and that is a caution to those of us at the forefront of mission to beware of spending too much time and resources on ourselves rather than on those to whom we have been sent. It is also a caution against thinking that being sent by God implies that we have answers and solutions for all challenges on the mission field, a stance which has unfortunately been adopted in not a few cases in mission history. Church and mission are therefore not two different entities but the same thing where Christian worshipping communities, mission agencies, and training institutions consider each other as messengers travelling together with a common objective of keeping afloat as they head to the same landing dock.

What shall we do?

In the light of the foregoing remarks, it is time to consider what options there possibly might be for churches, mission agencies, and theological institutions in their continuing quest for cooperation and relevance. How can churches, mission agencies, and theological institutions give meaning to partnership in mission in these contemporary times? What needs to change? What new things are possible?

As indicated earlier, mission begins with God because he is the source and the initiator but we also need to add that God is also the destination of mission where everything ends. As we acknowledge God's ownership of mission, we must also seek our inspiration from him. Over the years, churches, mission agencies, and training institutions have pursued a compartmentalised model of mission whereby they operated like departments of a company where knowledge of what the other is doing is not considered very important. The existence of mission agencies in many cases had been understood as a means to fill gaps in the church's mission endeavours. In that sense, mission agencies were seen as complementing the church's work by filling missional gaps. It is for that reason that these agencies have often been referred to as para-church organisations with the understanding that they operate on the sidewalks rather than in the mainstream engagements of the church's mission. The reality, however, is that many of these agencies have often pursued much larger objectives and can indeed, be shown to be more in the forefront of activities on the mission field than some local churches. In a similar vein, theological institutions have been generally known to concentrate more on the training and equipping of potential church leaders for work in the field and have, in the process, paid little or no attention to cooperation with other mission stakeholders after the training period. However, since the products of theological institutions do find their way into the services of churches and mission agencies, there is already a link that can foster cooperation in the cause of the Gospel. What has been lacking is a conscious attempt to combine efforts to achieve the common goal of making disciples of all nations. As labourers in the same vineyard of the Lord, these bodies owe it a duty to each other to do away with any prejudices and obstacles that hinder a fuller and deeper experience of God through cooperation and mutual help. This will however not happen without overhauling not only our various structures but also

our thought patterns through a collaborative effort on all sides. When that happens, the partners may, in the process, come to realise that the values they both cherish and the objectives which they pursue are to be found not in one place or the other, but their joint efforts. That is why the new paradigm for mission partnership ought to emphasise co-responsibility and co-ministry where we are mutually and directly involved with each other. It is in that spirit that I proceed to make a few suggestions for our meditation, deliberation, and possible adoption.

The Ecumenical Spirit

The term 'ecumenism' has been used to describe the efforts of different churches to operate in a manner that does not alienate other Christian churches or bodies pursuing the same objective of fulfilling the Great Commission. Such has unfortunately been the case in the history of the Christian church where a stiff adherence to denominational traditions and teachings has been the source of many conflicts and misunderstandings within the Christian family. Ecumenism, therefore, enjoins churches and other Christian bodies to seek the unity of all Christians to witness in unity to the targets of our mission. (David N.A. Kpobi, *Mission in Ghana – The Ecumenical Heritage*, Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2008, 7-12). It has therefore been gratifying that the 20th Century saw the beginning of efforts by the churches to work together despite doctrinal and organisational differences. The same period saw the establishment of mission agencies and fellowships across denominational lines. Since then, many more such trans-denominational endeavours have come into existence and are making some impact on the ongoing mission of the church. It is again gratifying that today, most mission agencies and theological institutions are known to cherish the spirit of ecumenism and are active and willing participants in ecumenical mission programmes. This is an asset to mission cooperation which must continue to be exploited in all positive ways.

Human Resource Utilisation

One of the most enduring forms of partnership between churches and other mission bodies over the years has been the willingness to utilize personnel or other human resources from among us. This has sometimes taken the form of secondment or part-time cooperation in specific areas. Such mutual

engagements have no doubt made a strong impact because the presence of a person from a partnering Christian church or organisation is one of the most visible indications that we are not alone in our attempt to fulfil the Great Commission. It is a loud statement to the world that the fulfilment of Christ's command is so important that we are willing to cross over from the comforts and security of our cultures and environments to cooperate. It is indeed a strong witness to the world about how far we are prepared to go for the sake of the Gospel, and for that reason, no hindrances should be allowed to block this form of partnership. One obvious hindrance to a partnership of this kind is the inflexible administrative and operational structures of many churches which make it difficult, if not impossible, to engage in common activities with non-church organisations over any considerable length of time. Whilst mission agencies are often willing to offer their services to local churches, the opposite is often not the case. This often results from different mission mentalities of the two sides: whereas mission agencies place their general focus on winning souls for the kingdom of God, churches tend to emphasise winning souls for their particular brand of Christianity. It is time to envisage mission undertakings that are conceived, planned, and executed in partnership with various stakeholders and where success is not considered again for any side but the Kingdom of God. For example, a mission organisation, whilst planning a mission outreach, can link up with a theological training institution to benefit from any existing research related to their mission or the religious landscape of the targeted area. The agency may also make contact with one or more local churches for a joint sensitisation or prayerful accompaniment for the task. Such cooperation is likely to produce a more comprehensive outcome than when undertaken by any one party alone. The partners become participants in a common mission, and feel like members of a common household or fellowship (*koinonia*) with a common destiny. They become partners in the same ship (partner-ship). They exemplify the diversity of Christ's extended family working towards the same goal.

Theological Cross-fertilisation

Beginning from the last few decades of the 20th century, new engagements have been emerging between the older theologies of traditional western Christianity and emergent African and other theologies of the southern hemisphere. There is no doubt that this

new engagement has, and continues to produce interesting results for the church's partnership in mission. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience that can be shared through an interaction of some form of exchange of theologians and mission practitioners from other fields. In our time, no discussion on Christian mission partnership can be complete without reference to exposure to African Pentecostal and Charismatic theology and practice, knowing that it has become the most common feature of mainstream Christian mission. Fortunately, many theological institutions have included such studies in their curriculum and are thereby impacting their products who in turn bring such knowledge onto the field. If this trend continues, there is every likelihood that the partnership of churches, mission agencies, and theological institutions would be enhanced. Effective theological formation in Africa must therefore be founded on sound context-sensitive education, and the continent's cultural resources must be employed to evolve curricula relevant to its context. In other words, it is only a contextual theology that does not ignore the African environment and worldview that can be trusted to meaningfully and effectively connect the seminary or theological academy with the mission agency and the local church. In this way, the theological academy can become an avenue for enhancing the theological knowledge of personnel in churches and mission agencies through special seminars, lectures, and conferences. Similarly, theological institutions must make room for church leaders involved in congregational and other forms of ministry as well as personnel of mission agencies to share their knowledge and experiences on the field in the classroom for the benefit of students and lecturers alike. One would also encourage theological training institutions to consider including mission agencies as places for the practical training attachment component of students who pass through their institutions. There can be no doubt that such interactions have so much to contribute to the mission partnership programme.

The church is what it does. This is the clear message that John Power sought to convey with the statement that: "Mission is not so much the work of the Church as the Church at work". The churches and mission organisations must be seen to be working and urging others to work as well because an idle church or mission body is a contradiction in terms. One means of doing this is continuous engagement with each other which can result not only in encouraging one another in our various endeavours, but also in

discovering other areas that our efforts could pursue. In a similar vein, theological institutions can be seen to be making more impact if their researches and wide knowledge do not remain in their notes or on the shelves of libraries but are made available to the churches and other mission bodies active on the field in a manner that is practicable for the propagation of the Gospel.

Trust and Transparency

One of the most common causes of friction and stagnation in partnership relations is the question of trust and transparency which can and do arise in the course of mission partnership relations. This human failing, when not properly handled, can be the cause of much disaffection within the Christian community. It is therefore important that any intended partnership initiatives take proactive steps as befits a Christian family in any such eventuality. New and creative alternatives to how churches and other mission bodies relate to and cooperate are required to reassert the importance of a relational and reconciling understanding of Christian mission within the body of Christ.

Conclusion

Working in partnership is the missional challenge of our time. Work is always lighter and gets more effectively done when it is approached through a joint effort of those involved in it. Churches, mission agencies and theological institutions have a responsibility to collaborate in mission so that, in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, the world may believe that God has sent us (Jn.17:21).

The reality of a Christian mission is that a mission agency may be the outcome of the work of a church, and so also may a church come into existence through the work of a mission agency. Similarly, a theological institution may emerge from one or both of the aforementioned. Mission only gets half done or not at all if we disengage any of the important agents who are also pursuing a similar objective of realising the fulfilment of the Great Commission. A triangular mission partnership of churches, mission agencies, and theological institutions has all the potential for giving birth to other partnerships and I urge the three entities to work towards achieving that objective. In conclusion, it is important to go back to the words of the Apostle Peter when he spoke

to the crowd at Pentecost: "... *the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call*". (Ac. 2:39). A partnership is a process, and what we start today maybe even more for the benefit of our children than for us. It is time to start planning towards this triangular partnership. May the Almighty God, the owner of mission, direct our efforts in this endeavor.

Editor's note: This paper was presented at GEMAFEST in November 2020.

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DIASPORA MISSIONS: A VIABLE MISSION MODEL OF THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE



Ebenezer Aryee

Diaspora is defined as any group of people who are scattered or dispersed from their original homeland.

God has always used the diaspora as an instrument for His global redemptive purpose. From the call of Abraham, through Joseph, Daniel, the Nation of Israel to the scattering of the believers in Jerusalem, the people on the move have been used as vessels to carry God's blessing of salvation to the Nations.

The Bible says in Galatians 3:8 – “Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” God revealed his global redemptive purpose to Abraham in the context of diaspora mission in Genesis chapter 12:1 – The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you”. Abraham had to move from his original homeland to fulfil God’s missionary call on his life.

We also find in the New Testament how some believers of the early church became vessels of taking the gospel to the Nations as a result of dispersion – “Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among the Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. (*Acts 11:19-21*)”

The rapid spread of Christianity in the then Roman Empire was due in part to the diaspora Jewish community spread throughout the empire from Jerusalem to Rome. These diaspora Jews became a catalyst for the Apostle Paul and his missionary band. The Acts of the Apostles shows how Paul and Barnabas ministered to Jews in the synagogues

before sharing the gospel with Gentiles (*Acts chapters 13 & 14*).

Missions means the transmission and confession of faith, and the church is called to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ throughout the whole world – “As the Father sent me, so I send you – John 20:21”. This model of missions with its implications of humble service, up-rootedness, vulnerability and the alienation that comes with being a stranger fits contemporary diaspora model of missions (*Hendrik Kraemer 1957*)

There are three dimensions to diaspora missiology. The first is Internal Missions - (missions through and to the diaspora) – this is where diaspora believers reach out to their cultural groups that are accessible in the nations where they are scattered.

The second is Cross-Cultural Missions - (missions beyond the diaspora, often referred to as reverse mission) – this involves intentional cross-cultural outreach beyond their ethnic groups to the formerly Christian nations of Europe and America.

The third is Common Missions - (missions with the diaspora often referred to as inter-cultural mission.) – this is where diaspora churches partner with indigenous European and American believers and churches to evangelize least-reached people groups.

With an estimated global diaspora population of over 300 million, globalization and migration present the church in the 21st century with an opportunity to fulfil her missionary mandate through the age-old instrument of diaspora mission.

People move and migrate for various reasons. They respond to the movement of capital and resources or their perceptions of opportunities for better living conditions available elsewhere.

It is estimated that there are over 140 million people of African descent living in the diaspora which

includes a new wave of African migrants to Europe and North America on the wings of globalization. In the new African immigrant Christian communities, we find attempts not just to affirm the supremacy of Christ but also their mission agenda within secularizing Western societies as far as Christian presence is concerned. **When mobilized, this vast army will provide a pool of resource for prayer, finance and workers to advance the completion of the Great Commission.**

According to Dr Enson Lwesya, the Church in Africa should intentionally train Christians to go abroad with a mission mindset. He adds that training members of the church to become missionaries of God begins with appreciating the philosophy of the church as a missionary community and the ministry of all believers.¹

According to Dr Lwesya, the basic foundation of such a philosophy is allowing the believer to know they have God-given gifts and that God rejoices in the careers they pursue. Therefore, every career, job, business, hobby, and life becomes an arena where God's grace interfaces with the needs of the community, with the believer as the point of contact.

He continues that God's providence is actively at work in the Diaspora and that majority of Africans only realize, after the fact that God controls their migrations. However, being aware that they drifted under the hand of God's sovereignty is not enough. He maintains the African Christian must be helped to understand that they are found in the diaspora for a purpose. They are like Esther in the ancient Diaspora of Israel – the unlikely person who saved people from calamity. They are like Daniel who served the purposes of God with integrity in a generation that enjoyed serving itself.

The present realities in most access-restricted nations demand new ways of doing things. Dr Lwesya concludes that churches across Africa should be influenced to deliberately set up activities to inform, train and commission their members going abroad as bi-vocational missionaries, or tentmakers.

Diaspora mission like the incarnational model is the mission model of the past, present and future. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever. Amen

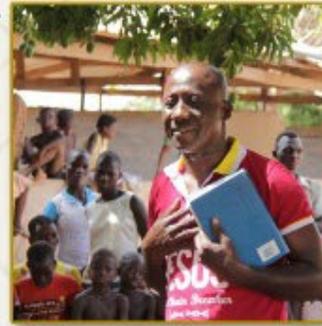
Ebenezer Aryee was born in Ghana and now lives in the UK where he and six others planted Good Shepherd church in July 2007 in a deprived community to bring transformation through hope in Jesus Christ. He has a passion for mission and discipleship and is committed to inspiring and mentoring young people for mission and has led teams of young people on short term mission to Africa. Ebenezer has ministered in several countries in Africa and the Middle East helping to build teams for mission mobilisation. He currently serves on the leadership team of Simply Mobilising International in Europe and is a board member of Pioneers UK. He has a Masters degree in Missional Leadership and is a strong advocate of cross-cultural and intercultural mission. Ebenezer is the founder and director of African Diaspora Mission Network which aims at mobilising Africans in the diaspora for cross cultural mission and to partner with the church in Africa to advance God's global redemptive purpose. He is married to Celia and they have two daughters Elsa 17 and Selma 15.

¹ Dr Enson Lwesya, Associate Professor of Intercultural Leadership Studies, All Nations Theological Seminary



GLOBAL MISSIONS Resource Centre

Rev. Emmanuel Kwabena Mustapha, the Executive Director of Global Missions Resource Centre – Yendi, formal missionary of North Eastern mission field of Ghana Baptist Convention and the founder of North-Eastern Christian Academy. Rev. Emmanuel Kwabena Mustapha is married to Mrs. Felicia Akua Agyeiwaa Mustapha with four Adorable female squad.



Who is Global Mission?

Global Missions is a christian organization known globally, its main 4 primary focus are:

1. Church planting: we identify a community where we share the gospel, and when the people accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Personal Savior and need a church. That is where Global Missions Resource Centre comes in to plant the church irrespective of the denomination they prefer to be.

2. Leadership Training: training for the leaders in the various churches that is planted and support/sponsor those qualified to enroll in seminary.

3. Infrastructure development: Like Church Building, Benches, Motorbikes and more

4. And Social Ministry:

Like Medical outreach, More than net (hanging of mosquito nets in the various villages), Boreholes, support to the farmers by using the Tractor to farm for them, SEWING SCHOOL: Women resource centre, where 24 young girls are enrolled to learn a trade such as Sewing and Hairdressing, and to be giving free sewing machine to start a business of their own when they complete ,all of this for free.



Over the past 14years, we have planted 1600 churches within yendi and across west Africa. Our new Vision is to plant 2000 churches,Train 2000 Pastors,Build 2000 Church Buildings,Buy 2000 Drums,Buy 10,000 Benches and 8000 Bibles by the year 2029 which was launched on the 10th February, 2019.

By the help of our partnership with Baptist General Association (BGA) have distributed over 91000 mosquito nets within YENDI districts and its environment ,And also we the help of our partnership with Cross 4 Mercy and YENDI hospital we have been able to build a modern intensive Care Unit (ICU) and supply the hospital with Equipment and assist them on free medications, operations over the past 4years.



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- BRINGING SAINTS TO THE FULLNESS OF STATURE IN CHRIST
- ACTIVATING PROPHETIC MINISTRIES
- MISSION MOBILIZATION, TRAINING AND SENDING

STRATEGY:

- EVANGELIZE
- ESTABLISH
- EQUIP
- ENGAGE
- EXTEND



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