

## Chapter 7

### The People for World Missions

#### LESSON OBJECTIVE

It is important to understand that:

- Churches and missionary agencies work together, not compete with or ignore each other
- Church members of all age groups should be involved in missions
- The great commission is given to ALL of Christ's disciples
- In this spiritual war, all hands on deck are needed
- The tasks of all the involved are of equal importance and each group needs training
- Different missionary agencies execute different tasks and serve different people
- There is a great need for partnership between the different Kingdom ministries

#### LESSON OUTLINE

Topics we discuss in this lesson are:

- Introduction of the Key-Players
- The Solution for Divisiveness

#### LESSON CONTENTS

In the last paragraph of chapter 6 we looked into the aspect of senders and sent ones, but more can be said about them. This chapter is about us as individuals and local churches, about clergy and lay-people. It is about young and old, and about church members who love Jesus above all else and want to occupy themselves with the great commission. It is about partnership between churches and missions within the Body of Christ.

## *Introduction of the Key-Players*

The idea that completing W.E. is a task for pastors is unbiblical. The great commission was never given to a few but to *all* of Christ's disciples. That includes us, whether we like it or not; whether it hinders our interests, careers and reputations or not. And, besides, without well-motivated church members, finishing the task is an illusion.

IT IS WAR. This is not the time to sit and relax until the Lord comes back, but to actively prepare the way for Him by bringing the gospel of the Kingdom to the uttermost parts of the earth.<sup>185</sup> In making disciples we will encounter opposition that may cost some of us our lives. It is a time for all hands on deck, if we want to see all people-groups reached. Not all can go to the field as long-term cross-cultural missionaries, but they can serve as senders!

There are six key-players in the missionary sending process<sup>186</sup>: the church congregation, the senders, the sent-ones, the welcomers, the mobilisers and the missionary-sending agencies.

### *The Church Congregation*

The local church plays a basic and essential role in W.E. It contributes prayer, manpower and finances for missions. Dynamic teamwork between congregations of believers and mission agencies -or any other group that supports the sent-ones- is needed, as they seek to fulfil the great commission.

### *The Senders*

If you are not a missionary or one in preparation, then become a sender. By doing so you can enable people who otherwise would not be able to fulfil their calling. You will be rewarded the same way as the missionary.<sup>187</sup> That is great, but not as easy as it seems: you have

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185 Matt. 24:14

186 Winter, Tullis & Imboden, e-mail article, 1997, The Process of Mobilization

187 1 Sam. 30:24

to learn how to do a good job. You may not need Bible school training, but a good sender has learned what his ministry entails. Let me give you some ideas to get started.

The *first* thing I mentioned earlier is: *Be Informed*. How? Get to know a cross-cultural missionary. If one is on furlough, invite him or her for a meal. Interview them about how they met the Lord, got their missionary vocation, were trained, where they travelled, what organization they work with, which language they had to learn, etc. If you cannot find one, correspond with one on the field. Ask him to send you his prayer- or newsletter, promise to pray for him and stick to your promise. Ask their mission agency about its activities. This increases your understanding and widens your missions-horizon.

Ask mission agencies for their magazines and read about their mission days, -weekends, -weeks, -conferences, etc. Go there and learn more. You will encounter more organizations, ministries and resources to learn from. The missions world is huge; it takes time and motivation to get to know it. Read relevant books, in connection with your missionary and the country or people group you have an interest in, etc. Possibilities are endless.

The *second* thing I mentioned is: Pray. Why second and not first? Because intelligent prayer is well informed, and knows *how*, for *whom*, *when* and *what* to pray. Prayer changes situations and persons. Even better than praying yourself, is to gather people regularly to pray for missionaries, countries, unreached people-groups, etc. King David had 30 strong men around him.<sup>188</sup> Why not build a group of 30 prayer warriors around each missionary? Let them commit to pray for their missionary daily. No missionary with that kind of help will be easily defeated!

A *third* thing to do is *Support Practically*. This can take many forms, e.g. create a *missionary support group* in your church, call meetings in which prayer is central and practical help issues can be discussed. Delegate occurring tasks to the members: financial matters,

newsletters, prayer coordination, etc. Pirollo writes that in a war for every front soldier *nine* others are required to support him.<sup>189</sup> He writes about moral, logistic, financial, prayer, communication, and re-entry support. Missionaries need encouragement, help with purchase and shipping of items, they like phone calls, e-mails and apps. When they come back they have needs to. Ask how you can help.

*Last but not least: Financial Support.* By becoming informed, by praying and getting involved in practical ways, the needs of missionaries become so clear, that the motivated sender may become a financial supporter as well. Missionaries have the same needs as all other people. Without help in these, he has too many issues to concentrate well on the ministry for which he went out. Costs of ministry can vary, so ask your missionary what his needs are. Some are not supposed to speak about their needs, but most are allowed to honestly answer these questions!

### *The Sent-Ones*

Sent-ones should *seek guidance*. Two things need to be in order first: a living relationship with the Lord Jesus and a heart-attitude of obedience. Without these you miss the instruments to appropriately navigate your way through life. Here are some ways through which the Lord usually leads His children:

- A Christian book;
- Prophecy in your church – to be tested by you and the leadership
- Your own quiet time: reading the Bible and praying
- Certain circumstances and even seeming failures
- Practical confirmations, e.g. receiving funds or invitations
- Experiencing inner peace about a decision
- One of His children, used by the Lord to speak into your life
- A dream – be careful, test it and ask the Lord's confirmation
- The quiet voice of the Holy Spirit speaking into your heart.

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189 Pirollo, 1991, Preface (Dutch edition)

There are two winds that try to blow us off track: the first is our fantasy or wishful thinking; the second is Satan. We should ask the Lord for discernment of spirits.<sup>190</sup> Mumford's book is very helpful here.<sup>191</sup>

The *last* important aspect for cross-cultural missionaries is training. One out of six missionaries leaves the field before or at the end of his first term. One reason is lack of good training. Study the topic of missionary attrition.<sup>192</sup>

It is not hard to design an impressive curriculum for future missionaries, but is what we teach relevant for their future task? Missionary students should be rooted in God's word, able to evangelize, make disciples who also make disciples themselves and establish churches. Whoever wants to be as "successful" as Paul: use his life and ministerial ethos as example, maybe even disregarding traditions or habits from the past!<sup>193</sup>

Missionaries must know how to defend their faith, when speaking with people who think differently, and must have a thorough knowledge of the religions and philosophies whose adherents they seek to reach. In addition, they need ample knowledge of the receptor-culture and -language. They cannot afford less than in-depth training.

Training in practical skills is a must also. Often countries are not accessible for missionaries and they can get visa only on the basis of their skills. Apart from that, many workers from the Global South had to leave their fields, when promises of support were not kept. How smart is it then when you have learned to support yourself through e.g. car mechanics, construction, agriculture, health care, teaching, chicken-or fish-farming, etc. Even Paul often worked a secular job as tentmaker!<sup>194</sup>

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190 1 Cor. 12:10

191 Mumford, *Take Another Look at Guidance*, 1975

192 Taylor, ed., *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition*, 1997. The book was discussed in EMQ, vol. 34 no. 2, pp. 226, 227

193 I here recommend my book (see Bibliography) Van 't Slot, 2015a:45-96

194 E.g. Acts 18:2; 1 Thess. 2:9

## *Welcomers & Mobilisers*

Every believer should be involved in world missions in one way or another. With today's massive influx of immigrants to our countries, the field is now in our backyard. Those who reach out to internationals in their own country are called *welcomers*. Of vital importance also, are the *mobilisers*. Whether working in a local church, city, region or a whole country, mobilisers channel resources, training and vision for world missions to the church. To improperly appreciate and support the mobiliser's role is to seriously hinder the other three functions (namely of the senders, sent-ones and welcomers).

### *Missionary-sending Agencies*<sup>195</sup>

There are different types of missionary-sending agencies. They have different purposes, different ways of working and focus on different ministry aspects. As a consequence, they need people of different gifting. Not every agency accepts just any worker and workers need to find out in what agency they would function best. Below, I briefly reflect on Winter's article as a guideline for matching workers and agencies.

#### 1. *Standard Missions*

These are agencies that send out their workers to anywhere and let them do anything needed. They major though in evangelism and church planting. These agencies are usually the older ones, either denominational or interdenominational. Examples are WEC and SIM. They have a wide scope: they evangelize the unreached, minister to human needs, disciple believers into churches and equip churches to fulfil Christ's commission. Because their range of activities is wide, they run the risk to lose vision and focus. In church-mission relationships interdependency should be developed.

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<sup>195</sup> Winter, ed., 'Six Spheres of Mission Overseas', *Mission Frontiers*, March/April 1998:16-24 & 40-45, my summary

## 2. *Service Missions*

These agencies give technical support to other agencies and national churches. Examples are MAF, GRN, WBT and others. They usually have an attitude of service to the people, by ministering to felt needs and cultural identification. They are professionals in their specific expertise e.g. bible translators. Because the emphasis is on serving other agencies, ties with churches are sometimes rather weak. Also, there is sometimes the tendency to become more business-oriented than missions-oriented.

## 3. *Relief and Development Missions*

They deal with the physical needs of people on the field, with or without relationships to other agencies. Examples: World Vision, World Concern, Food for the Hungry and Samaritans Purse. They usually partner well with churches and agencies, because they don't want to care for physical needs only, but for the whole person. Their frustration sometimes is ministry in areas where the gospel is not welcome, resulting in ministry to physical needs only.

## 4. *Short-Term (ST) Missions*

People go, using ST to see what it is like, learn about culture, exercise evangelism and teamwork, mature and are possibly 'caught' for world missions. Examples are OM and YWAM. They don't necessarily depend on previous or existing work. ST teams often stimulate local people to steps of faith and action, and many lasting mission works were initiated through their efforts. A disadvantage is that members are often immature and not that well-disciplined and committed.

## 5. *Indigenous Missions*

Another name could be: 'Native Missionary Missions'. They help national believers who speak the language, and so try not to 'waste' money on -relatively- expensive American missionaries who need much time to culturally adjust and are in fact permanently handicapped by their foreignness. Examples: Gospel for Asia, Christian Aid Mission and Partners International. This type of

mission depends on local believers. They *send money, not missionaries*. Traditional agencies rather seek to raise up workers *who do not need foreign funds*, but will be supported by their own people.

There are heavy disadvantages: financially supporting nationals can create unhealthy dependency. Financial accountability is difficult. Local workers see their paid ministry as a job, fulfilling the vision of others, instead of owning the vision themselves. The Bible says that a prophet is not honored in his own country, and therefore does not necessarily find more openness for the gospel in his own nation, than a Westerner would. It seems that for 'indigenous missions' economic expediency is more important than biblical soundness.

#### 6. *Congregational-Direct Missions (CDM's)*

These (usually charismatic mega-)churches send and minister according to their specific ethos, unbound by regulations of others. They like to set up missionary programs without wanting to depend on any of the other above-mentioned ministry-types. Yes, there is a high degree of ownership and personal involvement, and many people can be involved this way. But CDM's lack much of the expertise that mission organizations have. Short-term organizations are often blamed for amateurism, but CDM's are sometimes even worse.

#### *The Solution for Divisiveness*

The sad opinion has for long been prevalent that every type of mission organization, as well as churches, can do the job without the other. There has been competition and envy. Mission directors, church leaders and their personnel have sometimes been stronger in building *their own* little empires, than shaping the Kingdom of God on earth. Subsequently *their* honor became more important than God's.

Other mistakes have been made too; people were hurt and resources, efforts and time were wasted because 'the wheel was reinvented' over and over. People that might have been reached with the gospel are lost, as a consequence. The results of world missions were smaller than could have been, if only organizations and churches had seen

their common enemy and worked *together* for the sake of establishing the Kingdom instead of *theirs*.

### *Strategic Kingdom Partnerships*

Phil Butler, former leader of *Interdev* (at present VisionSynergy) says: 'If we try to effectively witness for Christ, which makes more sense, that God's people work *together* to share Christ's love or, that they go their separate ways and each do their own thing? The scriptures, world-wide business experience, a growing trend world-wide toward collaboration, and just ordinary common sense all point in the same direction: partnership. Leading mission agencies and churches are no longer exploring *whether* to partner, but *how* to partner more effectively'.<sup>196</sup> Partnership is about inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness, and co-operation is better than competition!

Mission history of 1989 to 1999 shows excellent examples of such partnerships. In Mongolia there were some 3 believers in 1989. An Interdev-organized partnership consisted 7 years later of 35 agencies, representing over 150 workers, and resulted in the planting of 30 Mongol churches that meet weekly, consisting of about 3,500 baptized believers.<sup>197</sup> No single church or organization might have reached such results on its own.

After the Iron Curtain fell in 1989, a partnership started in Albania in 1991, called the Albanian Encouragement Project, in which 70+ member agencies co-operated. Churches were planted all over Albania. Missionaries were sent, until there was 1 missionary for 6,000 Albanians: comparatively more than anywhere else in Eastern Europe. Many institutions were established, e.g. a school for missionary kids, a Bible school and a Bible society. Only co-operative efforts made these results possible.<sup>198</sup>

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196 Butler, *The Power of Partnership*, 1998:5,6

197 Addicott, W.E., *LCWE magazine*, #76, October 1996:10

198 *Ibid*, Tunehag, p. 7

## *World-Wide*

Areas of the world with an established or emerging church make up roughly 59% of the world's population. Unreached areas that do not have a nationally led, viable, reproducing Church make up the rest, 41%, or about 3.1 billion people. Only partnership and unity will bring the solution. But did Jesus not say that already?<sup>199</sup>

## *Every 10 People On Earth*

Of every 10 people on earth there are 1 committed follower of Christ, 2 nominal believers, 3 who have heard the gospel but not responded, and 4 who have virtually no access to the gospel. We should prioritize to give them a first chance!<sup>200</sup> Sometimes people say: 'Shouldn't we reach people in our street, city or country first? The need is right on our doorstep!' Of course: our Jerusalems and Judeas should not be neglected, but if we want to extend the Kingdom of God to where it has not yet been preached, we must first look at areas where the gospel is *not even available*. Four out of ten never had *one chance* of hearing the gospel!

## RESEARCH

The videos below give you 2 great motivating messages on missions by Patrick Johnstone:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ud1hUBUrRxA>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkpWA5boa\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkpWA5boa_o)

See also: <http://visionsynergy.net/about-us/>

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<sup>199</sup> John 17:21-23

<sup>200</sup> Compare [www.joshua.net](http://www.joshua.net)

## MISCELLANEOUS

*Recommended books:* See Bibliography

*Recommended articles*

Evangelical Missions Quarterly, Vol. 34 no. 2, pp. 226, 227 (review of 'Too valuable to Lose')

Addicott, Tunehag, 'W.E.', in LCWE magazine, #76, October 1996:10,7

Winter, Tullis & Imboden, e-mail article, 1997, The Process of Mobilization

Winter, ed., 'Six Spheres of Mission Overseas', in Mission Frontiers, March/April 1998:16-24 & 40-45

*Assignments*

- If you have worked with a missionary organization, describe which of the six mentioned categories it best fits in and why. If you never worked with one, describe the same of one you know of
- Write an analysis about your church, of who are the sent ones and of the sending structures (e.g. senders, home front committees) around them. Mention no names; 'missionary A' is sufficient. Include mobilisers and welcomers, if you find them in your church
- Interview a missionary and find out about his or her sending-structure: church and/or agency? Helped by e.g. a home front committee? Salaried or funded by friends? and any other question

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Give five ideas about how to become informed about world missions, as sender or as future missionary
2. Mention ten relevant ideas about what to pray for concerning a befriended cross-cultural missionary couple on the field
3. What prayer strategy did the author propose, to surround missionaries with? Mention the scripture reference too
4. Mention five ways in which you can support a missionary, apart from prayer
5. Mention five ways in which you can receive the Lord's guidance, preferably the ones you have experienced yourself
6. Mention the seven most important topics in which future missionaries should be trained, as well as three possible practical skills
7. Which are, according to Winter, the key-players in the sending procedure?
8. Which six different types of ministry were mentioned in this chapter?
9. What problem in missions-practice has caused overlap in effort and waste of resources?
10. What needs to be developed to preclude this from happening again?