

## **Asian Mission: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow**

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### PROLEGOMENA

At first glance, this Asian Society of Missiology conference's theme *Asian Mission: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* seems parochial and less Kingdom mindset. However, for those familiar with Asian mindset that is paradoxically exclusive and yet inclusive, then this theme is very fascinating to be studied and to be explored.

The exclusiveness of Asian's mindset has been demonstrated as Asian Christians embraced personal faith in Christ. The exclusiveness of this personal faith in Christ has made them willingly to suffer persecution and sometime physical death. However, they are not deterred by that persecution. Like the apostle Paul, they could sing that song of victory over death "*O death where is thy victory? O death where is thy sting?*" (I Corinthians 15:55, RSV). That song of victory of Christ's resurrection over death has conveyed a hope of glory in the life of Asian churches everywhere.<sup>2</sup> Asian Christians on the other hand are so naturally implanted with a genetic of cultural inclusiveness and willingly to live in a peaceful co-existence with their neighbors in so far as their faith in Christ is not to be compromised.<sup>3</sup> Thus, using

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<sup>2</sup>It is true that in every parts of Asia, Christians have endured persecution for the sake of Christ. It is owing to their holding fast of their faith in Christ.

<sup>3</sup>For instance, Taiping literatures have demonstrated a highly contextualized nature of Christian

Cartesian set theory one would say that Asians understanding of Christian faith is confined in the framework of both center set and fuzzy set perspectives.<sup>4</sup>

#### ASIAN MISSION YESTERDAY

As mentioned above, this conference's theme should not be understood in a parochial mindset but rather the Kingdom mindset in its *sensus plenior*. A new approach to look at history of mission on Asia should be called for. Asia should not be understood only in a geographical or ethnic perspective. Furthermore, Asia is not a continent of its own; it is part of *oikumene*, a territorial object of God's mission. As such, Asian Christians are members of the universal Church of Jesus Christ that was planted by God, in Asia. The Church's mission therefore, is part of Christ's mission in this world, implemented by Asians in connection with Christians from other parts of the world.<sup>5</sup>

#### A New Look at the History of Christian World Mission in Asia

Asians have participated in Christian missions by working together with Western missionaries since the beginning of the Western mission activities in Asia. However, by the end of the Second World War, as Asian countries gained their national independence, Asian Christians played a more proactive role in doing missions in their own country.

The concept that Asians have participated in Christian missions by working together with Western missionaries since the beginning of Western mission activities

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faith. For further study on this subject, see, David Hartono, "Assessing the Taiping Doctrine of God From the Contextualization Perspective" in *Paul's Contextual Christology As A Preferred Model For Creedal Churches* (unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation), Pasadena: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1996, pp.29-42.

<sup>4</sup> See, Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture (New York: Orbis, 1988) 240*. Note Kraft indebtedness to Paul Hiebert's initial use of set theory.

<sup>5</sup> 16th century British poet John Donne was right when he said: "The church is Catholic, universal, so are all her actions; all that she does belong to all." (In Meditation XVII).

in Asia deserves further reflection. First, as Western missionaries set foot in Asia, they employed the help of native Asians regardless of whether those Asians had already professed faith in Christ. It was – and is – a divine mystery that God can use a person who does not yet believe to be His instrument, such as Cyrus. In Isaiah 45:1 it says: “This is what the Lord says to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor.” (NIV) Likewise, God used Asians working together with Western missionaries in spreading the Gospel in Asia, even though they were not aware of it.

As churches of Jesus Christ in Asia have come of age, they have become eager, energetic, creative, and a critically realistic entity to engage in world mission. Asian Christians and Christians from other parts of the globe firmly believe that missionary movement has its root in the Triune God. They inherited the spirit of *Missio Dei* and *Missio Christi*, as doing mission has become an integral part of their spiritual DNA. The 1952 Willigen Conference has correctly stated that God’s mission into this world is “*out of the depth of His love for us, the Father has sent forth His own beloved Son to reconcile all things to Himself, that we and all men might, through the Spirit, be made one in Him the father, in that perfect love which is the very nature of God.*”<sup>6</sup>

This statement from the Willigen Conference has given a practical missional exegesis of Galatians 3:28 “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*” (NIV translation). Asian Christians and Christians from other parts of the world are doing missions in togetherness and oneness. This praxis should be reflected in the new approach of writing mission history. In this Conference, Asian mission historians should explore and discuss the possibility of this new epistemological approach to mission historiography. It is

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<sup>6</sup> See, Norman Goodall, ed., *Mission Under the Cross* (London:IMC, 1953) 189. See also, Peter P. J. Beyerhaus, “The Principles of Apostolic Mission in Our Eschatological World” in Timothy K. Park ed., *New Global Partnership for World Mission* (South Pasadena: Institute for Asian Mission, 2004) 35-54. Emphasis is mine.

important to look at mission history in its totality of the Kingdom concept inside out and outside in; furthermore, it might defuse a seemingly perpetual tension between nationalism and Western missionary work.

### Remembering Things Past With A Positive Attitude

Western missionaries have done many good works in Asia. The primary contribution was of course the propagation of the Gospel of hope and reconciliation of humanity with God in Christ Jesus. In addition, they have given Asian countries a legacy of many positive things, such as introducing the concept of modernization, of democracy, of human rights, that all human beings are created equal, of emancipation, of modern education in the sciences and social sciences, legal constructs and the establishment of schools from primary levels through tertiary levels, health care and the establishment of hospitals, the eradication of feudalistic and superstitious practices, to name but a few in a long list of achievements. Asian Christians should remember these accomplishments.

However, negative excesses in missionaries' works should not be overlooked. The most blatant mistakes were the willingness of some mission agencies to align themselves with colonial governments in order to create short cuts in doing missions. The sending churches on the other hand did not exercise a balancing act of support and social control to their governments through a rigorous exercise of the prophetic function that God had given them. Even worse, some missionaries had an attitude of superiority over the local people.

It should be admitted that it was not easy to do missionary works without blemish. Christians and missionaries were children of their age, confined by their contemporary social value and perception. There were not many Christians who acted like William Wilberforce, who was sensitive to unjust social issues and determined to abolish slave trade through the parliament of the British Empire.

The rise of Asian nationalism prior and after gaining national independence caused them – non Christian Asians to raise criticism towards Christian mission in Asia and connect it in part with Western imperialism. Christian mission was, they said, the extended arm of Western colonial governments/powers in exploiting Asia's rich natural resources. Such policy of conquest was carried out by means of superior military power and gunboat diplomacy.<sup>7</sup> They also unjustly labeled Asian Christians as collaborators of Western colonial power. This incorrect historical perception toward national Christians should be corrected; otherwise, this view would cause national Christians to carry unnecessary historical burdens.

Asian mission historians as they write history of Christian missions in Asia should correct these misconceptions. A fair, positive and respectful attitude should be given to Western missionary works in Asia. Negative excesses in missional praxis should be noted but not magnified. Asian mission historians should research primary documents and write how national Christians had involved and participated from the very first day when Western missionaries arrived in Asia. These new historical epistemological approaches, as supported by historical data would shed light that Western missionaries came to Asia not as undercover agents of Western colonial powers, but as missionaries of love. They came to Asia as an act of obedience toward God's calling. Primary documents such as letters to their families would testify the hardship that they endured, and their love towards the local people. Day one, week one and first month experiences are very important. Indeed, it is important to

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<sup>7</sup> So many European trading companies acted to exploit the colonies and to accumulate great wealth for their own companies and countries. For further discussion, see, Stuart C. Miller, "*Ends and Means: Missionary Justification of Force in Nineteen Century China*". In John King Fairbanks ed., *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press: 1974. 249-282. See also in the same book by Arthur Schlesinger, "*The Missionaries Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism*". John C. Gregory, "*British Intervention Against the Taiping Rebellion*", *Journal of Asian Studies*, 1959, XIX: 11-24. By the same author, "*British Missionary Reaction to the Taiping Movement in China*." *Journal of Religious History*, 1962-63, 2: 204-218.

highlight the friendships and relations between Western missionaries and nationals from day one based on primary sources, such as diaries. Non-Christian readers would be interested to read how Chinese workers who accompanied Robert Morrison, or Edwin Stevens<sup>8</sup> for example, made missional contributions. Two examples of mission history mentioned above have no description on the contribution of Asian workers at day one of their arrival in Asia continent (regardless they were or they were not Christians at the time when they worked for the missionaries).<sup>9</sup>

Asian mission historians of different nationalities should also extensively write about the involvement of national Christians in exhibiting patriotism and nationalism in national independence movements and any help and protection they received from their Western missionary friends. This too will shed positive light on the past history of Christian world mission.<sup>10</sup>

#### ASIAN MISSION TODAY

Any one who studies Asian mission today should take heed of the caution that was given by Georg Wilhelm Friederich Hegel in his book *Philosophy of History: Rulers, state men, nations are won to be emphatically commended to the teaching which experience and history teach is this – that peoples and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduce from it.*<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For a short bios of Robert Morrison and Edwin Stephens see, Gerald H. Anderson ed. *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> First hand materials could be collected from missionaries correspondents to their family members or their sending agencies if such letters still available. See for example, *A History of Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977).

<sup>9</sup> In Indonesia, many Christians such as Sam Ratulangi, Johannes Leimena, T.B. Simatupang to name but a few had participated in national political and national independence movements. Thus, Christians did not absence in their nation construct. Indonesian Communion of Churches' Research and Study department has published series of church history, *Benih yang Tumbuh (A Growing seed)*, Eds. Frank Cooley and Fridolin Ukur.

<sup>11</sup>Friederich Hegel in, *The Philosophy of History* In the Great Books of the Western World

Hegel's words of historical assessment should be taken seriously. There are past mistakes that have seemingly been repeated. What are they? What are the ramifications of those mistakes for the missional practice today? A few things should be mentioned and deserve further study in this conference and beyond it, even though it is not the task of this conference to tackle those issues in detail.

Asian missiologists will feel God's "heartbeat" for Asian mission tomorrow as they reread the history of the praxis of Christian world missions and critically assess some of the fundamental issues of Asian mission today. In this conference, as Asian Society of Missiology feels "God's heart beat", may attempt to draw a "Road Map" of Asian mission tomorrow. This would be counted as her unique contribution to Christian world missions.

### Resetting The Christian Image: A Necessary Step

After 9/11 terrorists attacked the New York twin towers, the US and many other countries declared war on terrorism. Certainly, this kind of asymmetrical warfare against worldwide terrorism is neither an easy task, nor a short-term military operation. But it is a winnable campaign; the *raison d'être* is pretty simple: the world population at large has disdain towards terrorist actions that show no respect to human rights and to human lives, as well as towards terrorists' total disregard for ethical norms, which constitute crimes against humanity. It logically follows that the US and Great Britain especially would enjoy great popularity in the world. However, in reality, we find their levels of popularity to be contrary to these expectations. What went wrong? There are many explanations pertaining to this question. Some political commentators and analysts suggest that US had no coherent policy in Iraq and no clear reasons to go to war with Iraq since Iraq posed no threat to US national security. Alan Greenspan the former chairman of the Federal Reserved Board even said: "I am

saddened that it is politically inconvenient to acknowledge what every one knows: the Iraq war is largely about oil.”<sup>12</sup>

In the past few weeks, there have been many media reports of the excessive use of force by US private security companies that caused the death of 17 civilians in September 2007. A few days later, Australian private security company were reported of having used excessive force, and that they caused the deaths of two Iraqi-Armenian civilian ladies. This further turned the world’s opinion of sympathy and support for Western alliance forces in Iraq to disdain and disgust.<sup>13</sup> Ted Rall, in his article, “Scapegoating Blackwater”, wrote: ”Checkpoint shootings of innocent civilians became a daily occurrence, due to rules of engagement that placed more value upon the lives of American troops than those of the Iraqis they were supposedly there to liberate.”<sup>14</sup>

Resetting Christians’ image is important, because in many parts of the world, the US has been incorrectly identified as a Christian nation. In today’s missions, the implication is that words proclaimed should match deeds. In another words, doing mission requires oneness of the message proclaimed and a Christ-like character of the presenters of the Gospel<sup>15</sup>.

### Beware of Any Form of Syncretism in Missional Praxis

The misperception of the Christian image has been further solidified by the support of many Christians in response to United States’ role in the conflict in

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<sup>12</sup> See, Alan Greenspan’s book, *The Age of Turbulence: Adventure in a New World* (New York: Penguin Press, 2007) 463.

<sup>13</sup> See the comment by Nayan Chanda, in *Bound Together: How Traders, Preachers, Adventurers and Warriors Shaped Globalization* (New Havens: Yale University Press, 2007) 319.

<sup>14</sup> The article was published in *Yahoo.com* on October 9, 2007. See, also *USAToday.com* editorial comment October 17, 2007 “*Our view on prisoners interrogation: Arrogance on torture policy undermines US interest*. See also, news report on October 12, 2007 at *Yahoo.com* in which it has been reported what retired general Ricardo Sanchez has said in his remark of war in Iraq: “There is no question that America is living a nightmare with no end in sight”.

<sup>15</sup> For further study on the related issues, see, Bruce Nicholls (ed.), *In Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmann, 1985).

Afghanistan, Iraq and other parts of the Middle East.<sup>16</sup> Many evangelical Christians and Evangelical churches have involved in an on going debate about war and politics.<sup>17</sup> Christians should not take side in this kind of political debate. Rather, they should exercise their prophetic role and voice any injustices that occur in the world arena.

However, no single Christian (even if they live in countries in which Christians constitute a minority) should remain silent and indifferent toward any acts of terrorism or suppression of human rights. Christians should stand firm on their birthright - especially the right to believe and worship God, and the right to change their religious beliefs. Christians from other parts of the world through a worldwide network of interconnectedness, should support each other as they face religious oppression without always resorting to depend on the power of the US Congress; because this approach will backfire.

The Bible describes Christians as the light of the world who worship the Prince of Peace (Matthew 5:14), who should therefore hold firm to the conviction that the “Christian faith is above all political entities.”<sup>18</sup> In this kind of situation, Asian missiologists ought to develop a mission theology that is free from religious

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<sup>16</sup> It has been reported that President George Bush today urged members of Congress to reject a congressional non-binding resolution in recognizing the killings of Armenians in 1915 as "genocide". See, Yahoo.com, October 10,2007. He warns that it would damage US relations with Turkey and said: "This resolution is not the right response to these historic mass killings." This comment left an impression that he is applying a double standard.

<sup>17</sup> Two prominent US political analysts Pat Buchanan a conservative wrote an article “Where are the Christians?” July 18, 2006. He was questioning Christians’ concerned and responded to wars. The other columnist is a liberal Ted Rall he wrote a thought provoking article on August 2, 2006 “Kill ‘em all, let God sort us out”. Germany Prime Minister Ms. Angela Merkel on September 9,2006 in her comments to the press corp. in Berlin unleashed her criticism on US government establishing secret prisons to detain members of the Al Qaida terrorists. She said that creating secret detention center does not match her understanding of how a nation which up hold law and order should behave. No any government that upholds law and order should resort to the philosophy of “the end justifies the means.” Read also Colin Powell comments on Iraq war in on line media, CNN.Com, December 18, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> See, Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 44, p. 2

syncretism and a politico-ideological syncretism as well. This politico-ideological syncretism, if not checked, will easily corner Christians in a parochial mindset, and unconsciously to become a political instrument. Should that happen, the light of the world will not shine its light before people, and the salt of the world would “*lost its taste and no longer good for any thing except to be thrown out and trodden underfoot*” (Matthew 5:13).

### Creating a Mega Church or Asserting Mega Influence: On the Issue of Spread and Penetration

In the earliest days, Christian mission as recorded in the Book of Acts never did not align itself with the powerful elite classes in societies, nor did it seek to gain favor from people inside the center of power. The church leaders never shied away from or fled from persecution (“*Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name*” Acts 5:41). The first century Christians spread the Gospel from the powerless or weak position and came to depend solely on God’s grace; their strength came from the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.<sup>19</sup>

In Acts 2:41, it is recorded that after Peter’s preaching, there were about three thousand souls who believed in Jesus. In Acts 4:4 it says that the number of the men alone were five thousand who believed in Jesus. And yet the early church did not have any intention to establish a mega church, or mega churches in Jerusalem or Judea or Samaria. What is really interesting is that God allowed the church members as it grew larger in numbers to experience persecution and be scattered throughout the region of Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1)(except the apostles). This fact is interesting to

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<sup>19</sup> For a good discussion on the issue of doing mission from a position of weakness, see, Paul Jeong, “Mission from a Position of Weakness”, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Pasadena: Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Inter-Cultural Study, 2004). See also, David Cho, “Let Us Restore the Way of Apostolic Mission in the Mission of 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, in *Tracing Apostolic Way of Mission* (Pasadena: IAM, 2007) 25-26.

be pondered: (1) As leaders of the early church, the apostles set a good example by choosing to stay in Jerusalem and prepare themselves to face a new round of challenges; (2) as it was recorded in The Book of Acts, those believers that chose to take refuge to other regions did not betray their newfound faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior; and (3) those Christians, as they became scattered and started to live in another regions, continued displaying their identity as the salt and light of the world. They started to penetrate every region. Therefore it is not wrong to conclude that God's intended strategy for missional praxis is: spread and penetrate! Ontologically, this strategy is to be understood as action and movement oriented; this strategy is effective and difficult to be suppressed by the enemy of the Kingdom.

## ASIAN MISSION TOMORROW

For sure there will be a lot of new nuances that the church has not encountered before as she is doing missions tomorrow. The information technology (IT) revolution has caused many changes.<sup>20</sup> The pace of change is rapid, and at many times the church has felt out of sync with those changes. In order to be better prepared for doing mission tomorrow, here in Bangkok, Asian missiologists have gathered together for the first time under Asian Society of Missiology forum to grapple with issues in the areas of the history of Christian missions, mission theology, and leadership emergence and development and in mission strategy.

### The Dawn of "Universal Civilization" and the Challenge of Globalization

Samuel P. Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* introduced the term "universal civilization." He asserts that the term universal civilization was not meant to describe that all societies share certain things in common including the moral codes. Nor does it mean that what

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<sup>20</sup> IT or information technology, is "the study, design, development, implementation, support or management of computer-based, information system, particularly software applications and computer hardware." Quoted from *Wikipedia*.

civilized societies had some things in common to distinguish themselves from primitive societies. Rather, it construes that values and codes that are held by the Western civilization are also held by other civilizations. It should be noted that he came short to say that the converse is also true.<sup>21</sup> However, he posits that universal civilization could be understood as Davos culture. It is an interesting postulation.

What is Davos culture? Samuel Huntington elaborates on this term in his Keynote address at the Colorado College's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary as follows:

In recent years, however, many people have argued that we are seeing the emergence of a universal worldwide culture. They may have various things in mind. First, global culture can refer to a set of economic, social and political ideas, assumptions, and values now widely held among elites throughout the world. This is what I have called the Davos Culture, after the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum that brings together hundreds of government officials, bankers, businessmen, politicians, academics, intellectuals, and journalists from all over the world. ...Davos people control virtually all-international institutions, many of the world's governments, and the bulk of the world's economic and military capabilities. The Davos Culture hence is tremendously important.<sup>22</sup>

Indeed, Davos Culture is playing a more and more important role in world affairs. Its deep influences can be felt in many segments of life and in many parts of the world through the great force of globalization. Where are the fingerprints of Christian churches in shaping this new cultural phenomenon? "Spread and penetrate"

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<sup>21</sup> See, Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997) 56-57.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "Cultures in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Conflict and Convergences", Keynote Address at the Colorado College's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium, February 4, 1999.

is the essence of the salt and the light of the world. A question should be asked, how Christian churches should strategize and mobilize its members, who are qualified to be invited as members of this world forum, and to present biblical views in any intellectual discussion that they would attend at Davos?

In light of this concern, Christian churches should redefine what mission is in an era of universal civilization and globalization. What is the goal of mission? What are Christian strategies in missions in the era of globalization?

### Mission Redefined: In search of the Contextual Nature of Mission

The Biblical understanding of mission at one time had been narrowly defined. It was an activity to spread the Gospel in the land where its inhabitants had never heard the Gospel before. Stephen Neil, for instance, postulated that “if every thing is mission, nothing is mission.”<sup>23</sup> In this age of information technology, there is a need to contextualize the term mission and to search for its contextual nature so that Christian churches might be able to map out mission strategies contextually. In fact, Christian churches should shelve Stephen Neils’ definition of mission and reset a definition of mission that is contrary to his: every thing is mission. In the IT era, the term mission could be interchangeable with term between outreach/evangelism. Should this postulation be affirmed, then, Charles Van Engen’s definition of mission becomes very helpful. He said:

Mission is the people of God intentionally crossing barriers from church to nonchurch, faith to non-faith, to proclaim by word and deed the coming of the kingdom of God’s in Jesus Christ; this task is achieved by means of the church participation in God’s mission of reconciling people to God, to themselves, to each other, and to the world, and gathering them into the church through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit with a view

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<sup>23</sup> See, Stephen Neil, *Creative Tension* (London: Edinburgh House, 1959) 81.

to the transformation of the world as a sign of the kingdom in Jesus Christ.<sup>24</sup>

Van Engen's definition of mission is fluid, it is an all-encompassing and Christ-centered. Therefore, bear this definition of mission in mind, one will detect that almost all mission concepts of the past such as: Christian presence, social action and medical mission, inter-religious dialogue, mission and mass media, music and literature, and churchless Christianity<sup>25</sup> - to name but a few examples, contained an interchangeable of the concept of mission and outreach/evangelism. All of those concepts have strong evangelistic undertones.

After 9/11, it seemed that Christian churches needed to hold a candid dialogue with people of other faiths and ideologies with decorum and in a spirit of mutual respect. The bottom line in this inter-religious dialog is to gain a consensus that, citizens of every nations (especially those nations that have signed on the *United Nation Declaration of Universal Human Rights* treatise) should have their human rights and religious freedom be guaranteed.<sup>26</sup> Therefore it is desirable that evangelical churches should develop relevant contextualized mission theology within the

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<sup>24</sup> See, Charles Van Engen, *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996) 26.

<sup>25</sup> See, Ralph D. Winter, "The Largest New Factor in Mission Strategy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", in Timothy K. Park ed., *New Global Partnership*, p. 65-71.

<sup>26</sup> See, *United Nation Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 18 which says: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." Adopted and proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948, and readopted at the Fiftieth of its anniversary by the United Nation General Assembly, 10 December 1998. For further reading on the issues of inter-religious dialog, see, David Hartono, "Mission from Two-third World to Post Christianity", in *Tracing the Apostolic Way of Mission*, 119-131.

frameworks of “universal civilization” and globalization and not to be confined only within the scope of “traditional” cultural studies.

### East and West, North and South are Facing Globalization

Every year at the annual meeting as the heads of state meet at the G-8 Plus, there are always people demonstrating in protest of the meeting out of a fierce opposition on the issue of globalization.

What is globalization? *Yale Globalization Online* gives this definition:

Globalization is a relatively new term used to describe a very old process. It is a historical process that began with our human ancestors moving out of Africa to spread all over the globe. In the millennia that have followed, distance has been largely overcome and human-made barriers lowered or removed to facilitate the exchange of goods and ideas. Propelled by the desire to improve one's life and helped along by technology, both the interconnectedness and interdependence have grown. This increasing integration of the world or 'globalization' has enriched life but also created new problems.<sup>27</sup>

There is no doubt that the catchword for tomorrow is globalization. It is a process of integration, interconnectedness and interdependency in almost every aspect of human life, with a desire to improve the quality of life itself. It is a historical process that involved people from many facets of life. Nayan Chanda classified these people as: traders, preachers, adventurers and warriors.<sup>28</sup> Indeed mission is an activity with an impact on globalization. Although the ontological nature of globalization as a result of mission activities is different from globalization as perceived by Davos culture,

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<sup>27</sup> See, Yale Global Online, “What is globalization?”

<sup>28</sup> See, Nayan Chanda, *Bound Together: How Traders, Preachers, Adventurers and Warriors Shaped Globalization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). It is an interesting book to read, missiologists can learn a lot from this book that was written around a center theme globalization.

there are common elements in these two kinds of globalizations, namely interconnectedness and interdependence. Churches in the East-West and North-South regions that differ in terms of culture, geography, sociology and civilization should adapt to new forms of interconnectedness and interdependence.

### Interconnectedness and Interdependence in Mission Praxis

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main”. (John Donne, Meditation XII).

John Donne’s words in Meditation XII convey an idea of interconnectedness and interdependence. The Scripture presents to us an even more profoundly perceived reality of interconnectedness and interdependence with Jesus Christ as the center of all. He said: “I am the vine and you are the branches” (John 15:5, NIV); “From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Ephesians 4:16, NIV); “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ” Galatians 3:28, NIV). Christian churches should creatively and contextually apply these biblical teachings of interconnectedness and interdependence in current and future missions.

Interconnectedness in mission praxis is not simply to be understood as mission organizations and churches in all parts of the world daily sharing news, concerns and prayer requests through the internet. It should go beyond this. Interconnectedness means that churches should understand that in the era of globalization, they should mobilize and connect every Christian in every vocation with different areas expertise in order to connect their actions in world mission. Simply put it, every thing is mission in its sensus plenior. Business in Mission movements is a good example. This is how Business in Mission Movements stated their mission statement:

Experts estimate that somewhere between 40,000 to 60,000 people around the world that would identify themselves as full time missionary.

The business as mission movement wouldn't hold as much potential as it does today had it not been for the missionaries that have laid the foundation over the past half century. Their sweat, blood and tears are a big part of the shoulders up which we stand today.

Today, the increase in "closed access countries" and the cries for food and basic economic development have led to accelerated shift in attention from traditional methods to the business as mission movement.<sup>29</sup>

However, business as missions should not exclusively be seen as an occidental mission, rather, it should also have a spirit of interconnectedness and interdependence in global mission. It should intentionally include Christian business people from every part of the world.

The stretch of the horizon goes beyond business, and extends to areas of academia and leadership as well. It is time that the Asian Society of Missiology should produce seminal essays in mission. Some of those essays are written in a manner of collective and comprehensive endeavors of missiologists and academia from multifaceted disciplines such as macroeconomics, finance, international law, political science, sociology, agriculture, Asian studies, and the list goes on, in order to tackle important issues in the era of globalization in which a lone scholar may not be adequate in tackling such complex assignment. Asian Society of Missiology could form a multi-disciplinary academic committee that would function as think tank similar to CSIS (Center for Strategic International Study) and play a role as consultant to churches in Asia and beyond.

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<sup>29</sup> Quoted from, Business as Mission Network, 10-16-07.

Missional Praxis in the Era of Globalization: Zero Sum and Non-zero Sum model<sup>30</sup>

The Lord Jesus' Great Commission stresses peace oriented action ministries.<sup>31</sup> It stresses that we go (*Matthew, Mark*), preach (*Mark*), make disciples of all nations (*Matthew*), baptizing disciples (*Matthew*), teaching them to obey every things that Jesus had commanded them (*Matthew*). In the end, as Paul the apostle said, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (*Philippians 2: 10-11*). This verse reflexes the nature of mission in a zero sum total. However, as the Prince of Peace, Jesus never intended that the Great Commission should be carried out by means of violent force and brutal actions. Rather, he wanted His believers and followers to be like Him, to carry out the Great Commission/mission with the spirit of love and humility (and not with the Middle-Age crusaders' mentality).

Mission is not a sheer concern with numbers, but a proclamation of the good news of God's salvation to all humanity in Christ; its concerns of mission is not to build mega churches but mega-influence in community and nation-building in an era of globalization. In this regard Kenneth Cragg's perception deserves some reflection. He said: But our immediate concern is the nature of the retrieval that the history imposes on Christianity today. Let it be clear that that the retrieval is not territorial. Christianity is not a territorial expression. The retrieval is spiritual. It aims not to have the map more Christian but Christ more widely known.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> The terms Zero sum and Non-Zero sum are borrowed from the term used by John Von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern two great mathematicians.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *Matthew 28: 18-20, Mark 16: 15.*

<sup>32</sup> See, Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., revised and enlarged (New York: Orbis, 1985) 230.

The retrieval is indeed spiritual, but it is a numerical increase of believers and expanding Christ's influence as well. In an era of globalization, one cannot talk the term territory in a traditional usage.

However, there are many missional praxis that would be categorized in terms of non-zero sum. Christian churches could join hands with people of other faith and ideologies in as far as it is pragmatically applicable: to combat poverty, child sex slaves, the pornography industry at large, drug usage and trafficking in communities, natural disaster relief efforts, educational ministry on global warming issues, and to foster a harmonious society.

The road ahead for doing mission tomorrow is indeed exciting. Every believer and follower of Christ Jesus is a missionary. God sends us into this world as the salt of the world and as the light of the world, to bring the message of hope and reconciliation with God in Christ in this world of despair. There are many people who live and die in the false hope that they themselves do not realize. It is our duty to present them with The True Light.

May God bless us, and bless this very first meeting of Asian Society of Missiology. May this conference become a channel of blessings to the world in days to come.

