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Christianity Facing a Third Era and a Third Millennium

James Veitch

Keywords: Armageddon, crisis, renewal, Charismatic, change, church, technology, revolution, orthodoxy

INTRODUCTION

We had been waiting a long time for the death of the church, steeling ourselves against its crash, watching from the pulpit the greying of the pews, projecting from the weekly attendance figures and offerings, the breathing space salvaged from the bulldozer's blade. We gather statistics and our computer uses them to shape a graph tracing for us the decline and fall of a dream. 'Eighteenth century philosophers had a very simple explanation for the gradual weakening of belief; religious zeal they said, was bound to die down as enlightenment and freedom spread. It is tiresome that the facts do not fit this theory at all.'¹

The decline Tocqueville saw in the 1830s, pales in comparison to the decline in church attendance and membership plotted today on computers in church offices, in many different countries in the Western world. While the facts he was referring to may not fit the theory explaining the decline he had in mind, there is by now information at hand which will help us understand what is happening to the Christianity with which we are so familiar in the Western world.

'Sunday morning in the sanctuaries of Christendom is as other-worldly as ever, from prelude to invocation, to anthems, hymns, prayers, to benediction, to sevenfold amens, to the dress of the clergy, to the shape of the building and its furniture—it is straight out of the middle ages or even earlier. In spite of the choir's latest hairstyles, the minister's quotations from contemporary literature, and the organists' dissonant crashes, all of which exhibit an overlay of modernity.'² But in spite of all this and the death threat, Christianity survives and in some places is doing quite well. But there is a puzzle: while less and less people attend church, not only adults but also children and teenagers, traditional forms of Christianity seem to blossom—with accents on unchangeable ancient beliefs, non-negotiable moral norms and excitable enthusiasms.

¹ 1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, p. 364.

² 2. Mary Jean Irion, *From the Ashes of Christianity* (adapted).

'Conservation' Christianity takes many forms and expressions but its commitment to audaciously proclaiming its Good News (an ancient story) as if this had happened today, and as if the end of history was scheduled for noon next Friday, is gradually taking centre-stage in church life. Other forms and expressions of Christianity pale at the strength and commitment of those who report that they are driven by daily experiences of the presence of the risen Christ. While one part of the church—Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox—slowly ebbs away, there is another part which thrives on its eloquence, is certain of a social blueprint, and is spreading its influence at key political junctions.

THE YEAR 2000

The 1990s may well be an incredible decade for the Christian and religious world. 'The time is at hand' so to speak, when attention shifts to the year 2000, and the Christian imagination fuelled by pictures of the end of history, seeks to drive new revivals. The millennium change has a fascination for Christians whose eschatology is shaped and moulded by the visions of the Book of Revelation. The turbulent times forecast by John of Patmos, surround us, giving birth to ever-increasing ripples of certainty. Just as the book of Daniel in the Hebrew Bible helped focus the attention of the historical Jesus on an apocalyptic vision of the end of time, so the word pictures of the book of Revelation appear to drive Christians living in the latter part of the twentieth century to renew their solidarity with the end of time vision of Jesus and the early church. 'In turbulent times ...' writes one major researcher, 'in times of great change people will head for two extremes: fundamentalism and personal spiritual experience.'³

The fundamentalist offers a return to clear-cut values based on non-negotiable religious principles, whereas the new age movement offers a living, feeling, experience of spirituality,⁴ and the opportunity to put a person in touch with their inner selves. The religious growth is at both ends of the spectrum, and into this spread of religious advocacies comes the 'megamagnetic' power of the year 2000. As if mesmerised by the power of this date churches throughout the world have launched a decade of evangelism.

To ensure effective evangelism, some churches have begun study programmes to probe the beliefs people say they hold and to devise ways of moving them into the church and putting their bottoms on to pews. Before the year 2000 dawns, Christianity will strive to capture the attention of people, in case 'Jesus returns again'. The church will not die, God is not dead at least in this decade. 'Science will not master all our problems'⁵—the expected revival of the 1990s is, Harvey Cox notes, 'a global phenomenon which has to do with the unravelling of modernity'.⁶

A WORLD IN CRISIS

There are others apart from Christians using the year 2000 as an 'Armageddon'. For, as Christians turn their enthusiasm to capturing souls for the kingdom before the end, others have turned to this world in an effort to avoid major disasters which put the life of the

³ 3. James Naisbitt, *Megatrends 2000*, p. 256.

⁴ 4. Ibid.

⁵ 5. Harvey Cox, *Publishers' Weekly*, 7 October 1988, p. 96.

⁶ 6. Ibid.

world at risk. And well they should!⁷ The atmosphere clouded by our combustible refuse is changing the contours of the antarctic ice cap, raising the level of the planet's oceans and threatening to submerge inhabited Pacific Atolls.⁸ A small rise will force back shorelines in New Zealand and Australia and, according to a map of the United Kingdom for the year 2050, will turn the English University City of Cambridge into a seaside resort. Global warming through the greenhouse effect poses a major environmental threat. Over the next 40 years temperatures could rise to a mean 3 degrees centigrade above normal, the poles may well become 7 degrees centigrade warmer, and as this occurs it will be impacted throughout the world on shorelines and low lying areas, reshaping the inhabited land of our planet. A second problem relates to the depletion of the ozone layer which will increasingly let in the harmful rays of the sun and gradually force humans inside from the beach, seeking shelter in summer as well as winter.

Our cities are cluttered with colossal wastage, much of it unable to be recycled. We rip down forests around the world to facilitate our lust for paper, and often the cost of recycled paper means that only the committed will choose to buy the more expensive product.

It is a well known statistic, but worth repeating here: the people of developed nations who represent less than a third of the world's population consume three-quarters of available food resources—leaving two-thirds to live off one-quarter! The United States, which represents 6% of the world's population, consumes 33% of the world's energy and minerals.

There are more than forty unresolved violent conflicts of one type or another at present being waged. War is endemic in parts of Asia, Africa, Central and South America, and the Middle East. Since 1990, in the wake of new political alignments, conflict has flared in a number of countries in Eastern Europe. For decades, some would say centuries, Northern Ireland has been in a constant state of conflict.

We exploit and pollute nature, the air we breathe, the land we use, and the water around us, and we exploit each other. It is possible that in one decade the world's population, now at five billion could nearly double, the increase coming from the Third World. Within a very short period of time, an overpopulated planet could be seriously at risk. We humans need the resources of the planet in order to survive; the earth does not need human life in order to live. Often it appears that this piece of information is not considered by those in power.

In the Pacific, far away from seats of power, out of sight and out of mind, and with total and cynical disregard for the protests of Pacific people, France continues an underground nuclear testing programme. Not just one atoll but two are now used. We are told it is safe but Pacific people watch and wait, suspecting that nuclear explosions, whether above or under the ground, can never finally be labelled safe. Every woman wearing a bikini immortalises above-ground nuclear testing which blew Bikini, a Micronesian island, apart in the late forties and fifties. If it is so safe to use the Pacific to experiment on nuclear weapons why not explode them underground in France!

The burning of toxic substances used in chemical warfare and the disposal of deadly nerve gases on Johnson Island, 1,100 kilometres south of Hawaii in spite of protests, is another example of what happens in the waters of the Pacific which cover a third of the globe.

⁷ 7. Norman Myers (ed.), *The Gaia Atlas of Planet Management*, 1985—provides an excellent review of the problems and what is being done about these matters.

⁸ 8. Tuvalu is the island community under threat. The 7,000 inhabitants may have to eventually relocate elsewhere in the Pacific.

The Pacific is the last part of the planet to be exploited for its natural resources. That exploitation has begun on an immense scale. Drift-net fishing, a method used by Asian fishermen in the Pacific, acts as a wall of death for all sea life in its path and some of the walls, according to Greenpeace surveillance, stretch for 50 to 60 kilometres, scooping up the entire future livelihood and staple diet of Pacific peoples.

True, Pacific protests at the United Nations have been particularly successful and a ban on such fishing methods is spreading, but such worldwide threats to sea resources will continue in some form or another.

It is seldom now the church that highlights such matters and which protests. It is more likely to be Greenpeace and one of its allies. Together with their allies in politics, the Greenies sound a secular prophetic note: we humans are killing our planet and placing its future at risk in a way which no other generation has done.

The children of our time are amongst the most endangered species of the universe:

If present trends continue more than one hundred million youngsters will die, most of them unnecessarily of illness or malnutrition, or both, during the 1990s. Every day over forty thousand children under five die of preventable causes; twenty-three million children under the age of five are, at this moment, severely malnourished! Add another one hundred and fifty million to that figure for children who are only malnourished. More than thirty million children live in the streets of our world cities. More than one hundred million of school age, 60% who are girls, will never attend school.⁹

Of course there is hope, as world-wide agencies work to reduce the damage, but when the figures for displacements caused by civil wars, drought, famine and acute poverty are added, too many children die across our world.

If all the present trends continue, the world up to the year 2000 will be more crowded, more polluted, far less stable ecologically, and far more vulnerable to disruption. Serious stresses involving population resources and environment are clearly visible ahead. Despite material output the world and its people will be poorer in many ways then, than they are today.¹⁰

It is little wonder that Christianity expressing itself through the church struggles to maintain its influence and its credibility. It's not that we do not have the capacity to care, and the political influence to challenge and change ideas, policies and structures, which need to be changed. It appears that we have lost our nerve to change both the church and the world we believe is God's creation. We have lost the biblical vision of a planet nurtured and cared for, so that future generations can live on it with peace and understanding and the interdependence that seeks to eradicate the poverty and oppression—the ills which destroy the lives and hopes of so many today.

Alongside a plan on the part of Christians drawn to the magnetic power of the year 2000 to evangelize the people of our planet, and to 'present Jesus with His two thousandth birthday present', according to American Southern Baptists, there is this keenness and commitment on the part of the secular conservationists and their allies, to change the way we live on this planet to ensure a future by the year 2000, for all. But with each step forward, time keeps running out. The challenges facing the world are enormous, the threats to life have grown to such an extent that they not only threaten to overcome our best efforts to initiate and bring about change, but they threaten the hopefulness we must bring to any effort to successfully initiate change.

⁹ 9. *Time* magazine, No. 40, 10 October 1990, pp. 41–43, quotations slightly adapted.

¹⁰ 10. 'The Global 2000 Report to the President', 1982.

THE CHURCH FACES ITS OWN CRISIS

This decade may have been set aside as the Decade of Evangelism, and the Decade of Hope for the global village, but unless Christianity renews its inner Spirit, and recovers a vision of the world, the church faces an uncertain future.

The decade of the 'sixties was high on rhetoric and new ideas. The 'seventies saw a retreat from change; the 'eighties saw an increasingly introspective church anxious about its future, and its influence on public thinking gradually disengaged from its public role. Since the 'sixties the church has encountered competitors and has increasingly been unable to cope with the challenges these competitors represent. There has been a parting of the ways as the church has stepped back from its interest and involvement in public matters and social affairs.

In spite of vigorous aid programmes, and a verbal commitment to social justice and the integrity of creation, international Christian bodies and national leaderships have not managed to motivate and mobilize concerns and commitments at the local church level. When it comes to initiating change or promoting peace, we become divided in our parishes. A-religious groups and movements have been able to develop more successful programmes for action on human rights and social justice (Amnesty International), as well as conservation (The Green Movement). The church is left with its gospel, its religious message and the formidable task of challenging and convincing people that this is a coherent, credible, humanly authentic world view, which is relevant to the plight of our world—that it is in fact the truth about God, our world, and us humans.

But unless I am mistaken, we are not doing too well on this level—in spite of evangelistic campaigns and the world-wide renewal associated with the charismatic movement. As if to force the issue with ourselves we have initiated a Decade of Evangelism to stem the tide, and set the year 2000 as a watershed by which time we hope to realize the vision of a world 'won over and dedicated to Christ'. The trouble is that with all this idealism we are in danger of over-estimating the *relevance* of our gospel to the people of today's world.

The issues facing the Christian community are much more serious and cut deeper into the heart of Christian belief than either the Decade of Evangelism or the Charismatic Movement will resolve. For the first time in our history since the formative period of origins (30–325 AD) we are faced with competitors who continually undermine our world-view and spike its relevance. We have to face the painful reality that what Christians believe as the truth, is but one possibility amongst many, and what we articulate as the gospel is not easily understood in today's world.

THE THIRD ERA: THREE CRUCIAL OBSERVATIONS¹¹

In the Western world (and it is extending to other parts of the world at a different pace) we are experiencing the massive changes at all levels of our psyche and life which are associated with a change in *era*. This is not a generational or decade change but a major shift of earthquake proportions which is bringing down institutions, destroying patterns of life long valued and cherished, and throwing up the ugliness of violence at all levels—not only where Western political and financial interests are being threatened and

¹¹ 11. For sources on a new era see Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (1973/1979) and *The Third Wave* (1981); John Hick, *The Second Christianity* (1983); John Hick, (ed.), *The Myth of God Incarnate* (1977); John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Response to the Transcendent* (1989); J.A.T. Robinson, 'Religion in the Third Wave', in James Veitch (ed.), *Faith in an Age of Turmoil* (1990), pp. 3–14; H. Küng and D. Tracy, *Paradigm Change in Theology* (1990).

challenged in other parts of the world, but within our own societies where the structures we have put in place, which have oppressed and disadvantaged many, and have served the interests of an educated social, economic and political elite, are now being critically challenged and threatened.

The second observation is as follows: institutionally the Church belongs to the structures which are most under threat in this early period of the era change. In spite of the Reformation and more recent attempts at reform, the Church is an early medieval institution which has survived largely because of its foresight in being ready and able to sanction and absorb political developments, statecraft and nationhood. But as our Western political institutions began to waver in the earthquakes so does the Church. In the past the Church has survived by playing the role of political broker: sanctioning and approving wars (this in spite of uneven and stormy relationships with governments) giving divine sanction to our Western way of life as the life for all humankind, serving as the unifying force within societies, and often being a party to stifling opposition.

All this is coming to an end. The state lays down the parameters for religious freedom and the Church is obliged to operate within such parameters. Its power and influence has been domesticated by the political apparatus it continues to bless and seeks to serve. Its own fate is tied to the fate of the political institutions by which it is controlled and to which it has become subservient. The Church is a first era institution, reformed constantly by tinkering with the institutional forms during the second era—to avoid its demise—but now in danger of falling with the institutions of the second era.

The third observation is this: all the principal beliefs in Christianity were formed by the seven ecumenical councils which met between Nicaea I in 325 and Nicaea II in 787. These beliefs were formulated and moulded by the debates which took place in the cultural and political ethos of that first era. Theologians of the time considered they had reached a consensus on primary matters of belief (often at the expense of destroying and silencing any opposition). So their decisions became the mind of the Church. What they did was to draw up the ideas which they thought were in the minds of the New Testament writers and express these in the language and thought forms, understandable to their peers and to, they hoped, non-Christians in their world. They formulated these doctrines with the mission of the church in view. The mind of the New Testament writers was in effect *re-created* by the theologians, bishops and clergy of the ecumenical councils. They did for their time what we should do for ours; but their way of thinking is not ours.

INDICATORS OF AN ERA CHANGE

There are a number of indicators which document major steps in the era shift. The first is the explosion by the United States Air Force of the atomic bomb, first over Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, and then three days later over Nagasaki. The war with Japan came to an abrupt conclusion. The reasons for the use of this bomb were widely debated at the time by scientists as well as politicians, but it was used on military advice, in spite of the Japanese attempt through diplomatic channels to bring about a cessation of war. On the day the bomb exploded, however, the world entered a new phase in its history. Whenever we now go to war it is always with the threat of events moving beyond control and a nuclear conflict erupting, destroying not only parts of our natural world but also leaving deep scars on the psyche of both victor and vanquished. Although conventional weapons have been developed and have nearly the same capacity as their nuclear counterparts, it is the use of nuclear weapons which carries the greater threat to the continued existence of human life.

We will never rid ourselves, however, of nuclear technology, nuclear waste, the weapons and the memory of how these are made. We shall have to find ways of disposing of the waste and become increasingly sophisticated in the way we treat nuclear energy, if people are to survive on this planet.

6 August 1945 is a date firmly engraved in the psyche of our world history; it is the day humanity came of age in the Garden of Eden, and began to eat the fruit of the orchard. There can be no going back, for this date marks the shift from the second to the third era.

We can document other signs of the shift. The technology which helped produce the nuclear age promoted the creation of the 'information society'.¹² By 1956, in the midst of an accelerated period of prosperity and productivity in America, a symbolic milestone was reached which 'heralded the end of the era: for the first time white collar managerial and clerical workers outnumbered blue collar workers.' 'For the first time in history most Americans worked with information rather than with the production of goods.'¹³ The next year that information society was globalized with the launch of the Sputnik satellite. The years 1956 and 1957 ended the industrial age and the second era, and created for us what Daniel Bell has called 'the post-industrial society'. The turning point in 1956 and 1957 in America impacted on the world in subsequent years creating a global village on the one hand, and on the other beginnings of colossal unemployment, consequential upheaval and the disintegration of social patterns. Employment is a commodity of industrial society, but the sophisticated computer technology of the information society needs less hands to make it work: information society needs less people to drive it. Unemployment will grow in this transition, causing enormous misery, frustration and anger until the state is prepared to recognize this and rearrange the distribution of wealth.

It is important to be reminded of the powerful impact one of the major symbols of this new era makes upon us. Television has transformed what we think, the values we have, and the hopes we strive to realize. It is not just entertainment, it is information. The visual picture is more influential in the shaping of our ideas and attitudes than the printed word. Governments realize this and use the television network to influence and mould public opinion. Television is already dominating domestic life, and the technology exists to allow it to dominate our lives further; early next century the TV wrist watch is expected to appear at commercially viable prices!

Along with energy and technology the silicone chip revolution and the information society with its satellite networks, there are the scientific discoveries which have changed our knowledge and understanding of our place as humans in the universe and in the cosmos.

THE THREE ERAS: THE RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS

The first era was dominated by the Ptolemaic understanding of the earth as the centre of the universe and by Aristotelian physics and cosmology. Christian thought was fitted into this (pre-scientific) world. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was a spectacular scientific revolution which ushered in the second era. The condemnation in 1633 by the Vatican, of Galileo's re-mapping of the universe, marked the beginning of this era. Although the subsequent second era picture of the universe as a giant machine created by God was never entirely satisfactory to theologian and scientist alike, it gripped the popular imagination. The Bible and theological ideals could be easily adapted to fit

¹² 12. Naisbitt, op. cit., p. 11.

¹³ 13. Naisbitt.

into this model. But the revolution continued with a succession of investigators and thinkers and the map of reality was subject to yet more changes. It was not only in the world of ideas that changes were rampant, the French revolution showed what enormous power the people possessed, when they sought their freedom. The church allied with the political establishment was swept aside in that avalanche.

The scientific revolution of this century, from Einstein to Stephen Hawking, shows every indication of a radical re-mapping of the cosmos. We have come to live in a vastly different sort of world from all our predecessors and for the first time we are becoming aware that we are standing alone in a new world and must re-create patterns of meaning and new structures and institutions to support and service our needs and further our vision of the world we wish to build.

This far into the third era there are few signs that people are uninterested in religion whereas there are strong indications of disaffection with church-going and traditional Christianity. It appears there is a strong positive interest in spirituality as people search for meaning and quality in human life and for ways in which the full potential of their humanity can be realized and evil overcome with good. Sadly this is being sought outside the church in specialized social groups which serve as support for individuals and families, enable people to care for each other, and express their interest as well as their compassion and support for others. It is also being expressed in leisure pursuits which enforce a kinship with nature.

While the church is less attended, the search for a viable and meaningful way of life continues. It is especially the people born since the mid-1940s who have increasingly sought their spiritual fulfilment outside the church—and their children appear less likely than any before to attend church. I believe this is because they are moulded by the world of the third era and from where they stand they do not see value in the church or traditional Christianity. It is not a third era institution that talks about the meaning of life in the context of the world which is slowly being replaced; it is a first era institution which insists that its first era theology and thinking about Jesus is ‘good news’ for third era people.

THE PROBLEMS

Christianity and all the world religions originated and developed beliefs, rituals and structures in the Ptolemaic-Aristotelian era and these were canonized into orthodoxy. The second era saw paradigm shifts as Christian thinkers sought to keep in touch with the developing scientific knowledge of the world and create a better understanding as humans.

But the map of the third era which confronts us is very different from anything else that has gone before and this is our major problem. Our immediate response has been to hold firm to orthodox Ptolemaic beliefs modified over the centuries and to *re-state* and *rethink* these in the language of our contemporaries. But this re-stating and re-thinking is too little, it may be too late, and for many it is totally irrelevant.

The credibility gap is continuing to widen between the world-view enshrined in and perpetuated by the Sunday service (and the building in which it is held) and the world in which we live at other times. We preach as ‘Good News’ religious ideas, convictions and ways of life which have very few connections with the third era in which we all live. A first era faith in a third era world seldom connect, hence the decline in church membership and attendance and the decline in the influence in the position of the church in western society.

To rationalize what has happened the fashionable term secularization is often used. Secularization, we are told, 'is the process in which religious consciousness, activities, and institutions lose social significance (and) ... religion becomes marginal to the operations of the social system (as) the essential functions for the operations of society (pass) ... out of the control of agencies devoted to the supernatural'.¹⁴ Put in another way, with the risk of over-simplification, secularization is a concept used since early in the eighteenth century to describe a world-view which increasingly developed during the second era, replacing the religious world view of the first. The phenomenon it points to simply means people found they could live well and meaningfully without reference to a transcendent God 'out there' as well as the church as the institution bearing witness to this God.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

First, the Church with its wide networks continuing to exist throughout society, its different ways of expressing Christian belief and its variety of worship styles is responsible for the care of people caught up in the era transition. On one level it needs to continue its work ministering to people who understand their lives and their religion in terms of first era beliefs. Many cannot change and prefer to blot the third era out of their minds; the only real world they know is the religious world of the hymn-book and the Bible. They were introduced to this world at some point in their lives and made commitments which have been crucial to their lives so they need to be cared for in terms of first era theology and pastoral care.

Secondly, the Church, especially if it is open about its understanding of what is happening to itself in the early decades of the third era, can give positive support and encouragement to people whose lives are caught up in the enormous changes, and who need the affirmation to work through these changes to develop new forms of being religious and reach new levels of belief. Such people should not be given a diet of first era theology and spirituality but helped to create new and relevant theological directions.

Thirdly, the Church because it has experience of where God's presence has been experienced in different situations and in different ways in the past, knows that it now needs fresh intellectual grounding for religious belief which can be spelt out in third era language and thought forms, and which can interact with and critique the emergent values and ideologies of the third era. All aspects of our theological training tell us that we can break out of our present situation. We know we do not need to be defensive when ideas are no longer useful, our images no longer inform people's imagination, and the theological language we use is not communicating 'Good News'—then it is time to discard the things that prevent us from taking a new and fresh impact on the minds of our contemporaries. But this means two things: recreating the Christian mind and re-founding the Christian community. Only time will tell if either or both are outside our ability in this final decade of the twentieth century. But we do need new wine skins for new wine.¹⁵

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¹⁴ 14. Bryan Wilson, 'Secularisation' in M. Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (1987), Vol. 13. p. 160.

¹⁵ 15. The first of the Reid Lectures at Westminster College, Cambridge given on 1 March 1991 under the general title Re-creating a Christian Mind: The church faces a third millennium in its history.

Paradigm Shifts and Trends in Missions Training—A Call to Servant-Teaching, a Ministry of Humility

Stephen T. Hoke

Keywords: Missiology, training, cross-cultural, contextualisation, urbanisation, pluralism, globalisation, dialogue, church planting, synergism, andragogy, mentoring, technology

‘For every trend there is a counter-trend.’¹ In response to lightning change in our global society, serious questions have been raised as to whether theological and missiological education are ailing. There is widespread recognition that missionary training can no longer remain the same. But the cure must go deeper than a facelift. Bryant L. Myers, director of MARC, Monrovia, California, has said: ‘The most important and enduring challenge to missiological education in the 21st century is the need to recompose and reform itself so it makes sense and supports missions in a pluralistic, multicultural, post-modern world in which the gospel is nowhere at home.’²

Just as the cry of the exploding national churches in the 60s and 70s became ‘We need help training leaders,’ so the critical concern with the rapidly exploding Two-Thirds-World (T-T-W) missions movement today is equipping leaders for the church and missions to reap the harvest from among the nations.

In response to one or a set of problems in education, the workplace, the church, and in missions, several trends are emerging, which arrange themselves at several levels: First, a set of global contextual issues which impact how we do missions; second, a cluster of new developments in areas of specialty which impact how each stakeholder fulfils their responsibility; and third, recent innovations in the field of training itself.

GLOBAL CONTEXTUAL ISSUES/TRENDS

1. Continuing Rapid Urbanization

As the world becomes more urban, the emphasis on preparing missionaries to live and minister in urban settings grows. Internships in urban centres throughout North America provide nearly ideal preparation for incarnational living among the rest of the world’s

¹ 1. Edith Weiner, Plenary address given at 1998 International Conference, San Francisco, June 1, 1998., American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), Alexandria, VA.

² 2. Bryant L. Myers. ‘Missiological Education Through De-Centralized Partnerships’, an address at Missiological Education for the 21st Century, Fuller School of World Mission, Pasadena, Nov. 1992.