THE CHURCH MOVES SOUTH: ELUCIDATION AND IMPLICATION[1]

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The flagship Commission One of the 'Edinburgh 1910' World Missionary Conference was entitled 'Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World'. It was based on a simple binary concept: there was a 'Christian world' which had been fully evangelised and there was a 'Non-Christian' World which was bereft of the gospel. These two 'worlds' were geographically understood: Europe and North America was the 'Christian World' while Asia and Africa formed the 'Non-Christian' World. (It was agreed not to discuss areas like Latin America which did not fit neatly into this binary division.) On this conception, the project of the missionary movement was essentially very simple: 'carrying' the gospel from where it was well established to areas where it was unknown. Beyond the wildest imagination of the delegates was the possibility that within 100 years the geography of Christianity could turn by almost 180 degrees. As Andrew Walls writes,

> By a huge reversal of the position in 1910, the majority of Christians now live in Africa, Asia, Latin America or the Pacific, and ... the proportion is rising. Simultaneously with the retreat from Christianity in the West in the twentieth century went—just as the visionaries of Edinburgh hoped—a massive accession to the Christian faith in the non-Western world. The map of the Christian Church, its demographic and cultural make-up, changed more dramatically during the twentieth century than (probably) in any other since the first.[2]

The stark geographical framework which guided the 1910 Conference is clearly not serviceable today. However, it is abundantly clear that there has been a recession in Christianity in the West while the faith has spread pro-

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1 This article is based on a paper presented at the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society Conference on Mission and Globalisation, Rutherford House, Edinburgh, 6-7 April 2010. The author is grateful for the discussion which took place on that occasion.

2 Andrew F. Walls, 'Commission One and the Church's Transforming Century', in *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now*, ed. by David A. Kerr and Kenneth R. Ross (Oxford: Regnum, 2010), p. 33.

digiously in the great continents of the South. As Philip Jenkins observes, 'The era of Western Christianity has passed within our lifetimes, and the day of Southern Christianity is dawning. The fact of change itself is undeniable: it has happened, and it will continue to happen.'[3] While there are formidable challenges facing the young churches of the South, there is no mistaking the fact that they demonstrate a vitality and a confidence which is almost completely absent in the historic churches of Europe. No wonder that the missionary and ecumenical leader Lesslie Newbigin liked to quote General Simatoupong of Indonesia: 'Of course, the number one question is: can the West be converted?'[4] A further question is what part, if any, the Christian faith of the South will play as an agent of such conversion? There is growing talk today of 'mission in reverse', i.e., to use Edinburgh 1910 language, the gospel is being 'carried' from the South to the West.

MAPPING CHRISTIANITY'S DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATION

Edinburgh 1910's flagship Commission I, chaired by John R. Mott, charged a sub-committee of its members convened by James S. Dennis to prepare a *Statistical Atlas of Christian Missions* which was published as an appendix to the Report of the Commission.[5] It is this volume which prompted the effort to produce a new atlas for the occasion of the centenary of Edinburgh 1910. *The Statistical Atlas* aimed to present a comprehensive picture of the progress of Christian mission worldwide as things stood in the year 1910. The new atlas has the same ambition one hundred years later. There are, however, important changes to be taken into account. Perhaps the biggest change is that it is no longer a matter of red dots marking European and American mission stations in Asia and Africa but rather an attempt to take account of the entire presence of Christian faith on a worldwide basis.

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3 Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 3.

4 Lesslie Newbigin, *A Word in Season: Perspectives on Christian World Mission*(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans & Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1994), p. 66.

5 *Statistical Atlas of Christian Missions: Containing a Directory of Missionary Societies, a Classified Summary of Statistics, an Index of Mission Stations, and a Series of Specially Prepared Maps of Mission Fields. Compiled by Sub-committees of Commission I, 'On Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World,' As an Integral Part of Its Report to the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, June 14–23, 1910* (Edinburgh: World Missionary Conference, 1910).

The methodology which created the atlas was to take the statistics of the World Christian Database, compiled and tested over many years by David Barrett, Todd Johnson and their team, and to project these on to maps. They have used both Government census statistics and the membership records of churches to build an authoritative enumeration of Christian profession. Drawing on the statistics of the World Christian Database, the atlas offers a variety of maps, tables, charts and graphs to indicate key trends. However, being an atlas its primary offering is the maps.[6]

The principal finding of the Atlas is that, whereas in 1910 it was a religion largely concentrated in Europe and the Americas with much of the rest of the world being regarded as a 'mission field', by 2010 it is strikingly evident that Christianity enjoys widespread allegiance and has become a dynamic force in much of Africa and parts of Asia. The atlas plots this dramatic change. Each 2010 map is accompanied by an inset which shows the situation which obtained in 1910. The map showing the relative strength of Christians by province shows how much the situation has changed certainly in Africa and to some extent in Asia in the course of the past 100 years.

In the case of Africa, the total number of Christians in Africa was just under 12 million in 1910 (9.4% of the population) and that by 2010 the total has risen to almost 500 million (47.9% of the population). Besides continental analysis, the atlas examines each of the 23 United Nations regions. The regional level can show the extent of the change in some areas even more vividly. The UN region of 'Middle Africa', for example,had very few Christians in 1910, whereas by 2010 a majority of the population is professing the Christian faith

Perhaps more surprising is the extent of the growth of Christianity in Asia. Though Christians form a small minority of the population, in the course of 100 years their growth in numbers has been very significant. The total number of Christians in Asia in 1910 was just over 25 million (2.4% of the population) while in 2010 it is just over 350 million (8.5% of the population). This gives grounds for Paul Joshua, one of the Atlas contributors, to argue that the shifting centre of gravity in world Christianity

[6] See Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross (eds), *Atlas of Global Christianity 1910-2010* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009). In an attempt to offer a global perspective on the question at hand, this article draws heavily on the interpretative essays found in the Atlas, almost invariably written by an author who originates from the region about which he or she is writing.

may need to be seen 'not as a movement to the Global South alone but equally as a movement to the Global East.'[7]

One device used by the atlas to trace the demographic change is to identify the statistical 'centre of gravity' of a religion in a particular year. This is the geographical point at which an equal number of believers in a given religion live to the north, south, east and west of that point. In the case of Christianity, in global terms the centre of gravity has shifted from a point in south-west Spain in 1910 to a point near Timbuktu in 2010. It has moved in the course of the century in a decidedly southern and slightly eastern direction. This demonstrates the shift of the preponderance of adherence to Christianity from Europe and Northern America to Africa, Asia and Latin America. The comparative use of the 'centre of gravity' can also be revealing in relation to particular regions. For example, in the course of the century Asia's 'centre of gravity has moved from Bengal in north-east India to a point in southern China just north of Viet Nam'.[8] This vividly demonstrates the extent of the growth of Christianity in eastern Asia in the space of the last 100 years.

While in global terms the story is clearly one of Christianity becoming more southern and eastern, the pattern is not uniform. It is important not to overlook cases where the trend is quite different. Western Asia stands out as a region where the Christian proportion of the population has fallen from 22.9% in 1910 to 5.7% in 2010. As Anthony O'Mahony observes: 'For Christianity in the Middle East the last hundred years has witnessed a profound series of crises. Displacement by war, genocide and interreligious conflict, leading to loss, emigration and exile, has been the main experience of Christianity in the modern Middle East.'[9]

In terms of demography, the Atlas shows only a slight decline in adherence to Christianity in Europe. The demography works on the basis of self-identification and most Europeans still identify themselves as Christians. What the demography cannot assess is how far this reflects a matter of cultural memory rather than actively practised faith. It takes the essay of Andre Droogers to point out that:

> Within a century the churches in Western European countries have been moved from a central position to the margins of society.... A small flock has difficulty in maintaining the infrastructure of the church, including buildings and clergy. In all churches the leadership has to reformulate the church's

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7 Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj, 'Christianity in South-central Asia', in Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, p. 143.

8 See Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, p. 137.

9 Anthony O'Mahony, 'Christianity in Western Asia, 1910-2010', in Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, p. 151.

> task in the current constellation, since many of the standard practices reflect a situation that no longer exists. The language of liturgy, hymnbook and sermon is often that of previous centuries, incomprehensible to modern persons.[10]

Expansion in the global South has run in parallel to recession in the global North.

A notable feature of the Atlas is that the statistical tables and maps are complemented by interpretative essays which seek to account for the demographic changes which the statistics reveal. Setting the past 100 years in the context of 'Christianity across twenty centuries', Andrew Walls observes that

> once more the pattern of Christian advance appears as serial rather than progressive, withering at the centre, blossoming at the edges. The great event in the religious history of the twentieth century was the transformation of the demographic and cultural composition of Christianity brought about by the simultaneous processes of advance and recession.[11]

Daniel Jeyaraj makes the point that, as a result of the demographic changes of the past century, Christianity is 'the most pluralistic living religion, because at any given time people worship Jesus Christ in the greatest number of languages, reflecting the diverse cultural contexts in which Christian faith finds expression.'[12]

CHURCH LIFE TODAY: THE EPHESIAN MOMENT

The demography makes it very clear that the church has 'moved south' in the course of the past century. What remains to be seen is what will be the implications of this for Christianity worldwide. A comment made again and again in the *Atlas of Global Christianity* concerns the diversity which is evident. While it may be a global religion, Christianity today is anything but uniform. As Dana Robert observes:

> What at first glance appears to be the largest world religion is in fact the ultimate local religion. Indigenous words for God and ancient forms of spirituality have all become part of Christianity. Flexibility at the local level, combined

[10] Andre Droogers, 'Christianity in Western Europe, 1910-2010', in Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, pp. 170-71.

[11] Andrew F. Walls, 'Christianity across Twenty Centuries', in Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, p. 48.

[12] Daniel Jeyaraj, 'The Re-Emergence of Global Christianity, 1910-2010', in Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, p. 55.

> with being part of an international network, is a major factor in Christianity's self-understanding and success today. The strength of world Christianity lies in its creative interweaving of the warp of a world religion with the woof of its local contexts.[13]

The great change within our lifetime has been the unprecedented increase in the range and variety of these local contexts.

This can readily be seen if consideration is given to the question of the language in which Christian faith is expressed. Spanish replaced English as the mother-tongue of the greatest number of Christians around 1980. Today Christian faith is being expressed in a growing diversity of languages. Bryan Harmelink reports in the *Atlas* that in 2010 the total number of languages which have 'at least some Bible translation will surpass 2,500'.[14] As Lamin Sanneh remarks:

> The worldwide nature of Christian faith and practice is fixed in the multiplicity of languages employed in translation and worship, and that linguistic activity reached one of its high points in the twentieth century to stamp the religion with its peculiar indigenising character. Whatever the situation with regard to the core of the religion, there can be little doubt that it has never been about a universal linguistic or territorial core. The local idiom, not the language of social scale, is the original language of religion in Christianity.[15]

As it recovers its rootedness in local idiom, Christianity's theological development will be informed by experiences and concepts which emerge in a variety of linguistic contexts and require effective translation into international languages if they are to enrich the understanding of the church as a whole.

The work of Western missionaries over the past two centuries has often been presented as a matter of domineering Westerners imposing their system of thought on hapless natives. The diversity of local character now becoming apparent in Christianity worldwide shows that the reality was very different. As Dana Robert has pointed out:

> In retrospect it is evident that even during the colonial period, indigenous Christians—Bible women, evangelists, catechists and prophets—were all along the most effective interpreters of Christianity to their own people. The

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[13] Dana L. Robert, 'Shifting Southward: Global Christianity Since 1945', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 24/2 (2000), 56.

[14] Bryan Harmelink, 'Bible Translation and Distribution', in Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, p. 298.

[15] Lamin Sanneh, 'Ethnolinguistic Diversity', in Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, p. 210.

> explosion of non-Western Christianity was possible because Christianity was already being indigenized before the colonizers departed.... Ultimately, the most interesting lessons from the missionary outreach during the Western colonial era is what happened to Christianity when the missionaries weren't looking, and after the colonizers withdrew.[16]

This widespread indigenizing of the faith makes the task of assessing global Christianity much more intricate and complex than would be the case if uniformity were the prevailing trend. The demographic change in the course of a century would be dramatic enough were it simply a matter of the Christian movement extending its 'home base' and continuing to operate on exactly the same basis. In fact, it goes much further. It presages new forms of Christianity and new forms of missionary engagement. Philip Jenkins poses the question: 'Southern Christianity, the Third Church, is not just a transplanted version of the familiar religion of the older Christian states: the New Christendom is no mirror image of the Old. It is a truly new and developing entity. Just how different from its predecessor remains to be seen.'[17]

Helpful initial assessment is offered by three commentators. Philip Wickeri, coming from long experience of Chinese church life, observes:

> ... the most dynamic sections of Christianity today are in movements emerging outside its established centres: The African Initiated Churches (or AICs), Pentecostals all over the world; the rural churches of China; new indigenous Christian communities throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America. They represent a popular Christianity, a mission from below, a mission of transformation. Their emphasis is on oral tradition, lay leadership and maximised participation confront historic Protestant churches with our carefully scripted, over-clericalised approaches to church life....[18]

Secondly, with a primary reference to the situation in Africa, Lamin Sanneh comments that:

> In the turn it took in its post-Western phase, charismatic religion was more than a spacey rhapsodic binge, just as its effects went far beyond wild spectacles and heady excitement. The West insisted that worship must be of a God who was intellectualizable, because intellectual veracity was the safeguard against mystification and superstition. Yet for Africans, the call for explana-

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16 Robert, 'Shifting Southward', pp. 53, 57.

17 Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, p.214.

18 Philip L. Wickeri, 'Mission from the Margins: *The Missio Dei* in the Crisis of World Christianity', *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 93 No. 369 (April 2004), 195.

> tion was not equal in its drawing power to the appeal of the living God before whose eternal mystery explanation must exhaust itself in worship. Only the reality of a transformed spiritual life could commune with God, which, in part, was the need that the African charistmatic movement existed to meet. The religious experience is about intimacy, connection, trust, discovery, and an ethical life in community and solidarity.[19]

Thirdly, Jehu Hanciles, considering primarily the faith of migrant Christians coming from the global South to the West, draws the contrast that:

> The old heartlands exemplified political domination, territorial control, national religion, cultural superiority, and a fixed universal vision. In sharp contrast, the emerging heartlands of the faith embody vulnerability and risk, religious plurality, immense diversity of Christian experience and expression, and structures of dependency.[20]

It is not only the demography but, with it, many aspects of the profile of global Christianity which are rapidly changing.

All of this brings us to what Andrew Walls has described as 'the Ephesian moment'. We have entered a time when, like never before, we have opportunity to bring to fruition the vision set out in Ephesians 2:22: 'In union with [Christ] *you too are being built together with all the others* to a place where God lives through his Spirit.' The possibility is there to engage not across two major cultures, as in New Testament times, but across a great many. The potential is there for a great enriching of the faith but it will not happen automatically. As Walls counsels:

> The demographic transformation of the church brought about by the missionary movement opens the possibility of testing our Christian witness by that of others, of experiencing one another's gifts and sharing our combined resources. Equally, it opens the prospect of a score of local Christianities operating independently without interest or concern in one another. Either of these processes is possible; only one of them reflects the New Testament view of the church or the Spirit of Christ.[21]

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19 Lamin Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 193.

20 Jehu J. Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008), p. 135.

21 Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark; New York: Orbis, 2002), p. 69.

Perhaps there lies the great ecumenical challenge of this century. As we consider how best to meet it, we turn to some of the prominent changes taking place through the southward shift in the Christian faith.

MISSIONARIES TODAY: FROM EVERYWHERE TO EVERYONE

Another change which is clearly demonstrated in the Atlas is that the 'from the West to the rest' pattern of missionary sending has given way to a movement which is 'from everywhere to everyone'. Even when the definition of a missionary is restricted to someone who crosses national borders in the interests of propagating the faith, there has been a dramatic change in missionary sending since 1910. Approximately 62,000 missionaries were in service in 1910 while in 2010 this number has increased to some 400,000. Of the 62,000 missionaries in 1910 all but 1,450 were sent from Global North countries. Of the 400,000 in 2010, 20,700 are sent from African countries, 47,100 from Asian countries, and 58,400 from Latin American countries. The 132,800 from Europe and 135,000 from North America ensure that the majority of missionaries still originate in the Global North.[22] However, the proportion coming from the Global South has increased exponentially. Africa, claims Tokumbo Adeyemo, has made the transition from 'mission field to missionary force.'[23] Moreover the indications are that the numbers of European and American missionaries are declining while their counterparts from the Global South are increasing in number.[24] Under the momentum of this change the pattern of missionary sending and receiving is markedly different from the 'one-way traffic' of 1910. As Jehu Hanciles remarks 'Within the emergent non-Western movement ... each nation sends as well as receives missionaries. Never before has the course of missionary movement been this multi-directional, disparate and global.'[25]

This shift in the pattern of missionary sending and receiving is even more marked if account is taken of the many individuals who fulfil a missionary vocation within the borders of their own nation. Though such missionaries do not undertake the kind of lengthy sea voyages of their European and American predecessors a century earlier, they may well undertake no less arduous journeys in terms of adjusting to a new environment, culture, language etc. 'A century ago,' observes Dana Robert, 'India and China had the largest foreign missionary presence, with "foreign" defined as mostly European. Today their governments keep out for-

22 See Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, pp. 260-1.

23 Tokumbo Adeyemo, cit. Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, p. 218.

24 Johnson & Ross, *Atlas*, pp. 260-1.

25 Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, p. 390.

eign missionaries through visa restrictions. But within their borders tens of thousands of "home" missionaries evangelize other ethnic groups.... A century after Edinburgh 1910, missionaries are more diverse than in any previous era of human history.'[26]

Certainly in the popular mind, and to a considerable extent in reality, missionaries of the Edinburgh 1910 era were working hand in glove with colonialism and imperialism. Most European missionaries clearly understood that their project was quite distinct from that of colonial rule. Nonetheless they found it difficult to avoid being in alliance for practical purposes with Western political aggression and economic exploitation. Notwithstanding the extraordinary personal sacrifices which were made by many missionaries, their work was often blighted by nationalist competition and ingrained racism. This complicity of Christian mission with Western imperial power sealed its foreign character and made it unappealing as a faith option, particularly in Asia.

By contrast, today's missionaries are ever more likely to share a similar racial, cultural and economic background to the people among whom they serve. Lalsangkima Pachuau gives the example of a Korean missionary in Thailand: 'We are easily accepted as one of their own, and we, on our part, understand better their situation and ways of thinking.'[27] To put this in historical perspective, Pachuau remarks: 'If the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh represents the high point of the modern missionary movement from the West to Asia, Edinburgh 2010 marks another high point, namely Christian missions from Asia, by Asians, in Asia and around the world.'[28]

A similar pattern is observable in regard to Latin America. As Marcelo Vargas and Antonia Leonora van der Meer have observed:

> The first decades of missionary work on the continent relied heavily on the hundreds of devoted Northern American and European missionaries who dedicated their lives sacrificially for the sake of the gospel. Today foreign personnel are still active but not indispensable to the missionary task. What makes mission occur today are the thousands of local and national partners working every day as missionaries not only within their own continent but also all over the world.[29]

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[26] Dana Robert, 'Missionaries Worldwide, 1910-2010', in Johnson & Ross, *Atlas*, p. 259.

[27] Lalsangkima Pachuau, 'Missionaries Sent and Received, Asia, 1910-2010', in Johnson & Ross, *Atlas*, p. 268.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Marcelo Vargas and Antonia Leonora van der Meer with Levi DeCarvalho, 'Missionaries Sent and Received, Latin America, 1910-2010', in Johnson &

MISSION BY THE POOR

The missionary movement represented by Edinburgh 1910 was no stranger to vulnerability and relative poverty. However, by and large it was a movement resourced and funded by prosperous societies which undertook its work in much less economically developed societies. Hence a close interconnection was formed between mission and what was then called 'civilisation' and would now be called 'development'. One of the sharpest critiques of the Western missionary movement was published by Anglican missionary Roland Allen almost 100 years ago. In a book entitled *Missionary Methods St Paul's or Ours?* he contrasted the Pauline mission which was powerless in worldly terms and therefore dependent on the Holy Spirit with what he saw as the alliance of the modern missionary movement with the power of the Western world.[30]

Were Allen alive today he might be surprised to see that the identification of Christianity with the powerful is increasingly a thing of the past. More and more the agents of Christian mission come from among the weak, the broken and the vulnerable. It is a new kind of agency but is it not one which has greater affinity to Paul—and to Jesus—than the form of missionary presence which often appeared to be allied to imperial power and economic exploitation? Increasingly, we see a situation emerging which is quite opposite to the one which troubled Roland Allen. Swept by unmerciful currents of history, Christian believers bear witness to the suffering Lord in whom they find the strength to meet adversity. A new (or recovered) pattern of missionary activity is emerging in which the poor take the gospel to the rich.

Jehu Hanciles has observed: 'This non-Western missionary movement represents mission *beyond Christendom*: mission de-linked from structures of power and domination; mission undertaken from positions of vulnerability and need; mission freed from the bane of territoriality and one-directional expansion from a fixed centre; mission involving agents who reflect the New Testament reference to the "weak things of the world" (I Corinthians 1:27).'[31] The organisational pattern of mission also starts to look quite different from that which prevailed in the Western missionary movement. There is no mistaking the fact that the gospel is spreading through migratory movements but there is no sign of anything like a missionary society. There is no head office, no organising committee, no command structure, no centralised fund, no comprehensive stra-

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Ross, *Atlas*, p. 276.

30 Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?* (London: World Dominion Press, 1912).

31 Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, p. 369.

tegic direction. It appears to be a disorganised movement of individuals making their own connections, developing their own perspectives and functioning within networks which they themselves have constructed. It has been characterised as a liquid movement, lacking in solid structures.

Those accustomed to living with vulnerability have little to lose and are often ready to take risks and be open to others in a way which would not come easily to those who are accustomed to positions of power and privilege. They also have a motivation, which could easily elude their more comfortable fellow Christians, to work with God for transformation. They are sensitive to the death-dealing forces, structures and systems which threaten human flourishing. Their prayer for the kingdom of God to come has a depth and potency which is rarely found amongst the prosperous. The poor therefore have a leading role in the mission of God in the world today. As Samuel Escobar remarks: 'There is an element of mystery when the dynamism of mission does not come from the people of a position of power or privilege ... but from below, from the little ones, those who have few material, financial or technical resources.'[32] Hanciles draws a contrast between the two eras of mission: 'Shaped by Christendom ideals, Western missions remain marked by an emphasis on distinctions and differences (territorial, cultural and racial). Shaped by the experience of plurality and diversity, non-Western efforts are oriented toward relational presence and interpersonal exchange.'[33]

How could the older missionary movement productively relate to the new pattern? What forms of connection and association will provide unity and synergy for such a diverse movement of faith? Samuel Escobar has thrown down the challenge:

> The Holy Spirit seems to be at work especially in the periphery of the world, giving Christian people a vision and mobilizing them for local and global mission in spite of poverty, lack of experience and absence of training.... If this is the way the Spirit is moving, what needs to be done in order to walk in step with his reviving and transforming activity? What kinds of global partnerships have to be imagined and developed for this new stage of mission history?[34]

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[32] Samuel Escobar, *A Time for Mission* (Leicester: IVP, 2003), p. 17; cit. Daryl Balia and Kirsteen Kim ed., *Edinburgh 2010: Witnessing to Christ Today* (Oxford: Regnum, 2010), p. 132.

[33] Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, p. 390.

[34] Samuel Escobar, 'Mission From Everywhere to Everyone: The Home Base in a New Century', in Kerr & Ross, *Edinburgh 2010*, p. 194.

MIGRATION AS HIGHWAY FOR MISSION

There has long been close connection between migration and mission. People moving, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, to a new place often take their faith with them. They plant congregations which may initially be expatriate in their composition but which, as they become established in their new environment, often have a missionary impact which extends far beyond their original constituency. In the context of the early 21st century it is strikingly apparent that there are large numbers of economic migrants and that the migration routes lead predominantly from Global South to Global North. This brings Christians from centres of renewal to the old heartlands of the faith where the fire is often burning low. This point is well illustrated by Jehu Hanciles' assessment of the missionary impact of African migration:

> By the end of the [20th] century, African migrants were widely dispersed among the wealthy industrialised countries of the North, and everywhere they went they established new Christian congregations. In effect, African migrations have provided a vital stimulus for missionary expansion, for the simple reason that every Christian migrant is a potential missionary. In both Europe and Northern America, African immigrant congregations have grown in unprecedented fashion and represent ... the cutting edge of Christian growth.[35]

I recall worshipping in a Zimbabwean congregation in the Wester Hailes district of Edinburgh at a time when there was a major national crisis in Zimbabwe. When the time came for intercessory prayers to be offered, I expected an outpouring of prayer for the homeland of the worshippers. Instead a series of passionate prayers were offered for the conversion of the people of Scotland. This was a group of worshippers who were very clear about the nature of their missionary vocation. Here were people who had taken to heart the injunction reported by Hanciles: 'Don't be refugees, be missionaries.'[36] Walter Hollenweger observes that: 'Christians in Britain prayed for many years for revival, and when it came they did not recognise it because it was black.'[37]

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35 Jehu J. Hanciles, 'Missionaries Sent and Received, Africa, 1910-2010', in Johnson & Ross, *Atlas*, p. 265.

36 Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, p. 330.

37 Walter J. Hollenweger, 'Foreword', in *A Plea for British Black Theologies: The Black Church Movement in Britain in its Intercultural Theological and Cultural Interaction*, ed. by Roswith Geldoff, (Bern: Peter Lang, 1992), vol. 1, p. ix.

This large-scale migratory movement has already brought a new dimension to church and mission in such centres of economic power as Europe, North America or the Gulf states. Jonathan Bonk observes that: 'Much contemporary evangelization is part of a vast migration surpassing in scale and potential import the one that saw Europeans sweep the globe.... A great majority of [the migrants] are deceptively inconsequential, profoundly Christian and explicitly evangelistic.'[38] The effects of this are evident in many different parts of the world. Roswith Gerloff and Abraham Akrong refer to 'religions on the move' amidst 'processes of transmigration and transculturation, which unleash dynamic, reciprocal, transitory and multidimensional creations in shaping a "poly-contextual world".'[39] They conclude that:

> ... the overall scene on all continents, including the migration of African, Asian or Caribbean Christians to Northern white-dominated societies, displays a reticulate structure—the vast variety and pluriformity of Christian families including traditional elements which overlap denominationally, culturally and linguistically.... Current trends suggest that this mobilisation of the masses in the South will be the driving force in Christian mission, with all promises and risks.[40]

At this point in history, when many of the migrants are first-generation, it is observable that they often worship in their own language and function as a support group for one another as they navigate the transition into their host society. Their social and cultural milieu is distinctive and not normally given to engaging the cultural mainstream of the host society in a missionary way. They bring a vital Christian presence but one which has something of a ghetto character, limiting its missionary possibilities. A key question will be what transpires in the second and third generations as greater assimilation takes place. Will the passionate faith of the immigrant community weaken as it encounters the acids of modernity? Or will it strengthen as the community employs growing bi-cultural competency to connect at a spiritual level with the society in which it is set?

MISSION AND BUSINESS

New mission dynamics are also emerging on what might be regarded as the opposite side of globalization from that represented by the poor. Sev-

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38 Jonathan J. Bonk, 'Finance', in Johnson & Ross, *Atlas*, p. 295.

39 Roswith Gerloff and Abraham Ako Akrong, 'Independents', in Johnson & Ross, *Atlas*, p. 76.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

eral powerful trends have coalesced to promote a reconfiguration of the relationship between business and mission. In the classic Western missionary paradigm, the role of business was to generate the income which could be used to support dedicated mission agencies. Many missions drew their financial resources from the support of successful business people. The change of paradigm now being proposed is that the business people themselves might be the missionaries. In a post-colonial world the missionary visa is increasingly becoming a thing of the past. On the other hand businesses, which are willing to invest and to offer employment, are welcome in many contexts. In terms of mission strategy this invites the creation of a new mission agent, described by Steve Rundle and Tom Steffen as a 'great commission company'. As they explain: 'the purpose of a Great Commission Company [is] to bring good news in word and deed to the neediest parts of the world. The good news about globalization is that the barriers that once prevented them from hearing this message are falling and the missions baton is being handed to a new breed of messenger.'[41]

At the same time as this new thinking emerges from the perspective of mission strategy, traditional approaches to development are coming under unprecedented critique. Both secular and religious agencies have worked for a generation on the premise that aid would provide a solution to underdevelopment in poor countries. This approach has recently been subject to scorching critique, such as that offered by Dambisa Moyo in regard to Africa: 'Has the US$1 trillion in development assistance over the last several decades made African people better off? No. In fact, across the globe the recipients of this aid are worse off; much worse off. Aid has helped to make the poor poorer, and growth slower.... Aid has been, and continues to be, an unmitigated political, economic, and humanitarian disaster for most parts of the developing world.'[42] Moyo methodically makes the case that: 'The cycle that chokes off desperately needed investment, instils a culture of dependency, and facilitates rampant and systematic corruption, all with deleterious consequences for growth. The cycle that, in fact, perpetuates underdevelopment, and guarantees economic failure in the poorest aid-dependent countries.'[43] Inasmuch as mission work has been inter-connected with development work in poor countries,

41 Steve Rundle & Tom Steffen, *Great Commission Companies: The Emerging Role of Business in Missions* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), p. 25.

42 Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There is Another Way for Africa* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), p. xix.

43 *Ibid*, p. 49.

it is exposed to this kind of critique. Insofar as the promotion of business emerges as a better alternative to distribution of aid, business as mission looks like an idea whose time has come.

These new currents of connection between business and mission bring to fruition thinking about the role of 'kingdom professionals' in a post-missionary context which has been emerging since the mid-20th century. The Willingen conference of the International Missionary Council in 1952 had a vision of mission being expressed, 'through an increasing flow of Christian laymen and women who go across the world in business, industry and government and who do so with a deep conviction that God calls them to witness for Him in all of life'.[44] In the years which followed Lesslie Newbigin was a consistent champion of the conviction that, 'the primary witness to the sovereignty of Christ ... must be given and can only be given in the ordinary secular work of laymen and women' who are to be considered 'the church's frontline troops in her engagement with the world'.[45]

Indications are that the missionary outreach of the Asian and African churches, to which the initiative is increasingly passing, may give expression to this paradigm. Writing of south-east Asia, Violet James observes that: 'Many missionaries are entering countries as "tent-makers".... Indonesians, Filipinos, Malaysians and Singaporeans are part of a large missionary force in Asia today as educators, doctors, nurses, business people and consultants in information technology. Some businesspeople have started various micro-enterprise projects to empower the poor.'[46] CMS Africa, a mission agency weaned from its parent body, the (Anglican) Church Mission Society in 2009, has accepted the challenge of lack of true discipleship within African churches and aims to nurture faith which is culturally and socially transformative. Among the strategies being developed is 'Business as Mission' (BAM). As Serah Wambua explains: 'BAM is about establishing real businesses and not an excuse to enter into a community for evangelistic purposes. BAM is seen as the entry point for poverty reduction and it is empowering and inspiring businessmen in Africa to create jobs and make wealth strategically dealing with

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44 International Missionary Council, *The Missionary Obligation of the Church: Willingen, Germany, July 5-17, 1952* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1952), pp. 19-25; cit. Kool, 'Changing Images in the Formation for Mission', p. 162.

45 Lesslie Newbigin, cit. Michael W. Goheen, *'As the Father Has Sent Me, I Am Sending You': J.E. Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2000), pp. 44, 308.

46 Violet James, 'Christianity in South-eastern Asia', in Johnson & Ross, *Atlas*, p. 147.

the poverty challenge.'[47] This African model of mission departs from the binary understanding where secular business and Christian mission are two separate watertight compartments. Seeking at one and the same time authenticity in discipleship and economic transformation in African societies, it sees business as a mode of mission whose time has come. The vision is that a more holistic faith, working through business initiatives, will deepen discipleship while mobilising people of faith to combat the acute poverty endemic across the continent.

FRESH IMPETUS FOR MISSION

Very different though it may be, the missionary movement driven from the south has undoubtedly invigorated Christian witness as we move into the 21st century. Despite its various blind-spots, weaknesses and mistaken alliances, the 20th century has witnessed a vindication of a fundamental conviction of the missionary movement which arose from the Evangelical Revival. It is apparent today, like never before, that the good news of Jesus Christ can take root in every culture across the world and produce fruit in church and society everywhere. The worldwide flourishing of the faith stands as a demonstration of the validity of the missionary vision that the gospel can be received and find expression in completely new contexts. Without the missionary movement, the prospects for Christianity as a world religion might well be doubtful today, particularly as its long-time European homeland is proving inhospitable. Largely as a result of the seeds planted by missionary endeavour, vigorous and numerous expressions of Christian faith are to be found on all six continents today. It has become the truly worldwide faith which, theologically, it always aspired to be. Beyond any question, this movement to the south has breathed huge new energy into the worldwide Christian movement. Such is the diversity and dynamism of southern Christianity that there may be a significant risk of fragmentation. Discovering new expressions of coherence may be important for Christianity as a global faith. Equally, developing fruitful synergy between old patterns and new may be key to deploying available resources to maximum effect in the interests of Christian mission. These are not small challenges but they are faced in a context where the southward move of the church has ensured that the world Christian movement enters a new century with large numbers, great vitality and fresh imagination.

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[47] Serah Wambua, 'Mission Spirituality and Authentic Discipleship: An African Reflection' Paper presented for Study Commission 9 at Youngnak Presbyterian Church, 23-24 March, 2009, p. 51; cit. Balia & Kim, *Edinburgh 2010*, p. 236.