

Scattered to Gather

Embracing the Global Trend
of Diaspora





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Scattered to Gather: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora

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Foreword

The diaspora (i.e., scattering) of people has escalated in massive global proportion since the dawn of the 21st Century. Every nation has been impacted by this phenomenon of population movement. Consequently, we are witnessing re-alignment in the world economy and demography. The older European nations, for example, need more immigrants to sustain their population while the oil rich states of the Arabian Peninsula require contract workers to further develop their infrastructures and economy. Both the Southern and Northern Hemisphere nations (e.g., Australia, the USA, and Canada) have become new homes or adopted countries for refugees, asylum seekers, international students, and immigrants who simply seek a new beginning in life. We also see multiplied waves of people traversing the globe daily. The travel and communication industries accelerate globalization and cause an increase in the movement of people far and wide.

The academic discourse on diasporas has emerged as a biblical and strategic field of missiology. Diaspora missiology is defined as “a missiological framework for understanding and participating in God’s redemptive mission among people living outside their place of origin.” Indeed, the *People on the Move* have serious implications toward world evangelization. They are not only subjects of evangelism and church growth, but have become powerful agents for the extension of the gospel.

When I was serving as the International Director of the Lausanne Movement, I helped identify and appoint Dr. Sadiri Joy Tira, a Filipino-Canadian missiologist, as Lausanne Senior Associate for Diasporas. Under his leadership, a global network of diaspora specialists has been formed and those associated with the network have been actively exploring theological and practical issues related to aspects of diaspora missiology in various regional contexts. What has been accomplished in the past few short years has exceeded my expectations. Dr. Tira and his team, comprised of respected diaspora scholars and practitioners, have

produced a booklet outlining the biblical, theological, missiological, and practical framework for diaspora missions.

I feel privileged to commend this booklet, *Scattered to Gather: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora*, as a tool for the churches and ministries represented by the participants of Cape Town 2010 (the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization), to proclaim the gospel and, by the grace of God, engage in effective evangelism to gather the scattered into the fold of the redeemed.

Tetsunao Yamamori, Ph.D.
Senior Advisor
Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

Arizona, USA
August 30, 2010

Preface

Two consultations -- the *Lausanne Diaspora Strategy Consultation*, and the *Lausanne Diaspora Educators Consultation* -- were convened in 2009 for the purpose of gathering information from ministry practitioners and migration experts among the *People on the Move*. Prior and following the consultations, the Lausanne Diasporas Leadership Team (LDLT) spent many hours devoted to the crafting of this document. Dr. Enoch Wan, Dr. Elias Medeiros, and Dr. TV Thomas led the LDLT in synthesizing the information gathered from the Consultations while Dr. Greg Paek and Rev. Vergil Schmidt alternately hosted numerous LDLT Conference Calls as the LDLT deliberated on various issues related to the *People on the Move*. This booklet, *Scattered to Gather: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora* is the product of the Lausanne Diaspora Leadership Team (LDLT). I am thankful to these diaspora-leaders and Kingdom Workers who have worked together over the past two years to produce this booklet specifically for distribution to the participants of the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Cape Town from October 16-24, 2010 also known as CT 2010, and beyond. It must be noted that several evangelical missiologists and theologians were consulted who offered comments particularly on the LDLT Position Paper. We would like to thank these people in particular: Dr. Chris Wright of the Lausanne Movement's Theology Working Group, Dr. David Hesselgrave of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Dr. Simon Kistemaker of Reformed Theological Seminary.

I must also acknowledge the 2009 Diaspora consultation hosts: Greenhills Christian Fellowship (Manila, Philippines), and the Torch Trinity Graduate School of Theology (Seoul, South Korea). We are also grateful for the generous financial donors towards the consultation expenses, notably the Klemke Foundation (Edmonton, Canada), and many others who collaborated together making sure the "gathering of minds" in Manila and Seoul would achieve its goals and objectives.

The LDLT is also indebted to Mark and Susan Sosmeña, and Dennis and

Lorajoy Dimangundayao. These two couples are Kingdom Workers who put together the final touches of this publication.

Rev. Douglas Birdsall and Dr. Tetsunao Yamamori, Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) Executive Chair, and former International Director respectively, are to be credited for the appointment of the LCWE Senior Associate for Diasporas. These two godly evangelical leaders and missions statesmen have consistently advocated for the *People on the Move*.

On a final note -- *Scattered to Gather: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora* is not a replacement of the seminal *Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) No. 55 -- The New People Next Door* produced during the Lausanne Forum in Pattaya, Thailand in 2004 (<http://conversation.lausanne.org/en/conversations/detail/10487>). It is instead meant to complement the *LOP No. 55*. May this document inform and inspire the Global Church and missions agencies in their ministry to and through the Diasporas for the cause of World Evangelization.

Sadiri Joy Tira, D.Min., D.Miss.
Senior Associate for Diasporas
Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

Manila, Philippines
September 2, 2010

Profiles of LDLT

Medeiros, Elias

Dr. Elias Medeiros is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil since January 1975 and the Harriet Barbour Professor of Missions at Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) in Jackson, Mississippi, USA. Prior to coming to RTS in 1993, he worked as a “missionary” in the Amazon jungle and as an urban church planter in Northeast Brazil; taught missiology in the Presbyterian Seminary in Brazil; and was Academic Dean at the Evangelical Missions Center in South Brazil. He is married to Fokjelina. They have three married children, and six grand-children. Dr. Medeiros is deeply committed to world evangelization through every member of the body of Christ.

Paek, Greg Woon Young

Dr. Greg Paek was born in Incheon, Korea, and received his post-secondary education in the USA. His professional

experience includes youth ministry director, Christian education director, professor of Missions, and missionary to the Philippines and Indonesia. He is presently the National Director of Global Partners, USA, and General Secretary for the Asian Society of Missiology. Dr. Paek is a member and ordained minister of the Korean American Presbyterian Church. He resides in California and is married with three children.

Schmidt, Vergil

Rev. Vergil Schmidt is former Senior Pastor at Deer Park Alliance Church in Red Deer, Alberta, Canada. Rev. Schmidt received his ministry training and theological education from Creswell College and Graduate School (B.A., M.A.-Biblical Studies), Dallas, Texas. He has been instrumental in birthing several “New Immigrant” congregations during his posts as Senior Pastor of various churches in Canada. He is currently involved in church

multiplication in San Antonio, Texas, USA. Rev. Schmidt's vision is to reach and plant churches among the "New Immigrants" in San Antonio and beyond.

Thomas, TV

Dr. TV Thomas was born in Malacca, Malaysia. He makes his home in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada with his wife, Mary and three adult children. He began his ministry as an itinerant evangelist in 1974 with the Christian & Missionary Alliance before he was appointed as the Professor of Evangelism for the Murray W. Downey Chair of Evangelism at Canadian Bible College and Canadian Theological Seminary from 1984-1994. Currently, Dr. Thomas is the Director of the Centre for Evangelism & World Mission. He serves on numerous national and international boards. He is Co-Chair of International Network of South Asian Diaspora Leaders (INSADL) and President of the Fellowship of Canadian Evangelists (FOCE). His deep commitment to world evangelization calls

for extensive national and international travel to minister to camps, churches, colleges/ seminaries, retreats, seminars, conferences and consultations.

Tira, Sadiri 'Joy'

Dr. Joy Tira is the Senior Associate for Diasporas for the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) and International Coordinator of Filipino International Network (FIN). He is also a member of Edinburgh 2010 Commission VII: Christian Communities in Contemporary Contexts. Currently, Dr. Tira is serving as Global Ministries Diaspora Specialist for the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) in Canada, and is serving on the Board of Directors for SIM Canada. Previously, Dr. Tira served for over two decades as founding Senior Pastor of First Filipino Alliance Church in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. He is co-editor of *Scattered: the Filipino Global Presence* (Manila: LifeChange, 2004) and *Missions in Practice in the 21st Century* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2009). He

is committed to seeing the whole Church, specifically the Diaspora Christians, motivated, equipped, and mobilized to take the whole Gospel of Christ to the whole world.

Wan, Enoch

Dr. Enoch Wan was born in China and educated in Hong Kong & the USA. He is currently Research Professor of Anthropology, and Director of the Doctor of Missiology Program at Western Seminary, Portland, Oregon, USA. Dr. Wan also serves as the current President of the Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS). He travels and lectures extensively in North America and abroad. Dr. Wan previously served as Missions Department Chairman at the Hong Kong Alliance Bible Seminary, founding Director of Intercultural Studies Program at Canadian Theological Seminary, and founding Director of the Ph.D. Intercultural Studies Program at Reformed Theological Seminary. He has also served as a church planter, pastor (New York, Hong Kong, Toronto), and missionary (Philippines and Australia).

Yamamori, Tetsunao 'Ted'

Dr. Ted Yamamori is CEO of WorldServe Ministries and is President Emeritus of Food for the Hungry International and has served as Lausanne International Director (2004-2006). He is currently senior research fellow at the Center for Religion and Civic Culture, University of Southern California, and Adjunct Professor of Holistic Mission at Asbury Theological Seminary. Dr. Yamamori has held various academic positions in several colleges and universities in the USA, the United Kingdom, China, and Japan during his 18-year teaching career. He has written and edited two-dozen books. He holds a Ph.D. degree from Duke University.

Road to Cape Town: LCWE Diasporas

The redistribution of people has profound implications for missions strategy. With most current missions strategies landlocked and too geographically focused, we need, as Ralph Winter suggests, for more agencies to “take note of the strategic value of reaching the more accessible fragments of these ‘global peoples’.” A new strategy is necessary to effectively reach the millions of migrants wherever they are.

To respond to the opportunities and challenges of reaching these global peoples, the LCWE included a “Diaspora Issue Group” that convened during the Lausanne 2004 Forum for World Evangelization in Pattaya, Thailand. Mr. Ram Gidoomal, Dr. Patrick Tsang, Mr. Leighton Chin, and Dr. TV Thomas led this issue group in producing the *Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 55: Diasporas and International Students: The New People Next Door*. Then in 2007, LCWE

appointed a Senior Associate for Diasporas; and in 2008, the Lausanne Diasporas Leadership Team (LDLT) was assembled. For the first time, the Lausanne Movement, formed the “Lausanne Diasporas Leadership Team” (LDLT) to formulate an Evangelical Diaspora Theology and Strategy to present at the Lausanne III in Cape Town in 2010. This team consisted of Elias Medeiros of Reformed Theological Seminary (Jackson, Mississippi), Greg Paek of Global Partners (USA), Vergil Schmidt of the Christian & Missionary Alliance (USA), TV Thomas of Centre for Evangelism & World Mission (Canada), Enoch Wan of the Evangelical Missiological Society (USA), Sadiri Joy Tira, Lausanne Senior Associate for Diasporas, and Ted Yamamori, Lausanne Senior Adviser.

The strategy that would be proposed was called “Diaspora Missiology.” At the November

2009 Lausanne Diaspora Educators Consultation held in Seoul, participants defined Diaspora Missiology as “*a missiological framework for understanding and participating in God’s redemptive mission among people living outside their place of origin.*”

It would present a strategy that would go beyond planting brick and mortar churches in rural and urban places, to even planting churches among transients, sometimes living in foreign dormitories, sometimes working on the ocean, such as in cruise and container ships.

By using the resources already in place and by strategically training diaspora Christians already on location at both the formal and non-formal levels, the Church would purposely mobilise a missions force that requires no “missionary visa”, that requires no missions agency-sponsored international travel, no political restrictions, and faces no “closed doors.” Finally, diaspora missions would not be self-sufficient but would be sustained by kingdom partnerships and

extended networks, resulting in a synchronized approach to diaspora missions.

A crucial step in synchronising the Church’s efforts to reach the *People on the Move*, would be the establishment of effective global evangelism strategies grounded in solid biblical and theological foundation, and moored in a strong missiological framework. To this end, two consultations were held in 2009 via the Lausanne platform. These were the *Lausanne Diaspora Strategy Consultation* held in Manila, Philippines in May 2009; and the *Lausanne Diaspora Educators Consultation* held in Seoul, South Korea in November 2009.

Greenhills Christian Fellowship, a fast-growing metropolitan congregation with a passion to motivate their members for diaspora ministry, hosted the Manila Consultation. Participants of the Manila Consultation included theologians, Bible scholars, ministry practitioners such as missionaries, evangelists, pastors of international churches, anthropologists,

sociologists, legal experts (i.e. migration lawyers), diplomats, demographers, migration researchers, etc. They came from government and non-government agencies, seminaries, denominational and para-church organizations. The result of the consultation was the identification of diaspora peoples, various issues affecting diaspora peoples, and organizations, groups (and individuals) who were ministering specifically to diaspora people. Furthermore, a group of participants from the academic institutions were tasked to form a committee to plan the *Lausanne Diaspora Educators Consultation* or “Seoul Consultation” to respond to the many questions that were raised regarding the “future” of diaspora missiology after Cape Town 2010.

These missions educators and missiologists then gathered in Seoul, South Korea, hosted by the Torch Trinity Graduate School of Theology, a seminary devoted to training diaspora leaders for ministry to diaspora peoples. The Seoul Consultation culminated in

the assembling of the “Seoul Declaration on Diaspora Missiology”, summoning the Whole Church of Jesus Christ, including its missions agencies and its academies to mobilise, train, deploy, support, and empower Diaspora Kingdom Workers.

The proceedings from the Manila and Seoul consultations are now synthesised in this booklet. Papers and data presented at the consultations are available on-line at www.gatheredscattered.com. It is the LDLT’s prayer that this proposed strategy will result in a calibrated and synchronized advance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ among the *People on the Move*. May the vision of diaspora missions reverberate through the Whole Church from Cape Town and beyond.

Seoul Declaration on Diaspora Missiology

Convening as missions leaders, mobilizers, educators, trainers, and kingdom workers in the diaspora at the Lausanne Diaspora Educators Consultation on November 11-14, 2009 in Seoul, Korea -- in partnership with and an extension of the Lausanne Diaspora Strategy Consultation held in Manila, Philippines on May 4-8, 2009

We Acknowledge

1. That the sovereign work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the gathering and scattering of peoples across the earth is a central part of God's mission and redemptive purposes for the world.

2. That the church, which is the body of Christ, is the principal means through which God is at work in different ways around the globe. We honor the uniqueness, dignity, and beauty in each person and culture,

celebrating the collaboration of the church with the broader society.

3. That "diaspora missiology" has emerged as a biblical and strategic field of missiology and is defined as: a missiological framework for understanding and participating in God's redemptive mission among people living outside their place of origin.

We Affirm

1. That our missional focus and ministry integrates and cooperates with the mission and vision of the Lausanne movement for world evangelization as published in The Lausanne Covenant and The Manila Manifesto.

2. That although we draw from various disciplines, our understanding and practice of the mission of God must be informed by, integrated with,

and conformed to biblical and theological foundations.

We Appeal

1. To the whole people of God in local churches and church movements, mission agencies, the academy, and the marketplace to mobilize, train, deploy, support, work together with, and empower “diaspora kingdom workers” for the diaspora fields ripe for harvest.

2. To church and mission leaders to recognize and respond to opportunities in world evangelization presented by the realities of the global diaspora.

3. To missions leaders and educators to give strategic priority in the funding and training of personnel and to provide space for the development of “diaspora missiology” in training systems and curricula.

4. To the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into the harvest and raise up worldwide intercession for an unprecedented move of the

Holy Spirit so that *the Whole Church takes the Whole Gospel to the Whole World.*

*LCWE Diaspora Educators
Consultation 2009
Torch Trinity Graduate School
of Theology
Seoul, South Korea
November 11-14, 2009*

“Diasporas” and God’s Mission

A Position Paper

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this position paper on “diaspora” is to lay a theological foundation for those who seek to formulate strategy for Christian missions to the diasporas and the employment of “diaspora” missions. This paper is organized in sections such as:

- Biblical study on “diaspora” and related key words
- Theological foundation for “diaspora missions”
- Historical overview of “diaspora”—biblical history
- Missions to and through the “diasporas” and the Great Commission
- Missiological implications of “diaspora”
- Conclusion

In this paper, the terms “diaspora” (singular) and “diasporas” (plural) are used in the following way. In the singular form, we are referring to the fact of leaving one’s homeland and being on the move (voluntary or involuntary migration/immigration) of an individual or a people-group, e.g. Filipino Diaspora, the Brazilian diaspora. In the plural form, we are referring to the fact of leaving one’s homeland (voluntary or involuntary migration/immigration) of all different peoples or groups as a whole, being on the move.

BIBLICAL STUDY ON “DIASPORA” AND RELATED WORDS

“Diaspora” (from the Greek διασπορά) is a biblical word and a vital biblical theme in redemptive history. In the Old Testament the Hebrew words translated in the LXX as διασπορά, have been translated in the English Bible translations as : “removed,” “driven out,” “scattered,” “banished,” “exiled,” “dispersed,” “outcast,” “exiles,” “preserved,”

“remnant [which were scattered],” even “horrified.”¹

In the New Testament the words: διασπορά, (the noun—as in John 7:35; James 1:1; and 1 Peter 1:1) and διασπείρω (the verb—as in Acts 8:1, 4, and 11:19) have been translated in English as “dispersion,” “dispersed,” “scattered.”

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR “DIASPORA MISSIONS”

We begin our theological foundation of “diaspora” with the doctrine of the Trinity: God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Nothing in history happens by chance. Every geographical move of every human being who ever lived happens within the overall will and sovereignty of God. The fact that God created nations (Genesis 25:23; Psalm 86:9-10) and languages/cultures (Genesis 11:1, 6, 7, 9), and determined the place (space) and the timing (time) of our habitation. The passage in Acts 17:26-29 implies that He not only “uses” the “diasporas;” but designs, conducts, and employs such “diasporas” for His own glory, the edification of His people, and the salvation of the lost. Every dispersed person and people group has a place and a role to play in God’s redemptive history.

God sent His Son Who left His place of honor and glory (Philippians 2:4-12); to be the Incarnate Word dwelling among man (John 1:1-14). While still a baby, Jesus was taken by Joseph and Mary from Jerusalem to Egypt involuntarily due to a life-threatening circumstance – a case of diaspora. He grew up in Nazareth (Matthew 2:15-23). Therefore,

¹ Hebrew word: פִּזְּרָה puwts—see Genesis 11:4, 8; 49:7; Exodus 5:12; זָרַח zarah—see Leviticus 26:33; Jeremiah 15:7; נִוָּע nuwa—see Psalm 59:11; נָדַח nadach—see Deuteronomy 30:4; Nehemiah 1:9, etc. According to a study done by Narry Santos, “The concept of dispersion or scattering in the Old Testament is contained in seven root words with different contexts and usages. Such a variety of words in Hebrew shows that there is no fixed or technical word for the concept of dispersion. The seven root words that communicate different aspects of scattering concept are as follows: (1) *gola* (exiles)/ *gala* (remove)/*galut* (captivity); (2) *zara* (spread; winnow); (3) *nadah* (banish); (4) *napas* (scatter); (5) *pus* (disperse); (6) *pazar* (scatter abroad); and (7) *parad* (separate)” in “Exploring the Major Dispersion Terms and Realities in the Bible” (A Paper Presented at the Global Diaspora Missiology Consultation, Taylor University College and Seminary, November 15-18, 2006, Edmonton, Canada), p. 2; cf. Narry Santos, “Survey of the Diaspora Occurrences in the Bible and of Their Contexts in Christian Missions in the Bible,” in *Scattered: The Filipino Global Presence*. Luis Pantoja, Sr., Sadiri Joy Tira, and Enoch Wan eds. (Manila, Philippines: LifeChange Publishing, Inc., 2004), pp. 53-65.

Christianity is the only “religion” in which God came from Heaven to earth and then returned (John 16:28). And the sending of the Son by the Father has tremendous missiological implications for those whom the Son sends in the world (John 17:18).

The Holy Spirit, promised by the Father and by the Son (John 14:16; 16:7) was sent to empower each believer, everywhere, as a witness of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8); to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11); to be “the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchase possession, to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:14); and to endow every member of the body of Christ with gifts for service (1 Corinthians 12 and 14).

The will and the work of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are clearly revealed in the Scriptures, starting from creation (Genesis 1-2) to consummation (Revelation 22). A historical overview of the Old and the New Testament attests that “Diaspora” is intrinsically related to redemptive history and sovereignly planned and executed by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF “DIASPORA” – BIBLICAL HISTORY

ADAM, EVE, AND THEIR CHILDREN -- The Scriptures are filled with cases of people in “diaspora,” starting with the first couple. Genesis 1:28 says, “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” Being fruitful and multiplying, filling the earth, subduing it, and having dominion would also imply voluntary “diaspora” as restated in Genesis 9:1 after the flood.

THE BABEL DIASPORA -- “And they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, **lest we be scattered abroad** over the face of the whole earth.’” (Genesis 11:4. Bold added).

Their plan was wrong in God’s sight for several reasons: First, it

demonstrates the arrogance of those building the city and the tower: “a tower whose top is in the heavens,” and “a name for ourselves.” Second, it was man-centered – “let us...lest we.” And third, their sinful and arrogant determination not to be scattered was contrary to the “mandate” of spreading and subduing the earth. Thus God caused confusion of tongues and subsequently their involuntary diaspora. The incident manifested both God’s judgment and His loving grace with the descendants of Noah after the universal flood. Instead of destroying the people, the Lord used diaspora (Genesis 11:5-9) to fulfill His redemptive purpose through the seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3).

As recorded in Genesis 11:7-8, the confusion of tongues and the subsequent involuntary diaspora were means of God to restrain greater evil – “now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them” (Genesis 11:6). To disperse the people was God’s purpose since the beginning (Genesis 1:28; 9:1). We are the ones who continue with our “Babel complex”--the desire to be centripetal; never centrifugal.

GOD’S HOLY PEOPLE -- God has always moved His people in “diasporas” by His sovereignty will. Some “diasporas” happened due to man’s sinful behavior, e.g. curse of Cain (Genesis 4:12-16); but the Lord used His servants to be a blessing for the nations. Example: God called Abraham from the place of Shinar (Chaldea) and blessed Him to be a blessed among a “cursed” people (the Canaanites of old, cf. Genesis 9:25). Abraham was also called “Hebrew” – the sojourner (Genesis 14:13)²

Other cases of “diaspora” happened as the Lord determined and used circumstances to bless His people (Abraham in Canaan³ — Genesis 12:1-6; Joseph and Jacob’s family going down to Egypt – Psalm 80:1; 81:5; 105:17). In other words, God does not send us away in the manner we expect and want. We cannot predict nor control how God employs “diaspora” to accomplish His will or deploy His servants. He is

² For discussion on the term —Hebrew see W.F. Albright, —Abram, the Hebrew: Archaeological Interpretation, II BASOR 163 (1961) 36-54. Also see B.J. Beitzel, — Habiru, II ISBE, 2:586-90.

³ Abraham was a blessing in Diaspora and the blessing of Abraham implies Diaspora.

the sovereign Lord of history and ruler of human destiny. In Deuteronomy we read: “My father was a Syrian [or Aramean], about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there....” (Deuteronomy 26:5). It was a reference to Jacob and his wanderings in a kind of “diaspora.” It also reminds us that Israel knew its origins being aliens, strangers, wanderers—a very unusual way to start a national epic.

The Scriptures are filled with references to those who lived and made a difference in the context of “diasporas.”⁴ “They all [Abraham, Joseph, Jacob, Moses, Daniel, etc] died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers [ξένος aliens, “those temporarily residing abroad and pilgrims [παρεπίδημος] on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13). Yet the fact remains: God blessed the nations through His people in diaspora. Remember Abraham, Joseph, Moses, the Israelite young maid in Syria. Consider 2 Kings 5:1-4. Who could forget Jeremiah, Daniel, and other godly leaders whom the Lord used in diaspora?

VOLUNTARY DIASPORAS AT THE TIME OF JESUS -- In John 7:35 we read: “So the Jews said to one another, ‘Where is he [Jesus] intending to go that we shall not be able to find him? Is he intending to go abroad to the people who are dispersed [διασπορὰν] among the Greeks and to teach the Greeks?’”

At the time of Jesus, scribes and Pharisees would travel land and sea in order to win others to Judaism. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves” (Matthew 23:15). In the case of John 7:35, Jesus was not going abroad, but the questions raised by the Jews point to the fact that voluntary active diasporas were used as missional means at the time of Jesus.

⁴ In Ephesians 2:19 Paul uses the words ξένος, and πάροικος (Ephesians 2:19). ξένος—stranger in the sense of alien, alienated from something or some group of people (strange in the context of the covenant; or someone without knowledge or without a share in).

What characterized such voluntary active diaspora? Desire—“Is he intending to go abroad...?” And purpose — “to teach the Greeks?” Can this then be called “purpose-driven diaspora” as we see it? There is very good evidence both that the Jewish diaspora was very widespread around the known world of the 1st century and that the Jews themselves were aware that it provided a great opportunity for gentiles to come to know about the living God, and come to worship him.⁵

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE AND DIASPORA

Many of the books of the Bible were written while their inspired writers lived in diaspora. Moses wrote the Book of the Law while moving from Egypt and before he could enter the “promised” land. The post-exilic prophets wrote books of the OT while living in diaspora, e.g. Daniel in Babylon. Most of the New Testament books (i.e. Pauline epistles) were written from outside Jerusalem by servants of the Lord living and ministering in a diaspora context.

Two books in the NT were written to believers in diaspora. James, the brother of Jesus, wrote to Jewish believers living among the nations: “James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad [ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ]: Greetings” (James 1:1).

Were they in dispersion because they were already scattered when they heard the gospel? Or were they scattered because they had been forced to leave due to their believing in the gospel? Probably the former, although the preposition ἐν (translated as “which are”) could indicate both “voluntary active diaspora” as well as “involuntary diaspora.”

Peter also wrote to both Gentile and Jewish believers living among the nations. We have, James and Peter, two letters in the New Testament written specifically for believers living in a diaspora context.⁶

⁵ Cf. Richard R. de Ridder. 1975, *Discipling the Nations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1975), pp. 58-127; and John P. Dickson, “Promoting the Gospel: ‘Mission-Commitment’ in the Churches of Paul Against its Jewish Background” (Ph.D. diss., Macquarie University, 2001).

⁶ Jason Lim, —The Trials of the Christians as Elect Resident Aliens and Visiting Strangers

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion [παρεπιδήμιος διασποράς] in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Peter 1:1). Peter, in his letter, uses two different words in order to qualify those who are in diaspora: (1) παρεπίδημος—pilgrims—“one who comes from a foreign country into a city or land to reside there by the side of the natives;” (2) and πάροικος—strangers in the sense of foreigners (sojourners)—“a stranger, a foreigner, one who lives in a place without the right of citizenship.”⁷

Since the creation of the world, therefore, till today, diasporas have been an indispensable means by which God has accomplished his redemptive purposes through Jesus Christ. The history of the expansion of the Christian Church yesterday, today, and tomorrow – past, present, and future – cannot be explained apart from the historical reality of God’s sovereignty, ruling over the nations and the moving of His people everywhere.⁸

“For the kingdom is the Lord’s, And He rules over the nations” (Psalm 22:28).

“He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations; Do not let the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah” (Psalm 66:7).

“The Lord has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all” (Psalm 103:19).

The so-called “Great Commission” texts assume the participation of those who are purposely sent to the nations (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15, 19-20; Luke 24:45-47; Acts 1:8) as well as those who have been

in 1 Peter, II Ph.D. Dissertation, 1998 University of Sheffield, Published by Alliance Bible Seminary Press, 2005.

⁷ The word used in Luke 24:18 —Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You the only **stranger [visitor]** in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?”

⁸ Based on the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and the fact that diasporas are missiological means, each believer has a ministry (place, gift, and role to fulfill) in the context of the diasporas.

dispersed for other immediate reasons (political, economic, educational, ethic, and so forth – Isaiah 49:6; Daniel 12:2). After all, the Lord rules over the place and the time of our habitations (Acts 17:26-27). The expansion of the early church in the Book of Acts; the final gathering of God’s people spread throughout the world and from among all the nations at the second coming of Christ; and the grandiose worshipful celebration in heaven (read Revelation 5:8-10); all presuppose the significant role and ministry of “the priesthood” of God’s and of Christian believers (1 Peter 2:9-10).

MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF “DIASPORA”

Diaspora — a missional means decreed and blessed by God (Genesis 1:28; 9:1; 12:3; 28:14) under His sovereign rule to promote the expansion of His Kingdom and the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 24:14; 28:17-20).

God’s sovereign ruling over human history is clearly stated the passage quoted below:

“And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ‘for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring’” (Acts 17:26-28).

The fact that God creates nations (Genesis 25:23; Psalm 86:9-10), His provision of languages/cultures (Genesis 11:1, 6, 7, 9), and His determination over the place (spatial dimension) and the timing (temporal dimension) of our habitation (Acts 17:26-29) imply that He not only had used “diasporas” as provision; but missional means for:

- His own glory,
- the edification of His people, and
- the salvation of the lost.

Dispersion of persons and peoples is within God's redemptive plan in human history. From the perspective of the doctrine of "the priesthood of all believers" then "diaspora" and "diasporas" are fulfillments of God's global plan and worldwide missions. Every nation counts on the presence, participation, and power (either good or bad) of "diasporas" or "expatriates" (short-term, long-term, or those who have already acquired a citizenship status). Diaspora is a worldwide phenomenon and increasingly more significant at a global scale. There are millions of North Americans, Hispanics, Africans, Arabs, Koreans, Chinese, Brazilians, Filipinos, etc. living away from their homeland.⁹

The reasons for such dislocation are numerous. As Wan has written, "People move on voluntary basis (for education, freedom, economic betterment, etc.) and are being moved for involuntary reasons (e.g. refugee, human trafficking, etc.). They move because of personal and/or non-personal reasons. The table (Figure 1) shows why there is an international migration wave."¹⁰

⁹ For more information on researches and data on diaspora studies, see two-volume set, *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures around the World* edited by Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember and Ian Skoggard. See also *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader* by Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur.; and the peer-reviewed new quarterly journal, *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education* in 2007 (http://www.lchc.ucsd.edu/MCA/Mail/xmcamail.2006_03.dir/0251.html).

¹⁰ The comments in quotation marks and the tables on Figure 1 and Figure 2 were published by Wan. See Enoch Wan, "Diaspora Missiology," in *Occasional Bulletin* (Spring 2007): pp. 3-4, www.emsweb.org.

Figure 1 – The push & pull forces moving people

PUSH	PULL
world poverty growth and attractiveness of wealth & health in countries of desirable destination	media exposure of “greener pasture” elsewhere
political persecution & abuse of power, e.g. exploitation of women & children	political freedom & human equality, e.g. gender equality & great opportunity
natural disaster	quality of life
man-made disasters: accident, pollution, social isolation, psychological stress, etc.	relief, opportunity, the “American dream”
obligation to improve the state of left-behind group, e.g. family or community	success story of or invitation from loved ones (family or friends abroad)

“Why are they moving and to what destination? On the basis of two kinds of forces (i.e. voluntary or involuntary), three kinds of choice (i.e. more... less...least) and five types of orientations (i.e. outward, inward, return, onward, stay-put), the table listed out immigrants of various types” (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 - Forces & choice of migrant and five types of orientation¹¹

Migrant Orientation	Voluntary More choice/option.. Proactive Migrants	Involuntary ... less choice / fewer options... ← →	... little choice/few options Reactive Migrants
Out-ward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tourists • visitors • students • professional transients • business travelers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • economic / labor migrants • rural-urban migrants • anticipatory refugees • people induced to move 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refugees • expellees • internally displaced people • development displacement • disaster displacement
In-ward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary migrant newcomers • family reunion / formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visitors, students or tourists who seek asylum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asylum seekers • refugee seekers
Re-turn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • returning migrants & refugees • voluntary repatriates • voluntary returnees • repatriates long-settled abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • returning migrants & refugees • mixture of compulsion • inducement & choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deported / expelled migrants • refugees subject to repatriation • forced returnees • repatriates long-settled abroad
On-ward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resettlement • dispersal by strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • third country resettlement of refugees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scattering • forced dispersal
Stay-put	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staying by choices • household dispersal strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people confined to safe havens / countries / areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staying of necessity • containment

DIASPORAS AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

Evangelicals in diaspora ought to beware of the necessity of grounding all their discussions (expositional, historical, strategic, experiential, etc) under the exegetical, theological, and ecclesiological scrutiny of the Word of God (the Scriptures)¹² while at the same time calling the participants

¹¹ Wan, op. cit., p. 4.

¹² Theological and doctrinal statements should be taken very seriously in all our discussions at Lausanne III in Cape Town 2010. We do not want to betray the next generations of evangelical workers. A discussion on this area has been raised by David J. Hesselgrave in his article, "Will We Correct the Edinburgh Error? Future Mission in Historical Perspective," in *Southwestern Baptist Journal of Theology* 49:2 (Spring 2007): 121-149. It can be downloaded from: www.baptisttheology.org/journal.cfm.

to seriously consider the practical implications and applications of the phenomenon of diasporas.

The “Great Commission”—Christ’s command to make disciples of all the nations—is not just to be assumed or to be taken for granted. It has to be explicitly and constantly reminded. One of the ultimate questions of our “diaspora” missions is this: are we making disciples of all the nations? This was one of McGavran’s main concerns for missiology: “the purpose of missiology [Couldn’t we add “diaspora” missions?] is to carry out the Great Commission. Anything other than that may be a good thing to do, but it is not Missiology.”¹³

What is happening today, regarding the diasporas, is greater, larger, and without precedence in the history of mankind due to the trend of globalization, urbanization, demographic shift of labor forces and immigration (from the East to the West, South to the North) and Christian gravity (from global North to global South).¹⁴ “Diaspora missions” is the practicing of Christian missions in the 21st Century creatively in accordance to the socio-cultural changes (of globalization, urbanization and demographic shift) by missions to the diasporas and through the diasporas to accomplish the Great Commission.”

What an opportunity for both evangelical “diasporas” and evangelical “nationals!” Nobody has to be a prophet, nor having a Ph.D. degree to discern “diasporas” as a “sign” of the time. We need to broaden the traditional paradigm to embrace vigorous “diaspora” strategies,¹⁵ as “bridges of God.”¹⁶

¹³ Dave Hesselgrave is quoting from a personal letter he received from the late Donald McGavran on April 7, 1988. See David J. Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2006), p. 316.

¹⁴ Wan 2007:3.

¹⁵ See Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁶ *The Bridges of God* was the title of one of McGavran’s first published book in 1954 which became a reference in the history of the Church Growth Movement. For a short version see Donald A. McGavran, “The Bridges of God,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, Edited by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, pp. 323-338 (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999).

Figure 3 - “Traditional Missions” vis-à-vis “Diaspora Missions”¹⁷

AREA	TRADITIONAL	DIASPORA
PERSPECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> geographically divided: foreign mission ↔ local, urban ↔ rural geo-political boundary: state/nation ↔ state/nation disciplinary compartmentalization: e.g. theology of missions/strategy of missions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> non-spatial, “borderless,” no boundary to worry, transnational and global new approach: integrated and interdisciplinary
PARADIGM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OT: missions = gentile-proselyte – coming NT: missions = the Great Commission — going Modern missions: E-1, E-2, E-3 or M-1, M-2, M-3, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new reality in the 21st Century viewing and following God’s way of providentially moving people spatially and spiritually. moving targets and move with the Targets
MINISTRY PATTERN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OT: calling of gentile to Jehovah (coming) NT: sending out disciples by Jesus in the four Gospels and by the H.S. in Acts (going) Modern missions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sending missionary and money - self sufficient of mission entity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new way of doing Christian missions: “mission at our doorstep” “ministry without border” “networking and partnership” for the Kingdom “borderless church,”¹⁸ “liquid church”¹⁹ “church on the oceans”²⁰
MINISTRY STYLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cultural-linguistic barrier: E-1, E-2, etc. Thus various types M-1, M-2, etc. “people group” identity evangelistic scale: reached ↔ unreached “competitive spirit” “self sufficient” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no barrier to worry mobile and fluid hyphenated identity and ethnicity no unreached people “partnership,” “networking” and synergy

¹⁷ Adapted from Wan 2007:6, Figure 5 and Figure 6

¹⁸ David Lundy, *Borderless Church*.

¹⁹ Peter Ward, *Liquid Church*.

²⁰ A church was founded by the chief cook brother Bong on board of the container vessel Al Mutannabi in Nov. 2002 (see Martin Otto, *Church on the Oceans*, 65). From personal communication of March 29, 2007, a staff worker reported that “Last week I met the second cook on another ship and I was very happy to see that the second cook already started planting a church....”

²¹ “Partnership” defined: entities that are separate and autonomous but complementary, sharing with equality and mutuality.”

DIASPORA MISSIONS

“Diaspora missions” is the ways and means of fulfilling the Great Commissions by ministering to and through the diaspora groups. It can be described as follows:

*The integration of migration research and missiological study has resulted in practical “diaspora missiology” - a new strategy for missions. Diaspora mission is a providential and strategic way to minister to “the nations” by the diaspora and through the diaspora.*²²

Christian believers in diaspora can be motivated and mobilized for global missions. They are one of the most strategic “missionary” forces in the history of missions, both in “missions through the diasporas” (i.e. missions done by the diasporas, evangelizing their kinsmen at home or elsewhere) and “missions beyond the diasporas” (i.e. missions done by the diasporas cross-culturally, evangelizing members of the host society and other ethnic groups in their context).

MISSIONS TO THE DIASPORAS

Many previously presumed to be “unreached” people from the 10/40 windows are now accessible due to the global trend of migrant populations moving “from south to north, and from east to west.” Congregations in the receiving countries (i.e. industrial nations in the West) can practice “missions at our door step” (see Figure 3), i.e. reaching the newcomers in their neighborhoods without crossing borders geographically, linguistically and culturally. When **God is moving the diasporas geographically** making them accessible, the Church should not miss any opportunity to reach them with the gospel, i.e. **“missions to the diasporas.”**

It is a known fact that people in transition (e.g. migrants and immigrants

²² Sadiri Joy Tira & Enoch Wan, “Filipino experience in diaspora missions: a case study of Christian communities in contemporary contexts,” Commission VII: Christian Communities in Contemporary Contexts, Edinburgh, June 12-13, 2009.

are taken away from the comfort and security of their homeland) are more receptive to socio-cultural change thus also become more receptive to the gospel. When **God is moving the diasporas spiritually**, the Church should seize this golden opportunity and practice “missions to the diaspora” diligently and faithfully for fruitfulness. Many of the diaspora people (e.g. displaced people and victims of human trafficking) are in need of Christian hospitality and charity. Combining the practice of the Great Commandment with the Great Commission will be appropriate and effective in **“missions to the diaspora.”**

MISSIONS THROUGH THE DIASPORAS

“Missions through the diasporas” is a reference to the missions whereby the diasporas evangelizing their kinsmen in their home land or elsewhere. After all Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Daniel, and leaders of the early church were all living in the context of diaspora. Peter and James wrote specifically to the church living in the context of diaspora. The history of the church throughout the centuries affirms this thesis. The Reformers (John Calvin, for example), the Puritans, and other evangelical groups made major contributions while living in the diaspora. We should never forget that USA, for instance, owe much of their “progress” (educational, religious, economic, ethical, etc) and biblical worldview to the 17th Century Puritan diaspora.

Christian denominations and organizations who fail to seize this “kairos moment” in the history of the Christian church will miss the momentous development in Christian mission of the 21st Century. Being different from the traditional sense of “missionary” sent from the West to the rest of world, we now can maximize the potential of expatriates from their homeland to return as “missionaries.” We can creatively employ many of these “self-supporting diaspora missionaries,” (reverse missions). The reality is that Christians living in the diaspora context represent the largest self-supporting contingency of missionary force which has been located within many of the so-called “unreached peoples” and accessible to practically all people-groups of the world today. A case in point is the FIN movement.²³

²³ For details of the movement of “FIN” (Filipino International Network) see “Filipino

MISSIONS BEYOND THE DIASPORAS

One of the main strategic concerns had to do with the place, the role, and the need to mobilize self-supporting evangelical Christians living in diaspora context to evangelize other people-groups in their immediate context and members of the host society, i.e. **“missions beyond the diasporas.”** After acquiring the language and making cultural adjustment, diaspora Christians are the best bridges for cross-cultural evangelism. Their spiritual vitality can contribute positively to existing local congregations of the host society and in the planting of new ones. Immediate and adequate biblical and cross-cultural training is to be made available to everyone to be equipped for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-14). Thus discipleship and education are imperative to enable Evangelical “diasporas” to impact the local communities of the host society and other ethnic groups within their reach.

We cannot dismiss or take lightly the problem of illegal immigrants. However, there is no better way to help any country than to reach out to all immigrants with the transforming message of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even the seventeenth century “Pilgrims,” for instance, understood the correlation between conversion, education, and citizenship; between godly living and the political, social, economic, and ethical development of a nation in the New World.

Christian involvement of local churches and denominational groups within the context of diaspora groups is imperative for the Great Commission. There could be great impact leading towards revitalization/ renewal of congregations and denominations of the host country. Global demographic trends of diasporas created new opportunity and

International Network: A Strategic Model for Filipino Diaspora Glocal® Missions” by Sadiri Joy B. Tira published in *Global Missiology*, Featured Article, October 2004, www.globalmissiology.org. It began locally in Canada networking among C&MA local congregations and gradually expanded to become inter-denominational and global. For further details, see “The Filipino Experience in Diaspora Missions: a Case Study of Christian Communities in Contemporary Contexts,” written by Sadiri Joy Tira & Enoch Wan and presented by Tira at the Commission VII: Christian Communities in Contemporary Contexts, Edinburgh, June 12-13, 2009. See also www.fin-online.org.

great potential for partnership between the evangelical churches and denominations in the industrial West and different evangelical groups in diaspora. Imagine the impact that such endeavors may reach out to different ethnic groups within their reach.

There is a great opportunity for educating the ecclesiastical ethnic leadership in the context of the diaspora. Evangelical theological institutions (Bible institutes, colleges, universities, seminaries) can also play a crucial role within such diaspora groups. Those living in diaspora will need Christian education and ministerial training and the national denominations can greatly contribute in this regard. As a matter of fact, some theological institutions are already working towards the possibilities of offering such training (including degrees) using the Portuguese, Korean, Chinese, and Spanish languages.

Evangelical “diasporas” who occupy a position of leadership (political, diplomatic, academic, denominational, scientific, business, etc.) ought to become aware of their crucial place and significant role of building bridges and developing relationships between them and members of the host country and other diaspora communities. Diasporic congregations are to be mobilized for the Great Commission when individual Christians are motivated and empowered to carry out their missionary duties. When members of the diaspora groups have acquired the language and are adjusted to the culture of host society, they are the natural bridges for “**minister beyond them**” to reach others of host societies and other diaspora groups cross-culturally.

CONCLUSION

The major point of this positional paper is summarized below. Diaspora is a global phenomenon with worldwide significance in Christian missions. The understanding of diaspora can be traced back to the revealed initiatives of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Behind the seemingly chaotic and tragic phenomenon of diaspora, there is the Triune God’s divine decree and supreme sovereignty over human history. Both biblical and contemporary history can attest to the soteriological significance of diaspora.

The Church can respond missiologically to the diaspora phenomenon in several ways. Since God has moved people, geographically from their homeland to new place of residence and spiritually to become receptive to the gospel, **missions to the diaspora** has proven to be effective in gospel-outreach. Diaspora groups are to be motivated and mobilized for global missions both in “**missions through the diaspora**” (from diaspora to their kinsmen in their homeland or elsewhere) and “**missions beyond the diaspora**” (i.e. cross-culturally to the host society and other ethnic groups within their geographic context).

Any evangelical congregation, denomination or institution who is indifferent to this historic moment in regards to “diaspora” missions will regret it later. The “plane” of missions to, through and beyond the diasporas is on the move and is about to take off. There will definitely be turbulence (theological, strategic, and ethical) but the plane will land safely for the Glory of God, the edification of His church, and the salvation of the unconverted.

Let us never forget that our eternal citizenship is in heaven. We are to live on earth as those whose citizenship derives from the rule of God’s Kingdom over all the earth. It is not a license for illegal activity; but a provision for Kingdom ministries. We live on earth with the government of God and all the responsibilities and privileges of those who are citizens of God’s Kingdom. As we begin to strengthen our brotherly love and respect within the context of the Christian churches (both national and “abroad”) as brothers and sisters, we will be able to work together on other areas. As we worship together, work together, and mature together in mutual respect and openness, we will be able to make a difference in our societies as we clearly proclaim the good news of salvation and ushering in transformation through godly living, love and light.

It is time to foster our theological thinking in dialogue with other Christian thinkers in diaspora. Theologizing in the context of diaspora will enrich our Christian tradition and our missional pilgrimage.

Next Steps You Can Take

... to Reach Out to Diaspora Peoples

INTRODUCTION

One of the undeniable realities of the 20th and 21st centuries is the global phenomena of the Diaspora Peoples – *People on the Move*. The scale and scope of the Diaspora phenomenon has escalated in recent years and today 3% of the global population lives in countries in which they were not born. The latest research reveals that around the globe, 200 million people now live and work outside their homeland.¹ People in acute crisis and seeking economic opportunities are part of the *People on the Move*.

With so many people from so many origins are moving in so many directions and landing in so many destinations, planned or unplanned, it could be concluded that we are fast

¹ Duncan Mavin, "One Big ATM," *The Financial Post Magazine*, October 07, 2008. Don Mills Canada: National Post

becoming a "borderless world".² We believe that the Triune God in His sovereignty is moving people so that they may seek Him and know Him. Reaching the *People on the Move* is both an urgent necessity and an amazing opportunity for Christians and Churches. This certainly is a new paradigm in the mission of the contemporary Church.

The simple and straightforward strategy that follows is undergirded by a solid biblical and theological base outlined in "The Theology of Diaspora" paper included in this booklet. If a Christian or a congregation applies this seven-step strategy, launching a ministry to Diaspora peoples will become a reality. Our appeal to all Christians,

² The term "borderless world" is to be attributed to economist Kenichi Ohmae who wrote the book *The Borderless World* in 1991, McKinsey & Company Inc.

local congregations, mission agencies, the academy and the marketplace is to work together and empower Kingdom Diaspora Workers for the diaspora fields are truly ripe for the harvest.

STEP #1 -- EMBRACE THE VISION FOR THE DIASPORA PEOPLES

1. Diaspora phenomenon is a growing global and local reality.
2. The scope of the Diaspora phenomena is immense and the opportunity to reach them with the Gospel unprecedented.
3. Scriptures reveal that it is the intentional purpose of God that the Diaspora strategy be employed.
4. The Great Commission of the Lord Jesus includes the evangelization of the Diaspora.
5. Each Diaspora group provides both an accessible mission field and a potential mission force.
6. *People on the Move* are more open to change and are often

receptive to the Gospel.

7. The primary agency for the evangelization of the *People on the Move* is the Church of Jesus Christ in its local and global presence.
8. The Gospel fits into any culture and background but the Church has to contextualize it for the respective Diaspora group.
9. Evangelization of the *People on the Move* calls for focused intentionality, urgent passion and strategic practical action.
10. Reaching an individual or a group with the Gospel can have far-reaching consequences for Kingdom advancement.

STEP #2 – ENSURE THE RIGHT ATTITUDES

Attitudes are important and powerful in life, relationships and ministry. The following are seven questions that will help you and your congregation to assess your readiness to reach out to Diaspora people:

1. Do you have a patronizing

attitude toward other cultures, races, and ethnic groups?

2. Are you racially prejudiced or ethnocentric?

3. Has the influx of people from other cultures, races and ethnic groups paralyzed you or excited you to evangelize them?

4. Do you have a loving burden for the “strangers” in your midst? (Leviticus 19:33-34; Deuteronomy 10:19)

5. Are you ready to embrace diversity of culture and ministry to all cultural, racial or ethnic groups?

6. Have you embraced loving hospitality as a vital spiritual principle of Christian life and ministry? (Matthew 25:35; Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9; Hebrews 13:2)

7. Are you an active part of a nurturing community who worship and learn together, love and serve each other and together? (Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 1:22, 3:8; 4:8-11)

STEP #3 – EXPLORE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Increasingly, Diaspora people are moving into all kinds of environments. Often people are unaware of the changes taking place in their everyday world. Here are some questions to help diagnose who really is your neighbor, in your work, residential or leisure world?

1. Who are the Diaspora people in your neighborhood?

2. What are the lands of their origin?

3. What is the size of each Diaspora group?

4. Why did they come? Or what factors brought them here?

5. What is the heart language or mother tongue of the Diaspora people(s)?

6. What generations are represented among them?

7. What are their religious affiliations?

8. Have they established worship places?

9. Are there some Christian believers among them?

10. What are their educational levels?

11. Where are they vocationally/ professionally?

12. What is their receptivity level to the Gospel?

13. What are their felt/ immediate needs?

14. How can you meet these felt/immediate needs and begin to build meaningful relationships with them?

15. Who else can you partner with to reach them?

STEP #4 – ENGAGE IN HOLISTIC MINISTRY

1. Treat all people with mutual respect, dignity and generosity.

2. Work collaboratively with people of all backgrounds on issues of common concern,

e.g. youth issues, drug abuse, housing, unemployment, racism, etc.

3. Encourage various Diaspora groups to work together to face common challenges and serve their communities.

4. Pursue partnerships with other churches and Christian agencies which share expertise, materials, personnel, prayer and resources for training.

5. Work intentionally in partnership with governments and non-governmental agencies (NGOs) whenever possible, where Bible truth and practice are not compromised.

6. Approach ministry with extreme creativity and flexibility.

7. Extend ministry to Diaspora people building on existing ministry initiatives.

8. Seek to provide advocacy services and legal expertise for those who are victims of injustice – the refugees, sinned against, the trafficked people, the powerless, etc.

9. Provide material, emotional and psychological support, and trauma counseling for the vulnerable.

STEP #5 – EQUIP FOR EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

1. Help the local church realize that it is a landing place for Diaspora people and a launching pad for Diaspora ministries.
2. Make believers aware of the scope and the available avenues of ministries to Diaspora people.
3. Keep believers informed of timely and true information about challenges and progress of ministry.
4. Ensure spiritual growth and vitality are regularly experienced by believers
5. Mobilize intercession and spiritual warfare praying for the advance of the Kingdom.
6. Provide training to increase cross-cultural competence of believers.

7. Equip believers to be able to share their personal testimony succinctly.

8. Enhance the believer' skills in cross-cultural hospitality.

9. Train Christians to engage in culturally-sensitive and contextual evangelism and discipleship.

10. Provide appropriate culture-sensitive and language-specific resources for effective outreach and discipleship.

11. Expose key language-specific resources available on the internet for evangelism and discipleship

12. Explore ways to open doors and use contact points to the Gospel to them.

STEP #6 – ENCOURAGE BUILDING GENUINE RELATIONSHIPS

1. Identify with the people of the Diasporas and get involved with them on a personal level.

2. Take risks and build genuine

cross-cultural relationships.

3. Provide loving hospitality to care for their felt and immediate needs.

4. Get to know the Diaspora peoples and their original cultural contexts.

5. Find believers who can communicate with them in their mother tongue or heart language.

6. Seek to expose your faith but not to impose your faith on them.

7. Pray for guidance of the Holy Spirit to share the Good News of Jesus with them.

8. Ensure Christianity that is shared is Bible-based but not culture-based.

STEP #7 – EMPOWER THE DIASPORA CHRISTIANS OR CHURCHES FOR MISSION

1. Present to the Diaspora Christians or churches the vision, advantages and opportunities for mission.

2. Instill a missionary vision and foster an environment of mission.

3. Plan relationship-building opportunities with the Diaspora to implement the Great Commission locally.

4. Identify and train Diaspora leaders.

5. Cooperate with mission agencies to provide theological training in the respective mother tongue.

6. Employ distance learning and electronic means to train potential Christian workers.

7. Network partnerships with Christians and churches in countries of origin.

8. Cultivate partnerships with host country churches to engage in mission.

9. Create focused prayer networks for ministry effectiveness.

10. Link with national, regional or global Christian Diaspora networks when possible.



CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this seven-step strategy has motivated you to begin reaching Diaspora people in your world with God's Good News. Try it and you will enjoy the thrilling adventure! Diaspora people are winnable for our Lord Jesus Christ!

Diaspora Links

For resources on reaching the *People on the Move*, please visit:

Lausanne Diasporas Leadership Team website

www.gatheredscattered.com

-and-

Lausanne Diasporas Conversation

<http://conversation.lausanne.org/en/home/diaspora>

For more information, to request additional copies of *Scattered to Gather: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora*, or to obtain copies of the *The Jesus Film -- Lausanne Diasporas Special Edition* (DVD) featuring sixteen major diaspora languages, please contact:

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I share [the Lausanne Diasporas Leadership Team's] enthusiasm for the missionary potential of diasporas, an idea deeply rooted in the Bible and in the history of the Church. – **Samuel Escobar**, *Leading Latin American Theologian and Missions Statesman*

Diaspora missiology is one of the most important new disciplines needing to be addressed in this generation. With the increasing dispersion of peoples to and from countries big and small, from professionals to the wandering homeless refugees and laborers, the challenge to reach and embrace them with the love of Christ is growing exponentially. Broad-based research, creative methodology, hearts of compassion, and sacrificial lives are needed to meet this challenge. – **Cindy Perry**, *Senior Consultant for Himalayan Region, Development Associates International*

Attention to global diaspora is a necessary discipline for those interested in mission today. As resource and catalyst, diaspora missiology is not only essential for effective mission, it is a rich taproot that will nourish every facet of global Christianity and theology. Indeed, the closer we look at diaspora the more we see our reflection: a pilgrim people not yet home but on the way. – **Thomas Harvey**, *Academic Dean, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies*

I believe God is behind the global Diaspora phenomenon. People on the Move provide fertile and creative opportunities for evangelism and discipleship. We are amazed by the high level of receptivity to the Gospel in our church planting efforts. – **Balbir Kaur Chaal**, *Research Scientist in Singapore*

In the global economy today, the nations are "moving in" to the neighbourhood around the world. In keeping with the incarnation and "the royal law" (James 2:8) to love our neighbour, we should move in among them. This will mean something extraordinary: the opportunity to share the good news with someone whose family line has not, in many cases, heard the gospel from the lips of a child of God for hundreds of years. Many will come to Christ. Many already have, and are in turn making disciples. – **Nigel Barham**, *Director, MoveIn*

The Diaspora phenomenon or "People on the Move" is a reality we cannot escape. It is with us to stay and must be addressed in mission. We continue to see multitudes of people of all ethnic origins constantly on the move. *Gathered Scattered: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora* will inspire you and instill within you the challenge God has placed before the church to reach and disciple these multitudes for Jesus Christ. – **Mike Harrison**, *Retired Missionary to South East Asia, OMF International*

[The Lausanne Diasporas Leadership Team] has done a huge service to the body of Christ by giving us this important material. We urgently need to see this kind of movement with every major language group in the world. – **George Verwer**, *Founder, Operation Mobilisation*