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Editorial

Mission and Public Issues

J. Nelson Jennings

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> In a world increasingly threatened by violence, aggression and fragmentation, it is essential that states and businesses join in promoting far-sighted and ethically sound models of globalization, which by their very nature must entail subordinating the pursuit of power and individual gain, be it political or economic, to the common good of our human family, giving priority to the poor, the needy and those in the most vulnerable situations (Francis 2024).

Thus stated Pope Francis in his January 15, 2024 message to the Executive President of the World Economic Forum as it began its recent five-day Annual Meeting. A question: How might Francis's message have been connected to Christian mission? I will work toward answering that question through examining some recent historical examples.

Evangelicals—especially "Evangelicals" in the traditional religious sense who are involved in missions, characteristic of this journal's readership—have often struggled with how to relate to political, economic, and other public, structural, and what might be called non-religious arenas of societal life. The struggle is compounded when, as is typical, missionaries are serving as guests in a foreign setting.

One approach has been to try and steer clear of such issues. Indeed, a central *raison d'etre* for the Lausanne Movement's formation in 1974 was the perceived drift by World Council of Church leaders away from evangelism and church-planting and toward a primary preoccupation with political and economic matters, including independence movements throughout Africa and Asia. Shoki Coe's 1972 appeal for "contextualization" by Christian missions—to expand from a narrowly spiritual, anthropologically informed gospel to one that encompassed more of people's total *contexts*, including structural and social realities of injustice and poverty—helped to confirm for many self-professing Evangelicals that an alternative missions network was needed. The coinciding, Ralph Winter-instigated focus on "people groups" deepened most Evangelicals' conviction that biblical missions meant evangelizing individuals and starting churches, apart from any distractions of politics, economics, and social justice concerns.

Even so, avoiding political and economic realities has proved difficult if not impossible for Christian missions. Perhaps Billy Graham, one of Lausanne's central founders, exemplifies that challenge as much as anyone. On one hand, Graham self-consciously preached a strictly religious message of the Cross of Jesus Christ, inviting millions worldwide to be forgiven of their sin through faith in Christ. Indeed, the Lausanne Movement's ten-minute tribute video to Graham focuses exclusively on that message, including in several clips of Graham preaching at Lausanne I in 1974 on the need to be laser-focused on evangelism (Lausanne Movement n.d.a.). At the same time, Graham's strident condemnation of communism and his support of U.S. policy in prosecuting the Vietnam War is well documented (Hays 2017)—even if, for example, Graham deflected questions about whether his two preaching trips to U.S. troops in Vietnam meant his support of the war by explaining, "My only desire is to minister to our troops by my prayers and spiritual help wherever I can" (Decision Magazine Staff 2022).

A more complete description of Lausanne's makeup will include the social justice voices that were in fact present and deeply influential at Lausanne I. Several delegates, mainly non-Westerners including such Latin American stalwarts as René Padilla and Samuel Escobar, gathered as a "radical discipleship caucus" and openly criticized what they saw as Lausanne's "American-culture Christianity" (Swartz 2021). Debates within Lausanne and wider Evangelical circles over the relationship between evangelism and social justice have persisted ever since, although Lausanne's current 28 "Issue Networks" reflect at least an official acknowledgement of a variety of social, political, and economic concerns (Lausanne Movement n.d.b.). Of particular note at the present moment are the several concerted, prayerful efforts among Lausanne-related networks, both previous and current, to constructively deal with Israel-Palestine issues (Lausanne Movement n.d.c.).

For its part, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) has a long-standing commitment to religious freedom, including through engaging the United Nations. Regarding the current Palestine-Israel conflict, the WEA describes its response as a "balanced, strategic solution" involving "send[ing] aid to the needy in both Gaza and southern Israel" and encouraging Christians to "pray for peace and justice"—noting as well that, given conflicting responses among Christians around the world, "the World Evangelical Alliance cannot adopt or endorse a political position" (World Evangelical Alliance 2024). I will venture to add two explanatory comments. First, while I do not wish to single out the WEA for employing the commonly used "cannot" here—implying some sort of constraint that removes any decision-making capacity or responsibility—"does not" would more accurately convey how the WEA is responsibly carrying out its "duty as part of the family of God to prioritise concern for all our fellow believers within … conflicts, regardless of their nation of citizenship or residence," as WEA Mission Commission Executive Director Jay Matenga has so aptly stated. Second, the WEA in fact has—unavoidably, I believe—adopted and endorsed "a political position." That position is not restricted by national allegiance but instead is guided by a "higher ethic" of "solidarity" with fellow believers, and indeed all fellow human beings, who suffer on conflicting sides of this and any other conflict (Matenga 2024).

Zooming out topically beyond Israel-Palestine to consider socio-economic-political matters in general, the WEA Mission Commission stands not only for problem solving but for a more positive "wellbeing missiology," for example "asset based community development." Cross-cultural missionaries can thus come alongside and follow the lead of communities among whom they serve rather than assuming "the superior role of a clinician" (Matenga 2024). The Lausanne Movement's Issue Network of "Integral Mission" at least gives space to many Evangelicals' conviction that "there is no biblical dichotomy between evangelistic and social responsibility in bringing Christ's peace to the poor and oppressed" (Lausanne Movement n.d.d.).

Zooming out organizationally to consider the wider "Evangelical missions world" that includes churches, ministries, and movements acting independently from Lausanne and the WEA brings into focus (at least for our purposes here) not only self-designating "Evangelicals" but also various "Charismatic," "Pentecostal," and "Independent" groups around the world. I assume from study and anecdotal experience that, in general, this plethora of groups also struggle with how to relate to political, economic, and other public, structural, and what might be called non-religious arenas of societal life. A common approach would be to try and avoid what are intrinsically unavoidable socio-economic-political involvements. Exceptions abound, for example joining an ecumenical political advocacy network in the U.S. (Churches for Middle East Peace 2024), opposing proposed progressive legislation regarding sexuality and gender in South Korea (Yim 2022), and supporting

a political candidate in Brazil (Petrosky 2023). Recent historical examples of at least some Evangelical churches and religious leaders contributing to reforming and even dismantling unjust political and economic structures during the anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa and the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, for example, need mentioning here as well.

The World Council of Churches, its member churches, and their related international mission agencies have more consistently, explicitly, directly, and concretely related to public and structural matters than have members of the Evangelical missions world. For example, the WCC Executive Committee's November 2023 "Statement on the War in Palestine and Israel" expresses "outrage" at both "the brutal attacks on Israeli communities by Hamas militants on 7 October 2023" and "Israel's disproportionate retaliation," then specifically "***Demands*** [both] the immediate unconditional release and safe return of all hostages [and] an immediate ceasefire and the opening of humanitarian corridors, and ***calls*** for guarantees of the unimpeded distribution and delivery of vital humanitarian assistance, including water, food, medical supplies and fuel, and the reinstatement of electricity and internet services in Gaza" (WCC Executive Committee 2023; emphases original). Corresponding Lausanne and WEA statements have been calls to prayer, not demands for specific political (and military) actions. It is worth noting as well that the WCC General Secretary joined the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem in blaming Israel for the October 20 bombing of St. Porphyrios Greek Orthodox Church in Gaza (Gencturk 2023).

Soon we will circle back to this editorial's initial question about Pope Francis's message to the World Economic Forum and Christian mission. For now, it is worth noting how Francis's engagement with the current Palestine-Israel conflict has not been without controversy. Amidst his consistent, heartfelt appeals and prayers for peace, Francis met separately with groups of grieving Israelis and Palestinians on November 22. Afterward some of the Palestinians recalled the Pope using the word "genocide" to describe what was transpiring in Gaza, although a Vatican spokesman reported that as far as he knew Francis had not used that term. In his general audience in St. Peter's Square later that afternoon, Francis stated that the conflict had "gone beyond war. This is terrorism"—and Israeli officials made a connection with Francis having said, in a previously undisclosed, post-Hamas-attack phone call on October 7 with Israeli President Isaac Herzog, that it is "forbidden to respond to terror with terror." Needless to say, the connotation taken that Israeli military operations in Gaza were genocidal and terrorist sparked criticism from various pro-Israel groups (Faiola et al. 2023). Whatever the intentions of a peacemaker, an economics critic, a prophetic witness, or a social reformer might be, most likely some people in the conflict or controversial situation being addressed will not be happy.

How, then, was Francis's message to the World Economic Forum possibly connected to Christian mission? Some readers will have already answered that question quickly and confidently (perhaps all the while wondering what the editorial's verbiage was all about) with a resounding, "Not at all." Reasons for such an answer might include (1) missions *is not* about addressing "states and businesses" or about politics and economics, and (2) missions *is* about cross-cultural (and international) outreach to unreached people groups. A different type of reason might be that religious leaders, especially including the Roman Catholic Pope, have no business reverting to a bygone era of European Christendom when issuing advice or even directives to political and other societal leaders was accepted practice. Anyone can now see that Pope Alexander VI granting Iberian monarchs in the 1490s the right to conquer the world's remaining non-Christian lands was entirely inappropriate; telling the world's economic and political leaders how to conduct their

business today is also not a religious leader's responsibility, much less part of Christian missions, so the reasoning goes.

Some readers will have noticed that I have carefully distinguished between the terms "mission" and "missions." The former—used in the question at hand about Francis's message to the World Economic Forum—refers of course to the singular *missio Dei* (much discussed as that phrase has been). God in his mission is "making all things new" (Revelation 21:5), re-creating his beautiful yet broken world into a glorious new heaven and new earth. God's people are privileged and responsible to participate in God's mission through their lives and words directed toward others coming to faith in Jesus Christ, the Church growing and maturing, and realizing glimpses of the new creation's *shalom* of justice, goodness, and peace. Christian *missions,* for their (not "its") part, are those intentional and organized efforts by churches, agencies, and individual Christians to take part in God's mission. Some Christian thinkers have cautioned about a comprehensive view of "mission" running the risk of eliminating anything that is distinctively "missions." In my judgment that risk is worth taking in order to live and serve as those God has sent into his broken world that he is committed to making totally new—ultimately upon Jesus's return.

Pope Francis leveraging his twenty-first-century position of influence to encourage societal leaders to promote "far-sighted and ethically sound models of globalization" on particular behalf of "the poor, the needy and those in the most vulnerable situations" is a missional act. Especially given his recognized status as a Christian leader, as well as given the wide scope of how the Lord of Hosts uses people as part of his mission, Francis's message is closely connected to, indeed part of, Christian mission—even if such a message is not part of Christian missions per se. May we all give thanks as well, as those consciously participating with the Spirit in his redemptive mission, for the gallant and patient efforts of the many peacemakers regarding Palestine-Israel, Ukraine-Russia, and other conflicts. And may the crucified, risen, and ascended Savior continue in his mission to call all of his people from among all the world's peoples, joining us together and shaping us into his one universal body and bride.

This issue's articles address important aspects of Christian missions: contextually appropriate education, detailed and reliable data compilation, and missiological reflection. Whatever the scope of your understanding of Christian(s) may be, I hope these articles will be helpful in your efforts to serve the cause of Christ's gospel wherever and however God is pleased to use and shape you.

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More Local than the Locals:
An Ethnoscopic Analysis of a Philippine Seminary

Danyal Qalb

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Abstract

Most Filipinos are oral learners; seminaries in the Philippines are often copies of their Western counterparts with minimal contextualization. Using Thigpen's four-step "ethnoscopic analysis," I embark on a mission to examine theological education in the Philippines from cultural, scriptural, missiological, and pedagogical perspectives.

The findings from the ethnoscopic analysis prompted significant changes in my teaching approach and interactions with students at a local seminary. Join me on this journey as I explore improved ways for my students to learn and enjoy class more.

Key Words: mission, orality, pedagogy, theological education

Introduction

Since 2018, I have taught at a local seminary where I noticed students grappling with a curriculum akin to my educational experience in Germany. I have been trying to contextualize since I arrived in the Philippines in 2007. However, the seminary strongly emphasizes the Western educational system, training its students to adopt a Western way of teaching, thinking, and using English.

My students are not illiterate, but their comprehension of print-text is deficient, as they remain oral learners. I take you along in this article as I explore how theological education can become more engaging and effective for my students. I will look into cultural, scriptural, missiological, and pedagogical factors. Thigpen (2023) calls this four-step approach "ethnoscopic analysis" (30).

Education in the Philippines (Cultural Lens)

Filipinos highly value their children learning English, as I can attest from having two children in a Philippine school. As English is the language of well-educated, successful individuals (Box 2014, Chapter Perception of Literacy by Oral Societies, para. 1), a considerable portion of our curriculum is devoted to instructing students from rural areas in proper English. I agree that "English is becoming the lingua franca of Christianity in the twenty-first century" (Dörnyei 2009, 156). English is so ubiquitous in theological education in the Philippines that some see a need to add "theological English" to the curriculum (Gaston-Dousel 2011, 65). While acknowledging the benefits of using English, I also see how it poses a challenge for most of my students.

Oral learners start with real-life problems, or as Ong (2002) puts it, "Close to human to the lifeworld" (42–43). Kolb's (1984) experimental learning theory is integral to the Philippines curriculum (Corpuz & Salandanan 2015, 198). When theory is not separated from praxis, learning becomes "truly effective" (Johnson 2017, 47). Connecting theory and praxis fits Filipinos' learning preferences, but in reality practical aspects of experiential learning fall short. Instead, the focus is on input rather than the output or competencies of the students (Wiggins & McTighe 2005, 15). The taxonomy of Bloom et al. (1956) is used to guide teacher's accessing their student's learning achievements throughout the Philippines (Bilbao et al. 2015, 75–80). Teachers are encouraged to be "focused on higher-order thinking questions"; however, a recent study revealed that multiple

choice is the most used evaluation tool by teachers, showing that in praxis lower-order thinking questions are prioritized (Mohammad et al. 2023).

Lingenfelter (2001) rightfully points out that contextualization is not applied to theological education (449–450). Western theological education is often embraced by local leaders and seen as authoritative (Mercado 2002, 302). Non-Western seminary students have come to expect Western ways of doing theology (cf. Bird & Dale 2022, 274). "Global institutions function as if oral communicators were not the majority, as if reading were the norm" (Thigpen 2022, 4). "Local trainers may have trained elsewhere and when they return to their local area, forget their old ways and use the foreign ways they were trained in" (Bird & Dale 2022, 283). When I see my students or talk to students from other seminaries, I too often feel that they are being educated away from their congregations. Madinger (2017; 2022) calls this phenomenon the *Orality Gap* (OG) (55–56, 51–52).

Jesus, the Master Teacher (Scriptural Lens)

The Bible offers numerous teaching examples, but I will only briefly touch on some methods Jesus used. He spoke in ordinary language, employed close-to-life stories, questions, and repetition, and focused on execution.

The New Testament was written in Greek, the lingua franca of the Eastern Mediterranean of the time. However, Jesus spoke Aramaic, the language of the ordinary people, as evident in Mk. 5:41 and Mt. 27:46. Jesus was also aware of the literacy level of his audience. When quoting the Old Testament to ordinary people, he consistently began with the phrase "You have heard that it was said…" (Mt. 4:14; 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 27:9). In contrast, when addressing the chief priests, elders, Sadducees, scribes, or Pharisees, he employed the phrases, "It is written…" or "You have read…" (12:3, 5, 19:4, 21:13, 16, 42, 22:31).

Jesus's stories related to the everyday experience of ordinary people of his time. In Lk. 15, Jesus shared three stories, illustrating God's delight when even one sinner repents. People connected with these stories, and repeating the same truth in different narratives is a powerful tool for making that truth memorable. Unlike plain abstract truths taught as systematic theology, the narrative engages the heart; it "involves, disturbs and challenges us and as such is to be preferred" (Bausch 1991, 27).

When Jesus's parents found him in the temple after a three-day search, he was listening to the teachers and asking them questions (Lk. 2:46). Some of his questions were rhetorical (Mt. 16:26), others responded to trick questions (Mt. 21:23-27, 22:15-22), and sometimes his questions challenged his followers (Mt. 16:13-15).

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus challenged his future disciples to follow him (Mk. 1:17, 19; Jn. 1:43) and to see for themselves (Jn. 1:39, 46). Jesus's teaching was connected to real-life situations, one way oral people learn best (Bird & Dale 2022, 275; Ong 2002, 42–43). He did not merely preach servanthood; he demonstrated it by humbly washing his disciples' feet (Jn. 13:4-5). "Oral learners favor learning in real-life contexts and can, in fact, learn abstract principles through this means" (Bird & Dale 2022, 284).

Jesus's teaching can be described as performance-based pedagogy (Bird & Dale 2022). This instruction puts more value on execution than knowledge (274). An example is his end-time

speech, where Jesus clearly favors those who do what is right to those who acknowledge his lordship with their lips only (Mt. 25:34-46). Jesus wants his followers to be doers of God's will (Mt. 7:21). Before his disciples fully grasped the entirety of Jesus's mission, he sent them out to proclaim the arrival of God's Kingdom. Initially, Jesus sent twelve (Lk. 9:1-6), then 72 disciples to nearby areas (Lk. 10:1-12). When they returned, Jesus debriefed them and connected their experiences with additional lessons (Lk. 10:17-20).

Spreading the Word as it was Taught (Missiological Lens)

As seminaries largely remain uncontextualized (Lingenfelter 2001, 449–450), pastors and ministers keep using Western materials that are, at best, translated into local languages to disciple new believers (Song 2006). Sunquist (2017) contends that the principal duty of theological contextualization lies with the indigenous converts themselves (258). However, this is a tall order if they have been accustomed to Western theology (de Mesa 2016, Chapter Experiencing God through the culture, paras. 1–2).

What holds true for education also extends to evangelism. I have been involved in campus ministry for over a decade and have collaborated with various ministries in the Philippines. The most commonly used evangelism strategies are based on Western materials like the *Four Spiritual Laws*, *Evangelism Explosion*, or variations of these methods. As Filipinos tend to make decisions without having fully understood and thought through them (cf. Acoba & Asian Theological Seminary 2005, 5–6), a more obedience-oriented approach to evangelism seems more intuitive to me in this context, as a "sinners prayer" is not a good indicator of true repentance.

Knowledge and being should not be separated (Miller 2023). Differentiating between them can be attributed to the Enlightenment. Our primary focus on teaching knowledge "has unnecessarily fragmented generations" (Johnson-Miller & Espinoza 2018, 157). Christian education must refocus on heart transformation over intellectual information: "The whole person is generally overlooked in catechesis and other forms of formal Christian education in the church" (166).

Having interacted with numerous Philippine sending agencies, I see a close resemblance to their Western counterparts. Western missionaries often go as highly trained and well-funded experts, and that pattern can be replicated only by rich Filipino churches. Most Filipinos abroad are *overseas Filipino workers* (OFW) employed as household helpers, cooks, seafarers, or construction workers, creating vast opportunities for bottom-up missions (Sunquist 2017, 65). Western missiology does not have all the answers to this approach, leaving Filipino churches the chance to find their own theology of missions instead of relying on Western methods. Bottom-up missions is also exemplified by Jesus, who proclaimed that he came to serve (Mk. 10:45).

Relating Pedagogies to Jesus's Way of Teaching (Educational Lens)

What are some pedagogical approaches suitable for oral learners? The social aspect of teaching is of primary importance in the Philippines. Learning cannot be divorced from its social environment (Gibbons 2020, 2803), as many researchers have confirmed (Lave 2009, 202). Saiyasak (2023) demonstrates that relationships are the key to effective teaching in Southeast Asia (4-7), where "Christian teachers must build relationships with students before they can teach effectively" (Lingenfelter & Lingenfelter 2003, 42). According to Thigpen's (2020) "Learning Quadrants," as depicted in Figure 1, oral learners trust in people rather than in printed text (124). For oral people, print text reflects only the author, but communal knowledge is backed by many trusted people

(Lingenfelter & Lingenfelter 2003, 38). Jesus had a close relationship with his disciples as they followed him (Mk. 1:17, 19, Jn. 1:43) and observed his ministry (Jn. 1:39, 46).

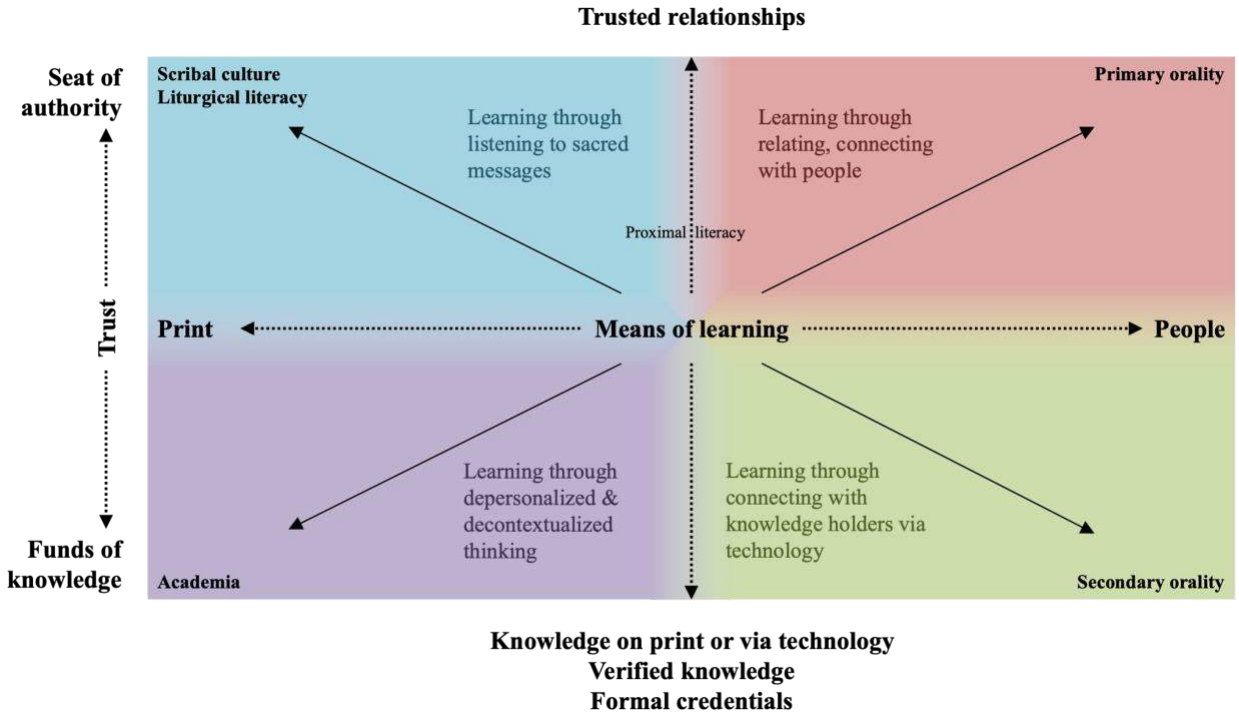

Figure 1: Learning Quadrants adapted from Thigpem (2020, 124)

Newbigin (1992) points to the Enlightenment as the reason for "the shift from a way of seeing truth as located in narrative, to a way of seeing truth as located in timeless, law-like statements" (6). Still, stories are at the core of worldview formation and transformation (Storr 2021, 51; Wesch 2018, 320–332). Stories cause us to shed hormones that can make us emotionally more receptive (Phillips 2017). Savage (1996) introduced the "Story Listening Pyramid", showing that through stories listener and storyteller connect emotionally, as shown in Figure 2. Stories connect the narrator with the audience on a brain-to-brain level (Silbert et al. 2014). The relationship between the storyteller and the listener is vital for accepting the message (Mburu 2019, 108).

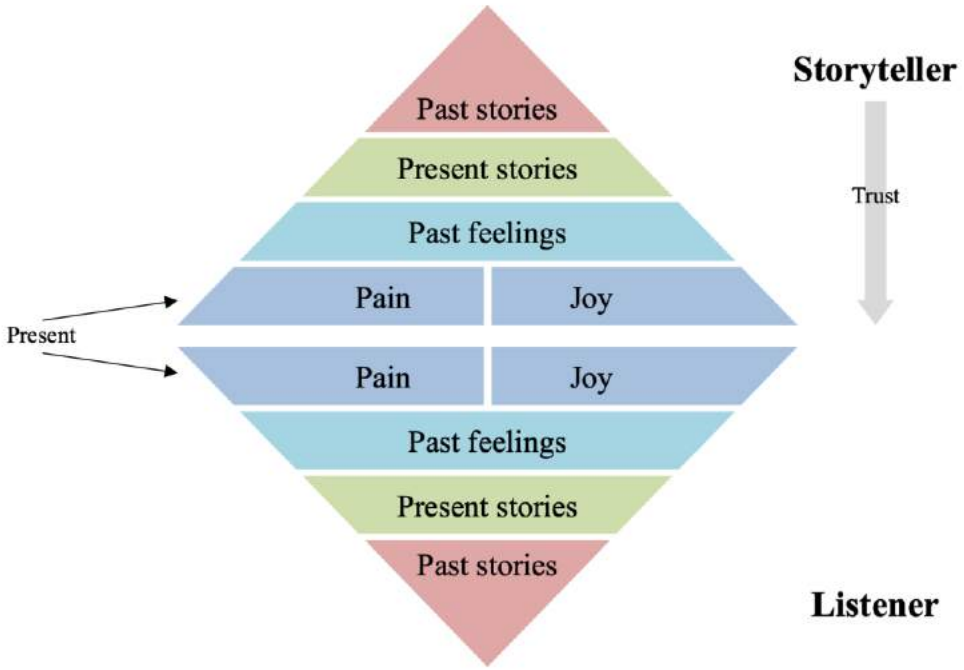

Figure 2: Story Listening Pyramid adapted from Madinger (2022, 84)

It was Bruner (1960) who suggested that students revisit the same topic year after year, building on the previous knowledge, calling it the "Spiral Curriculum" (13), as seen in Figure 3 below. This way of thinking suits oral learners as they start from the general, narrowing it down to the specific (Shaw 2021, 50) or from the known to the unknown (Mburu 2019, 7), from the "whole to part" (Steffen 2009, 109). Spiral thinkers are inclined to share seemingly unrelated stories that collectively illustrate a central point from various perspectives as they tend to use a more supple communication style by which they prepare the listener to accept the point, often without even mentioning the point directly (Maggay 2023).

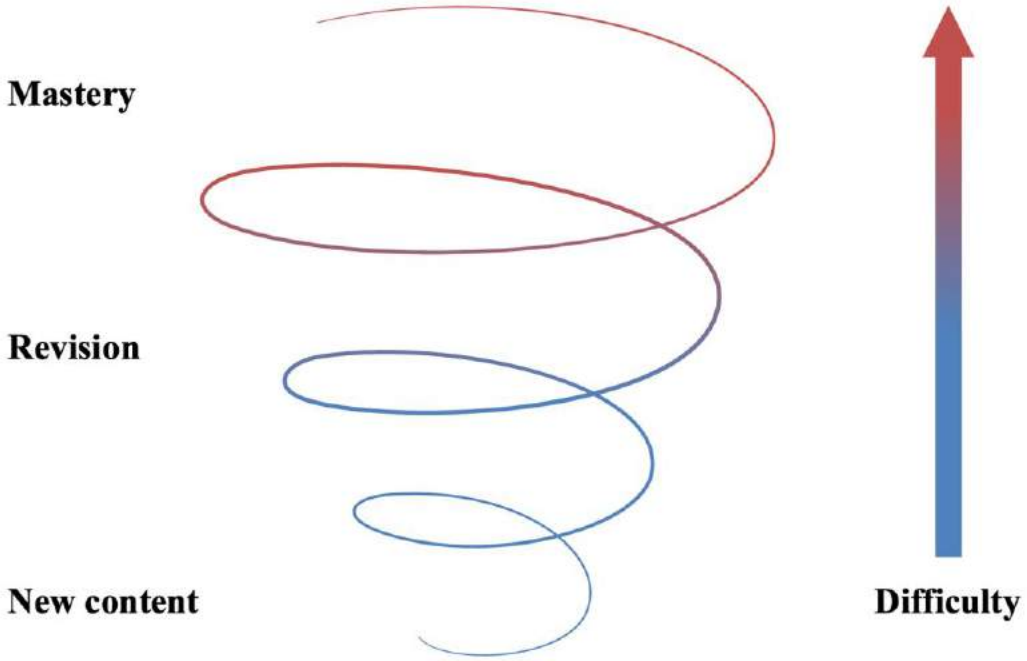

Figure 3: Spiral Curriculum (Brunner 1960)

Collaborative learning focuses on groups and must be connected to "real-world problems" (Crumly 2014, 29) and situational (Ong 2002, 48–56). Hofstede's (2010) data shows that Filipinos tend to be collectivistic, while most Western countries tend to be strongly individualist (97). Learning in groups is more effective as people learn faster, remember better, and can help each other's understanding (Watson & Watson 2014, 188–210). The mix of real-world and theoretical learning, often in groups, is known as *experiential learning*, recognized as a very effective way to learn (Johnson 2017, 47).

Wenger (2009) coined the term *communities of practice* to describe groups of individuals who come together, intentionally or unintentionally, to collaboratively learn and solve real-world problems within a shared field of human activity. Most Filipinos are literate, but they prefer to learn through oral communication. Craftsmen, for example, have told me they obtained their skill "on the job," not in formal settings. *Active learning* involves hands-on learning, providing immediate feedback to learners, fostering critical thinking, and encouraging the application of higher-order thinking skills to analyze, synthesize, solve problems, and evaluate outcomes (Crumly 2014, 29).

Case-based learning usually starts with a story or a case (Crumly 2014, 30–31). Jesus often used this approach for deep interactions. For example, it was after telling the Parable of the Sower (Mt. 13:1-9) that he elaborated on its meaning (Mt. 13:18-23). Combining experiential learning with case-based learning can be more effective because the story at the beginning of a learning session is replaced by a real-life experience. Going even a step further, we can look at *embodied cognition*. The theory states that learning, physical experiences, and emotions are interconnected (Adams 2021). All these different pedagogies can be seen in Jesus's teaching.

Using Oral Pedagogies to Transform Seminary Education

Can we implement oral pedagogies as used by Jesus in Philippine seminaries, given that students are used to the Western system and are expected to adjust to the teacher (Crabtree & Sapp 2004, 107)? Rather than offering specific recommendations, I will share my ongoing changes with my students, focusing on fostering transformative learning beyond mere information acquisition.

Because English is often seen as superior, I try to elevate the significance of heart-language communication. In class, I predominantly use Tagalog with some commonly used English terms. Additionally, students can engage in classroom discussions and do their assignments in Ilonggo or Cebuano. To reduce the need for reading assignments, I often incorporate videos, songs, illustrations, stories, and even games into my teaching. Moreover, I encourage my students to submit their assignments in their preferred formats: visual arts, mind maps, videos, or voice recordings. Physical movement and other visual forms of expression are encouraged in my class because these have proven to reduce students' cognitive load while improving learning simultaneously (Ferreira 2021). Whenever possible, I use stories to illustrate a point and as the primary teaching point. I have transformed my syllabi from lists of abstract concepts to narratives, creating an engaging student experience. During the first day of class, we enjoy reading the syllabus together, as different students are assigned to various characters in the story.

Filipinos do not want to stand out from a group even for their academic achievements (Lingenfelter 2001, 455). Learning should not be competitive but collaborative. In the course Community Development, my students collaboratively start and maintain an organic vegetable garden, graded not by the produce quantity but by their collaboration and teamwork.

Relational learning is essential. Chatting about personal and impersonal issues before and in class is a way of connecting (Crabtree & Sapp 2004, 116). In my Anthropology class, we start with a movie night featuring *Smallfoot*. Later in the course, we analyze the film, as it offers valuable insights into culture and worldview. We enjoy it as we bond and engage in this story, making learning fun and memorable.

Rather than grading exams, my students face post-class challenges related to the topic. For instance, after studying culture shock, they document themselves engaging in an activity unusual for their culture for a week, like sitting on the floor and placing their plate on the chair at mealtimes. This experiential learning is more memorable than memorizing definitions for exams. Many challenging tasks are performed as groups and submitted as multimedia into a group chat. Students still need to research, but we all enjoy their vlogging as, for example, the students picture themselves in the ancient cities of the Roman Empire and conduct interviews with attendees of Paul's sermons. Students are encouraged to watch each other's submissions and comment on them to learn from each other.

Do you know how learning a new language in a foreign country feels? Try to memorize to say and write the Great Commission in Japanese. Theory cannot replace the experience of struggling to accomplish something in praxis. For the course Campus Ministry, we follow a dynamic approach. First, we invite representatives from three campus ministries to share their strategies. Afterward, my students collaborate to devise a plan for implementing campus ministry on a nearby campus. Learning takes a hands-on approach in the latter half of the course as students actively engage in campus ministry rather than studying within the classroom.

In the subject Partnership Development, we collectively select a one-week evangelistic outreach project the class will undertake. Following my instruction on connecting with partners,

newsletter writing, and presentation skills, the students are tasked as groups with preparing newsletters and delivering presentations in churches to secure funding for the implementation of our outreach project. Nothing I can theoretically teach in class could prepare my students better than their experience.

Conclusion

Examining the seminary environment in the Philippines through cultural, biblical, missiological, and pedagogical lenses has been instrumental in identifying the divergence between my students' learning preferences, Jesus's ways of teaching, and conventional Western teaching approaches. Consequently, I have embarked on a transformational journey in my own teaching methodology, striving to align it more closely with the teaching methods of Jesus, as this approach resonates better with how my students learn best. "Christian practices do not require schools or blackboards or textbooks; they are a form of discipleship that fits well with traditional learning strategies of observation and imitation and of learning by doing" (Arrington 2018, 224).

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Pioneering Precision and Transparency in Mission Work

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Abstract

In the realm of mission work, the challenge of acquiring precise data is a constant struggle. This difficulty often leads to a profusion of figures being disseminated, which may lack specificity and clarity. Such ambiguity can result in stakeholders viewing the data with skepticism, a situation that could damage the mission organization's reputation. Therefore, data accuracy and transparency are paramount for effective mission work and for maintaining the integrity of our faith-based endeavors.

The Harvest Church Database and KapTrack are innovative tools designed to enhance the accuracy and clarity of mission work data. Harvest provides a clear snapshot of the Body of Christ's status across various geographical and church organizational structures. On the other hand, KapTrack is a multifaceted tool proficient in gathering data for diverse applications, such as tracking metrics on believers and churches, conducting surveys, monitoring resource usage, facilitating research, and tracking progress towards ministry goals. It also enables the creation of custom report dashboards, offering a more intuitive understanding and visualization of this data.

These tools are committed to preserving the integrity of faith-based endeavors by ensuring data accuracy and transparency. They serve as a beacon of trust and reliability in the mission field, illuminating the path towards a more informed and effective outreach.

Key Words: AFT, churches, dashboard, data accuracy, Harvest Database, integrity, KapTrack, software

Introduction

In 2002 I, Dwight Martin, software entrepreneur and son of a missionary, received a call from God to return to my native Thailand. I sold my business and, with my wife, journeyed back to Thailand from the U.S. in 2006. Certain Thai church leaders, remembering my parents' significant contributions as Christian literature suppliers in the 60s and 70s, quickly recognized who I was.

The church leaders, recognizing my technical skills, requested my help to be the Research Coordinator for the Thai Church.[1] These leaders wanted crucial data about the Christian community in Thailand, including the number of churches, the Christian population size, and their geographical distribution. As a result, I developed the eSTAR Foundation for the update and management of all the data (eSTAR Foundation n.d.a.) and the Harvest Church Database (Global Harvest n.d.).

Over a decade later, I identified a need for ministries to securely capture, retrieve, and visualize their mission data in near "real time." To address this need, I developed "KapTrack" (Kaptrack n.d.). This tool allows users to create custom "capture" forms for remotely collecting many types of data. Each form is tailored to the ministry's specific needs. KapTrack also features "intelligent" dashboards, making data visualization and understanding straightforward and accessible.

Both KapTrack and Harvest are secure web-based software applications, making them accessible worldwide. KapTrack is also mobile-friendly, with an app compatible for both

iPhone and Android smartphones. These tools have significantly advanced data collection and visualization in mission work.

Harvest

Upon my arrival in Thailand, I was quickly recognized by the members of the Thailand Evangelism and Church Planting Committee. This committee was composed of top Thai Christian leaders from all the major church affiliations (Dahlfred 2009). Their goal was ambitious yet straightforward: to reach the nation for Christ. However, they faced a significant challenge. They lacked crucial data about the Christian community in Thailand, including the total number of churches, the size of the Christian population, and their geographical distribution. This lack of data was a significant roadblock to their mission.

With dual Thai and US citizenship, I have extensive cultural and language knowledge of Thailand. Recognizing these capacities, along with my technical expertise and deep understanding of software systems, the Thai leaders asked me to serve as their Research Coordinator for the Thai Church. The Thai leaders believed that I could help them overcome their data challenges and gain a better understanding of the status of the Thai Church.

Leveraging my business acumen and technical skills, I agreed to take on the challenge. We assembled a research team, and we embarked on the task of collecting data on all the churches in Thailand. The cooperation of all the major church affiliations made the data gathering process relatively smooth. The next challenge lay in developing a tool to visualize the data and make it accessible to the Body of Christ in Thailand.

To meet this challenge the team developed the aforementioned Harvest Church Database. This comprehensive digital database provides a detailed directory of churches, a visual map of Christian presence, and a locator for churches. The Harvest Database is more than just a collection of data; it is a tool for believers seeking to understand the state of Christianity in their particular country. For those interested in the Thai Church, for example, Harvest offers a platform to conduct comprehensive research from multiple perspectives, enabling a thorough understanding of the Church's landscape (Church Cloud Solutions 2021a).

Maintaining an extensive database like Harvest comes with its unique challenges, especially considering the dynamic nature of churches. Churches are not static entities; they open, close, grow, shrink—and in Thailand relocate constantly. When questioned about the accuracy of the Harvest database, I offer the following thought-provoking perspective: "The data is 100% wrong, but there is nothing more right." This statement reflects the inherent challenges of maintaining a dynamic database. Certainly, only God has the complete picture, but the database's aim is to "think God's thoughts after him." The advantage of Harvest being an online platform, unlike a printed book, is its capacity for daily updates, ensuring the data remains as current as possible.

The Harvest Database's influence extends beyond Thailand. Christian leaders and organizations worldwide have expressed interest in developing a Harvest Church Database for their respective nations or organizations. Currently, Harvest is utilized in both "open" and "closed" countries. "Open" countries, where information is publicly available online, include not only Thailand but also Japan, Cambodia, the Philippines, and the Netherlands. Additionally, various ministries use Harvest as their private church database, demonstrating its global impact and versatility. Figure 1 below shows the home page of the Philippines implementation of the Harvest Database (Church Cloud Solutions 2021b):

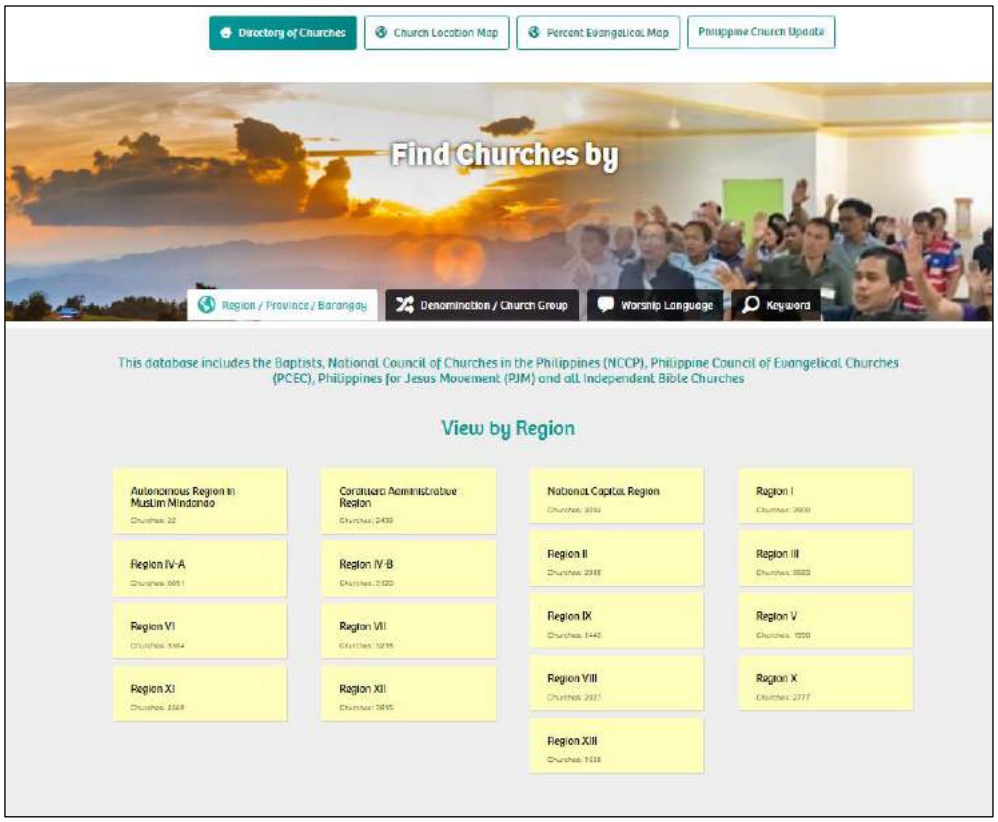


Figure 1. Philippine Church Update home page

The Harvest Church Database is a comprehensive repository of churches that serves as a tool for missionaries and Christians to help locate churches and educate themselves on the status of the Body of Christ in a nation. This database can also reveal fascinating insights about the distribution of the Christians in a country.

For instance, in Thailand the database reveals that the northern three provinces, which account for a mere 5% of Thailand's total population, are home to a staggering 50% of the country's Christian population and churches. These provinces are predominantly inhabited by various tribal groups, all identified in people group databases as an "unreached people group."

While missionaries have made significant inroads into these "unreached people groups," the data suggests that the largest segment of the population outside these groups remains largely untouched. In other words, while the focus has been on reaching the "people groups," the individual "people" have been somewhat neglected. This intriguing fact, hidden until now, was brought to light by the Harvest database, underscoring its value in guiding mission strategies.

In 2016, after examining the data and feeling disappointment with the slow spread of the gospel in Thailand, I came across Jesus's words in Mark 1:38, which sparked a change in my perspective: "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.*"* I had a profound realization that Jesus's mission was intended for the villages of the world rather than "people groups." This insight inspired a deeper exploration of the Harvest Database, extending the data analysis to include the village level, going beyond just provinces, districts, and sub-districts.

What I discovered was startling and moved me to tears. Despite 200 years of Christian influence, with my own family being involved for 76 of those years, only 5% of the villages in Thailand had a Christian presence or churches. The corollary was that a staggering 95% of Thai villages lacked any Christian presence. I was left questioning the effectiveness of previous

missionary efforts and wondering, “What in the world have we been doing?” Figure 2 below shows very clearly the data for all of Thailand as of April 2023:

Figure 2: Thai Christian Data (eSTAR Foundation n.d.b.)

This revelation highlighted the enormous task ahead and the need for a renewed focus on the needed mission work. That need raised the question as to whether or not there was a national group in Thailand specifically targeting the villages. Indeed, there was! Around the same time, a country pastor named Somsak felt a divine calling to establish 1,000 churches and welcome 10,000 new believers by 2020.

Despite the enormity of this task, Somsak stepped out in faith and began establishing house churches. As the research coordinator with all the data, in 2017 I joined forces with Somsak and dozens of church planters. Somsak and the team worked relentlessly, and by the end of 2020 the Association of Free Churches (AFT, also known as the Free in Jesus Christ Church Association, or FJCCA) had established 1,087 house churches and welcomed 10,412 new members. This achievement marked a significant milestone in their mission work. The AFT revival became well-known and was featured on the cover of the April 2019 issue of *Christianity Today* (Shellnutt 2019).

At the end of 2020, after succeeding on their 2016 vision, the leaders of AFT established a new vision for the year 2021. This new vision was to establish 800 more house churches. Using the data at my fingertips I suggested a way for the AFT church planters to be strategic, rather than random, and do something that had never been done before: to completely reach every village in one Thai province with the gospel.

Having data on all the churches in Thailand, I knew that Phichit Province had over 800 villages without any Christian presence. I suggested establishing those 800 churches strategically by reaching every village in Phichit Province with the gospel. Once a house church had been formed in every village, the AFT would establish a district church in every district to continue mentoring and growing the village house churches. So that is what the AFT leaders decided to do.

KapTrack

Before the use of KapTrack, leaders of the AFT would manually record the names of those who responded to the gospel on paper, later transferring this data into a simple database. Recognizing the limitations of this method, I developed another application to streamline this process. Instead of writing down information, leaders enter data directly into a smartphone. This process includes taking a picture of the individual and capturing the GPS location where they first heard about Jesus.

However, KapTrack was designed to do more than just that. It was built with flexibility in mind, allowing the creation of custom forms to capture any type of remote data. Moreover, since the mobile version of KapTrack does not require an internet connection, users can collect as much data as they need throughout the day and upload it later when they have internet access. This innovation significantly improved the data collection process, making it more efficient and comprehensive.

When AFT church planters venture into a new village, they traverse every road and lane in search of "persons of peace" (Luke 10). Once found, the church planters capture pertinent information about each new believer, enabling effectively returning to disciple them in their homes. As the church planters return, the house church grows organically from the original believer. Knowing where these individuals live and being able to track their discipleship growth ensures that no one is left behind due to a lack of information.

Imagine a map, teeming with dots (see Figure 3 below), each representing a person who has responded to the gospel message. Such a map is what you will see on the KapTrack dashboard. The dots are a testament to faith, showing the location of each new believer. This map is freely accessible (eSTAR Foundation n.d.c.). and provides a visual representation of more than 64,000 persons who have responded to the Gospel. Each dot represents the GPS coordinates where that person was found.

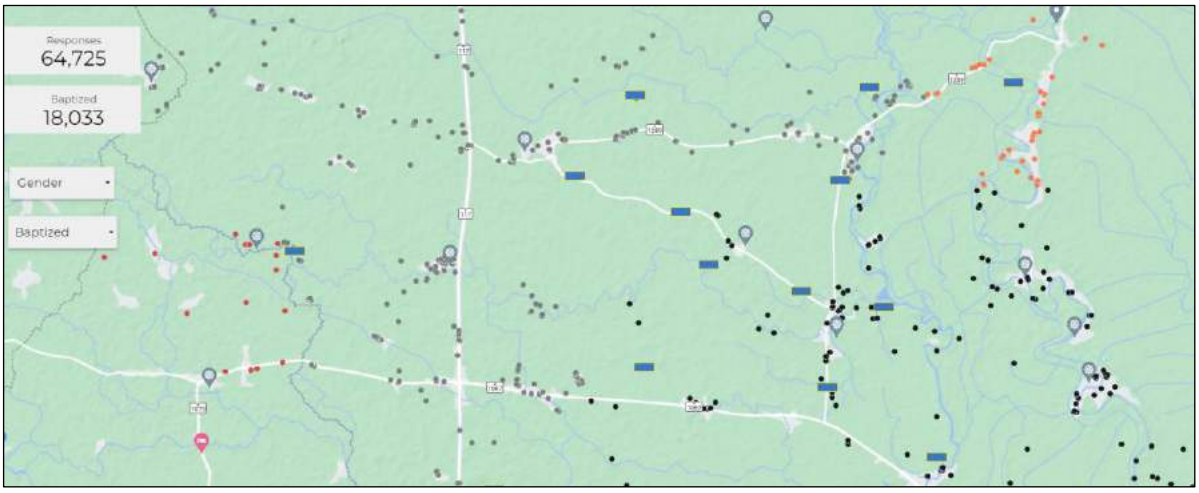
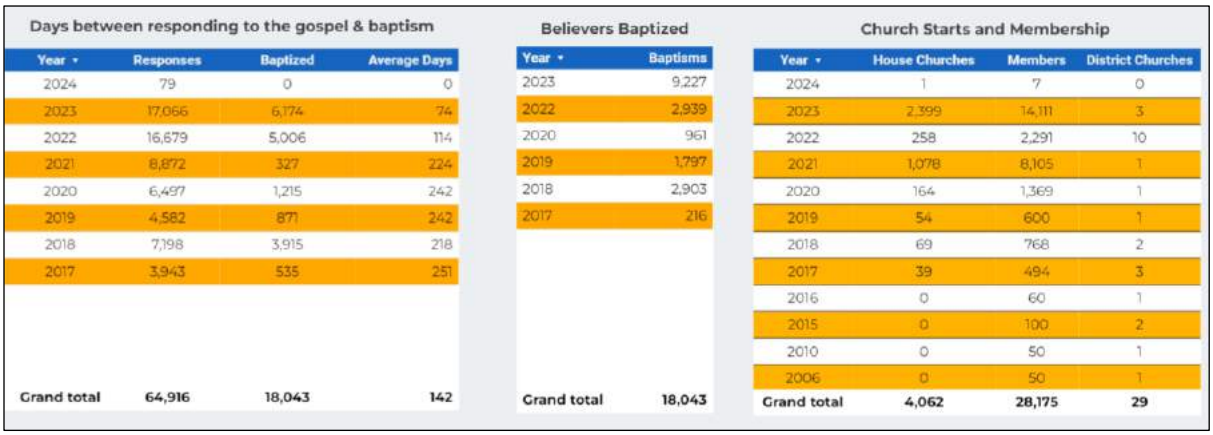


Figure 3: KapTrack Map (eSTAR Foundation n.d.c.)

AFT church planters make repeated visits to the villages, discipling the new believers and as a result many choose to be baptized. Once a house where people are being discipled has at least three baptized members, a different KapTrack form is used to mark that location as a new house church. Relevant information about this new Body of Christ is then recorded, marking another milestone in their mission work (eSTAR Foundation n.d.d.).

KapTrack is more than just a tool for tracking individuals or churches: it is also a vital asset for managing the data. It enables the creation of clear, comprehensive dashboards or "insights" that are updated daily with captured data. For example, Figure 4 below gives baptism data. These dashboards empower KapTrack administrators to generate reports on the captured information. For example, if an AFT KapTrack administrator requires information on unbaptized members, they can access this data with just a few clicks of a button. They can then view a list of unbaptized individuals who need follow-up to assess their willingness and readiness to be baptized.



Days between responding to the gospel & baptism

Year	Responses	Baptized	Average Days
2024	79	0	0
2023	17,066	6,174	74
2022	16,679	5,006	114
2021	8,872	327	224
2020	6,497	1,215	242
2019	4,582	871	242
2018	7,198	3,915	218
2017	3,943	535	251
Grand total	64,916	18,043	142

Believers Baptized

Year	Baptisms
2023	9,227
2022	2,939
2020	961
2019	1,797
2018	2,903
2017	216
Grand total	18,043

Church Starts and Membership

Year	House Churches	Members	District Churches
2024	1	7	0
2023	2,399	14,111	3
2022	258	2,291	10
2021	1,078	8,105	1
2020	164	1,369	1
2019	54	600	1
2018	69	768	2
2017	39	494	3
2016	0	60	1
2015	0	100	2
2010	0	50	1
2006	0	50	1
Grand total	4,062	28,175	29

Figure 4: KapTrack Baptism Data (eSTAR Foundation n.d.c.)

KapTrack also serves as a significant source of encouragement. It not only identifies the "gaps" or areas that still need outreach but also allows AFT church planters to track their progress and the areas they have covered. The dashboards offer a deeper understanding of their members' demographics, such as age and gender. Users can delve into these visual representations and conduct thorough research on the data. This feature facilitates effective management of the AFT revival, solidifying KapTrack's role as an indispensable tool in the AFT's mission work.

How KapTrack Helped Transform a Province

Phichit Province has been steeped in Christian mission history as "hard soil," symbolizing the immense challenges faced in spreading the gospel there. However, the AFT church planters discovered an unexpected truth: the people of Phichit were not resistant to the gospel but in fact they yearned for it. This revelation ignited a determination within the AFT to transform Phichit's "hard soil" into fertile ground for faith.

To accomplish this transformation, the AFT deployed around 40 church planting teams. Each team consisted of about four members and was assigned to share the gospel in 20 villages, returning weekly for over half a year to nurture and disciple the new believers until they were firm in their faith. These volunteer teams formed the backbone of the AFT mission.

However, just as the AFT church planters set out on their journey, they encountered an unforeseen obstacle: the COVID-19 pandemic. This global crisis threatened to halt their progress and cast a shadow of uncertainty over their efforts. Yet, fortified by their faith, these leaders were undeterred. They turned to prayer, seeking God's guidance amidst adversity. In response to their steadfast faith, God showed them an opportunity. They decided to distribute masks and hand sanitizers while sharing the gospel, transforming their mission into a beacon of hope during a time of fear and uncertainty. This act of service allowed them to connect with the community on a deeper level, fostering meaningful conversations about faith and demonstrating God's love and care in these challenging times. Thus, COVID-19 became an opening to reach the entire province.

Their journey involved traversing every road and lane, seeking "persons of peace" and to share Jesus with them. Their mission was not just to spread the word but also to establish house churches, following the Apostle Paul's approach in the book of Acts. They faithfully recorded the fruit of their efforts into KapTrack.

Over two transformative years, the AFT church planters' efforts bore fruit. House churches sprouted in every village, and district churches were established in all 12 districts of Phichit

Province. The transformation was astounding. Phichit Province, once the seventieth least reached province (out of 77 provinces) with only 477 believers, rose to become the fourth most reached province in Thailand with over 20,000 people responding to the gospel.

Having successfully established house churches in every village of Phichit Province, complete with twelve newly established district churches and designated leadership, the AFT mission turned its attention to the next province—Phetchabun. In 2023, leveraging data from Harvest and KapTrack, the AFT managed to form one or more house churches in each of Phetchabun's 1,562 villages and establish district churches in all 11 districts.

Looking ahead, the AFT has charted an ambitious plan. In 2024, they aim to reach every corner of Nakorn Sawan Province, followed by Khon Kaen Province in 2025, and both Chaiypum and Phitsanulok Provinces in 2026. After 2026 they will seek God's guidance where to go next.

The two electronic data-gathering tools described above, Harvest and KapTrack, have been instrumental in guiding and recording the results of the AFT mission. Without these two platforms, accomplishing the monumental evangelistic and church-planting task just sketched would have been significantly more challenging, if not impossible. The journey of faith continues, one province at a time.

Conclusion

KapTrack, as illustrated in the Phichit example, has been instrumental in discipling a multitude of believers and initiating thousands of house churches. However, its capabilities extend far beyond this use case. KapTrack is a versatile tool that can be employed in any scenario where data, whether remote or paper-based, needs to be collected into a form, custom-built for each use case.

But KapTrack is more than just a data capture tool. It includes data "tracking" or database lookup with extensive search capabilities, and ultimately KapTrack boasts a powerful reporting feature that can create custom dashboards. These dashboards, filled with maps, graphs, tables, and more, bring the data to life, making it easier to understand and interpret the information.

KapTrack empowers ministries by providing an efficient way to manage their data. Furthermore, the end user, or church planter, benefits immensely from seeing the fruits of their labor. This visibility not only motivates the church planters to strive for more and do better, but it also allows everyone to witness the transformative power of their work. In essence, KapTrack is a testament to the remarkable results that can be achieved when technology and faith come together.

Finally, KapTrack serves as a communication tool for ministry donors. It enables the ministry to demonstrate how donations are being effectively utilized to further the mission. This transparency fosters trust and encourages continued support from the donor, making KapTrack an essential fund-raising tool.

KapTrack and Harvest are innovative tools that play distinct yet complementary roles in the realm of missions. KapTrack offers a detailed perspective, tailored to cater to diverse data needs. On the other hand, Harvest provides a broader view of the Body of Christ at various levels—national, provincial, or even denominational across multiple nations.

Harvest empowers national leaders, mission leaders, and denominations to devise comprehensive church planting strategies. But its benefits extend beyond strategy formulation.

It facilitates communication among churches and ministries and provides extensive research capabilities to truly understand the "Status of the Church."

At their core, KapTrack and Harvest are more than just data management tools. They are catalysts for understanding, communication, and strategic planning within the mission and donor community. They serve as bridges, connecting individuals, communities, leaders, and donors in the shared journey of spreading Jesus's love and helping complete the Great Commission.

These tools transcend the realm of technology. They embody a commitment to fostering understanding, nurturing growth, and building trust. They serve as conduits, linking individuals and communities, and facilitating the sharing of faith and love. In essence, they are not just tools but companions in the mission of faith.

For those interested in learning more, I encourage you to visit https://kaptrack.com to learn more about KapTrack and http://globalharvestmap.com to learn about the Harvest Church Database These platforms offer a wealth of information and insights, serving as invaluable resources in the journey of faith.

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[1] In this article, "the Thai Church" refers to what traditionally many have called "Protestant" churches.

Daniel J. Fleming's Planetary Missiology for a Broken World

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Abstract

This article traces what it calls the "planetary missiology" of Daniel J. Fleming. In a world in which nationalistic ideologies are sacralized by different religions such as Islam in Iran, Hinduism in India, Buddhism in Myanmar, and evangelical Christianity in the United States, Fleming offers a planetary missiology of engagement that embraces differences through mutuality in worship, reading of sacred texts, and peaceful cooperation while at the same time holding the uniqueness of Christ for such encounters.

Key Words: interreligious dialogue, larger self, mutuality, planetary missiology

Introduction

Daniel J. Fleming (1877-1969) was one of the most distinguished missiologists of his time, a missionary to India for twelve years, a prolific writer, and a seminary professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York. His contribution to the field of missiology is vast, using his theory and his faith to write 30 books on missionary subjects (Hutchison 1987, 150). From the beginning of his career, Fleming had a vision for world unity and world Christianity. This article reviews some of Fleming's writings where he developed the idea of what it meant to be a planetary Christian. This theme sets the precedent from which to demonstrate that Fleming's missiology was global in its scope and a forerunner of the field of world Christianity.

The article first places Fleming in his historical context from the end of the nineteenth century—when Fleming was entering adulthood—through World War II. Second, Fleming's books *Marks of a World Christian*, *Whither Bound in Missions*, and *Attitudes Towards Other Faiths* are reviewed to convey the broader scope of Fleming's missiology. Finally, the article uses Fleming's 1946 *Bringing Our World Together: A Study of World Community* to demonstrate that Fleming's career as a missiologist was dedicated to the idea of world Christianity through his planetary missiology.

Daniel Fleming and Internationalism

Daniel Fleming was born into a Presbyterian family in Xenia, Ohio, but never had any intentions during his youth to become a missionary or minister. It was not until his college years at the College of Wooster in Ohio that the spark of serving God first came to his life. It was through the ministry of J. C. R. Ewing, a Presbyterian missionary on furlough, who convinced Fleming of a short-term assignment as a math teacher at Forman Christian College in Lahore, India (Hoyle 1998, 486). For three years (1898-1901), Fleming taught classes of math and science in the prestigious school. This experience transformed his life dramatically to the point that he claimed he was "reincarnated" through a spiritual awakening (Hoyle 1998, 457). That awakening motivated him to pursue a theological degree at Union Theological Seminary and a master's in physics at Columbia University, where he lived for three years. He did further studies in chemistry at the University of Chicago and was ordained by the Presbyterian

Church in 1903. In 1904, he married Elizabeth Cole and began an eight-year missionary career in Lahore.

When the family returned to the United States for a furlough leave of two years, medical complications kept Fleming from going back to India. He enrolled in a doctoral program at the University of Chicago, finishing with a dissertation entitled, "Devolution in Mission in Administration" in 1914. He had a long academic career at Union Theological Seminary in New York from 1915 to 1944, exploring topics of missionary work in relation to the social sciences, interreligious and cultural encounters, missiology, and Christian aesthetics (Hoyle 1998, 487).

During Fleming's missionary assignment, World War I was in its beginnings. After the war, a new spirit of internationalism was emerging to alleviate the horrors of the conflict. Dana Robert has argued that Protestant missionaries not only embraced internationalism as a source for the missionary enterprise but also "helped to shape it, participated in it, and both defended and critiqued it at a grassroots level. The missionary movement after World War I in Anglo-American Protestantism functioned within the globalizing discourse of internationalism" (Robert 2002, 50). The purpose of internationalism was to "reestablish friendships across national boundaries… an agenda of pacifism and international unity." Robert continues, "The post-war American mission focus on 'world friendship' represented a combination of pacifism, inter-racial reconciliation, and vision of global unity" (Robert 2002, 52).

Fleming exemplified this post-war trend by embracing internationalism as a new missionary commitment. He claimed,

> In a day when the nations of the earth are awakening to the claims of brotherhood, and when inter-national trust and good will are being stressed as the great way to peace and prosperity, people are beginning to recognize foreign missions as one of the most effective movements in human history. Inter-nationalism has been implicit in Christianity from the beginning. Its service, its message, its salvation could not be confined to individual, to family, or to community, but must be grasp nothing less than the whole world (Fleming 1922, 116).

Fleming believed that Christian missions could bring a planetary movement for peace rooted in the brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. The dedication of missionaries to proclaim Christ as the Prince of Peace was conducive to world friendship. Fleming promoted and articulated the new ideology of the internationalization of the world, striving for a better world of peace, unity, human rights, and equality among the nations.

Fleming's Idea of the Larger Self

In 1919 Fleming published *Marks of a World Christian* in which he articulated the influence that world Christianity should have in the world. In quite triumphalist terms, he perceived Christianity as a religion that could bring peace and be the principal religious force in the world through his planetary missiology of the "larger self." In his perception of the meaning and duties of a world Christian, Fleming argued that "indissolubly knit together are me, other folks, and God" (Fleming 1919, 1). Fleming saw himself as part of

a triangular relationship which included humanity and God in solidarity on the affairs on earth. He called this interrelationship among self, other, and God the "larger self." It was most likely that this idea of the larger self was a product of his missionary career in India. His experiences in India in a cultural setting that valued community and self-denial were essential to his planetary missiology. He recounted how prizes were awarded in schools in India where the rewards were intended to promote group loyalty rather than the individual selfishness of Western schools. He noted that, "instead of rewarding the top boys of the classes, they give a prize to the top class of the school, that is, the class which obtains the highest average in marks all round, for the body, mind, and soul" (Fleming 1921, 139). The selfless action from the winners was to spend the prize not on themselves but for the community by buying books for the library, decorating the school, or charity for the poor. For example, "every winter the boys help by cutting up firewood for those who are too poor to pay woodcutters, and for those houses where there are only women who could not do heavy work" (Fleming 1921, 141). Fleming reflected that, through the students' selfless acts of mercy, Jesus Christ was concrete and practical in their lives and thereby creating a connection between self, God, and the larger self.

Fleming argued that for Christians to understand the complexity of the self they should addressed the significance of such words as "selfish" and "unselfish." For Fleming, "unselfishness does not mean lack of self, for all that we do must be in response to some satisfaction our self gets in the act, but it refers to the kind of self that gets the satisfaction; it signified a truer sense of values" (Fleming 1919, 14). In contrast, selfishness "is used to describe a person who centers only on a part of his whole possible self and who manifestly works for this smaller so-called self" (Fleming 1919, 14). Therefore, there cannot be a true selflessness in human beings. Humans had created to their own advantage and convenience a narrow self which serves their own purposes in life.

The larger self is that conscience driven capacity to relate to the world in ways that reflect the acknowledgement of the "other" as part of oneself. Christians who understand the self in this capacity cannot be ignorant of or apathetic toward world affairs. Fleming argued, "inextricably linked up are we with a world society of immeasurable intricacy, complexity, and pervasiveness" (Fleming 1919, 17). After all, the self is surrounded by other selves who are interconnected one way or another, sharing a common humanity. Fleming's conception of the larger self challenged Christians to become world citizens. In this sense, his planetary missiology strove to create a world order that was rooted in the brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity and world friendship. The larger self as a planetary Christian should be in solidarity with the rest of humanity to create a world community that is guided by the principle of love. His planetary missiology of the larger self proclaimed that "the whole social order is Christianized" under the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Fleming 1919, 19). When the self embraces the world, it participates of the affairs of the world, and the world community becomes the community of the self. In other words, the self broadens the self's understanding of the world and readjusts to the needs of the world. It becomes involved as an active participant in those activities that bring human beings closer together, and it longs for the manifestation of God on earth through Jesus Christ and the power of the Spirit.

Fleming's Mutualist Missiology

In 1925 Fleming published *Whither Bound in Missions.* In this book, he was critical of the sense of superiority of Western Christians over the people of other cultures. He argued, "a hundred years ago European civilization naively assumed that the Caucasian had been made by God to rule the world" (Fleming 1925, 1). Missionaries should not have the assumption and presupposition that their culture and way of living was superior to those people among whom they ministered. The internationalization of the church called for a more dynamic process by the part of missionaries. Leaders from Japan and China criticized the paternalistic mentality of the missionaries in their countries. For example, Fleming quoted U. Kawaguchi from Japan:

> The sooner the missionary delegates his paternal instinct, his desire to possess and control, his endeavor to direct and to lead, to his Japanese co-laborer, the sooner his ideal of an independent, autonomous, native Church see its realization; and the more lasting will be the period of his usefulness in accomplishment of the Christian program of the Church (Fleming 1925, 9).

Statements like this one challenged the missionary societies to be more embracing of indigenous leadership in the development of native churches. It was a call to true brotherhood, sisterhood, and friendship in the spirit of unity, but at the same time it was a call to independence and indigenization. The Western mentality of superiority and corresponding interpretation of Christianity needed to be re-assessed considering the host culture.

Fleming's planetary missiology embraced mutual cooperation between the missionaries and the missionized. For him, the missionaries and Western culture must place themselves in a position of not only giving but also in an attitude of receiving what they could learn from other planetary Christians. The ideal in this cooperation was "mutual stimulation and cross-fertilization of culture, and that the better world will be achieved only when all work together from common goals in the light of a common experience" (Fleming 1925, 24). For Fleming, the church should be a "plurality of cultures each contributing its distinctive flavor" (Fleming 1925, 45). The Western missionary must recognize those people to whom they minister as equal partners in the kingdom of God. Mutuality will be a guiding principle for Fleming's theology of internationalization in his efforts to establish a church that gives space and allows the native leadership to interpret Christianity through their own cultural lenses.

Fleming and Indigenization

The main concern for Fleming in the continuance of church and ministry in the world was the total participation of nationals and the indigenization of the church. Fleming pointed out, "We now see clearly that the church that shall be able through Christ to redeem and enrich a given land must be indigenous, acclimated, naturalized to that particular land, striking its roots deep into the soil of the national life" (Fleming 1925, 154). The church should be free to participate fully in its own culture through the power of the Spirit who guides the church into all truth. Through the indigenization of the church, Fleming was advancing the theory of internationalism, and by invoking mutual

cooperation he was a forerunner of the development of contextual theologies rooted in the experiences of Christians in the majority world.

The guiding principle for Fleming's internationalization was his broader picture of world Christianity and the unity of all people under God through Jesus Christ. This broader framework can be seen in Fleming's position for mission to readjust to the cultures and religions in foreign lands. First, he insisted on changing the vocabulary of the "missionary enterprise to the development of Christianity abroad" (Fleming 1925, 165). Second, the indigenization of the churches should provoke a reactionary change in the perception of mission in Western countries. Now the whole world should be seen as the mission of the church. Third, Christian literature should be truly the inspiration and construction of nationals while the missionary should only serve as advisor. Fourth, the mission agencies should give places of leadership to nationals as soon as possible. Missionaries should be able to work under the leadership of the nationals with joy in their hearts, knowing that the work being done was for the glory of God and not for individualistic aggrandizement. Finally, the training of national leadership should be one of the main concerns for the missionary. As stated previously, the process of readjustment gave space and helped develop "the larger self" because it explores and expands the sin of narrowness in every individual (Fleming 1925, 180).

When Christians engage the other in a relationship of mutuality, the dynamism of the Holy Spirit creates a new identity which is inclusive and even pluralistic in its outlook. Because the Spirit hovers over the lives of believers, the Spirit could represent the power of God in relationships. Fleming's planetary missiology placed God, self, and others engaged in a triangular relationship of care, love, respect, growing, and becoming through their daily struggles. Therefore, humans are always searching and implementing the quality of the larger self to every experience that they went through with their fellow human beings and God. As Fleming affirmed, "The universal brotherhood of children of God is one of the great Christian convictions…. On its international and interracial side this great formula means that all men are children of God, and hence have a common divine heritage" (Fleming 1925, 196).

Fleming and Other Faith Traditions

In 1928, Fleming published *Attitudes Toward Other Faiths*. That same year, the ecumenical movement held its conference in Jerusalem. The theme of the Jerusalem conference was how to approach non-Christian religions. The tone in this conference regarding the non-Christian religions was sympathetic for the most part. A number of papers advocated fulfillment theory, including those by Nicol Macnicol, Julius Richter, Rufus Jones, John A. Mackay, R.E. Speer, and Oliver Quick. These presenters held to the supremacy of Christ over the non-Christian religions without destroying the light and truth that these religions possessed. For example, Macnicol proclaimed, "The Christ whom we preach does not destroy any gracious and beautiful trait in the character of the Hindu… he came not to destroy but to fulfil" (Yates 1994, 98). Also, an excerpt of the final report shows that Christians were interested in working together with adherents of other faiths as motivation for missionary activity. The report states:

> We call on the followers of non-Christian religions to join with us in the study of Jesus Christ as He stands before us in the Scriptures, His place in the life of the

> world, and His power to satisfy the human heart; to hold fast to faith in the unseen and eternal in face of the growing materialism of the world; to co-operate with us against all evils of secularism; to respect freedom of conscience so that men may confess Christ without separation from home and friends; and to discern that all the good of which men have conceived is fulfilled and secured in Christ (Kinnamon 1997, 395).

Fleming was a missiologist who similarly held the superiority of Christ over non-Christian religions but at the same time was very sympathetic to their contributions to civilization and ethics. In *Whither Bound in Missions,* he gave a sympathetic outlook of the non-Christian religions while holding his view of fulfillment theory. Fleming pointed out, "Every religion in its essence is seen to be a prolonged prayer for life from the unseen world" (Fleming 1925, 80). He used the terminology of *peidagogues* ("teacher") to refer to the non-Christian religions in several places. Also, he considered the sacred texts of non-Christian religions to be of inspiration and sources of ethics. Fleming's purpose in writing *Attitudes Toward Other Faiths* was "an effort to face the increasing religious contacts which lie ahead with attitudes refined by the spirit of our Master and chastened by a consideration of how we would have others act towards us" (Fleming 1928, x). One of the main reasons Fleming developed ways to engage adherents of other faith traditions was his conviction that the world was becoming a unified society, or what later would be called a "global village." He believed in the possibilities of common worship experiences with people of other faiths through prayers, songs, and the use of sacred Scriptures by the participating members. Also, he argued that a fellowship of silence could be the best way to secure common worship in a context where many different religious traditions were gathered. He pointed out, "I must be able to reach my God through another's forms of worship if this worship is to mean any real communion for me with the Divine. Otherwise, the service is not worship, but education; and I become an observer and listener, rather than a real participant" (Fleming 1928, 33).

The unity of God with humanity was one of Fleming's principal topics since his 1919 *Marks of a World Christian.* God was Creator of all that exists, and as such the religions of the world and their devotees were means to receive the revelation of God that was not uniquely ascribed to Jesus Christ. Perhaps this position is one of the biggest tensions in Fleming's planetary missiology: to hold to Christ as fulfillment of all religions and at the same time argue for the unity of God in the religions. Perhaps this paradox could be appreciated more clearly if one considers that Fleming believed that the revelation of God was operative in the entire cosmos. For him, all that is truth in other religious traditions came from the Father of Light. Fleming viewed revelation as coming not only in the biblical material but also in the revealing activity of the Spirit as already present in other faith traditions, giving them life. In this sense, he embraced the truth in other religions as means of grace because the inbreaking of the Spirit was operative in the entire cosmos.

Fleming believed that common service should contribute to the eradication of world problems, helping humanity in its unification of loving solidarity. He argued, "Service in a planetary basis should be inaugurated against narcotics, against war, against wrong conditions of labor. Ought we to seek opportunities where Christians and non-Christians may share responsibility in meeting such needs?" (Fleming 1928, 131). Humans should explore the dimensions of common worship and cooperative service in their daily

struggle to resolve the problems the world faces every day. For their part, doctrines and dogmas should be placed to the side, giving space for new explorations on issues of justice, peace, global economy, and love. Fleming sought to challenge the Western church in its dealings with the rest of humanity. He set forth his utopic vision of world peace, justice, and love as a guide for Christians to seek reconciliation with the rest of humanity.

Conclusion

Daniel Fleming was a world citizen. He dedicated his entire life as a missiologist to envision a world community of solidarity. For him the unity of humankind was an enterprise that could be achieved by the Christian Church. Fleming wrote *Bringing Our World Together* during World War II in 1946. The book continued the legacy of his ideal of a unified humanity. Fleming asserted, "This volume assumes that the vital forces of the universe are working toward a world-wide human brotherhood under God" (Fleming 1946, *vii).* Even during the dehumanizing period of World War II, Fleming still believed that humanity could achieve unity through the message of Jesus Christ by calling for active participation of men and women of goodwill on behalf of a broken world.

In producing *Bringing Our World Together,* Fleming was aware that Christianity was the solution only in the realm of religion. He recognized that the participation of people in political power was crucial for a new world order that could improve the existing conditions of his time. He called for an ecumenical collaboration not only among Christians and adherents of other faiths but also among politicians, social scientists, economists, geographers, and urban planners who wanted to build a planetary society (Fleming 1946, 92-96). Fleming's planetary missiology of the larger self-included every human being who was willing to sacrifice their ego to embrace a global citizenship that would suit the aspirations of justice and peace in the world. His planetary missiology was a call to embrace the cosmic Lordship of Jesus Christ to create the all-inclusive global family of God.

Today's world, perhaps more than ever, needs at least some type of "planetary missiology" to tackle the unsurmountable challenges of the planet. The world continues to be divided. Wars between so-called "Christian nations" and people of other religions have not stopped; the poor continue to be poor while the rich continue to get richer; the elderly are too easily overlooked or even discarded; racial and ethnic tensions boil over into violence. Christians today can decide how useful Fleming's planetary missiology might be in helping the Church and individuals deal with such ongoing problems. In any case, it is precisely because of the seemingly insoluble problems the world faces that the kind of "planetary missiology" that Fleming produced is worthy of continued study and attention.

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Call for Papers

"Awakenings, Advances, and Revivals: Noteworthy Outpourings of God's Spirit"

For Publication in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, July 2024

The theme of the July 2024 issue of *Global Missiology - English* will be "Awakenings, Advances, and Revivals: Noteworthy Outpourings of God's Spirit." This issue will be contrasted by the ensuing October 2024 issue on "Recessions and Declines." The following topics are examples of requested articles:

- Review of Recent Literature on Awakenings, Advances, or Revivals
- Case Studies of Local, Regional, or Broader Spiritual Outpourings
- Contemporary Case Studies
- Historical Case Studies
- Biblical-theological Analyses
- Missiological Analyses

Proposed titles with approximately 100-word abstracts are due February 29, 2024. Full manuscripts of approved paper proposals will be due May 15, 2024. Manuscript guidelines can be found on the *Global Missiology* website at

http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/about/submissions#authorGuidelines.

Please address all submissions and questions to globalmissiologyenglish@gmail.com.

Call for Papers

"Recessions and Declines: Noteworthy Decreases of Christianity and Its Influence"

For Publication in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, October 2024

The theme of the October 2024 issue of *Global Missiology* - *English* will be "Recessions and Declines: Noteworthy Decreases of Christianity and Its Influence." This issue will provide contrasts with the preceding July 2024 issue on "Awakenings, Advances, and Revivals." The following topics are examples of requested articles:

- Review of Recent Literature on Christian Recessions and Declines
- Case Studies of Local, Regional, or Broader Decreases in Christian Presence and Influence
- Contemporary Case Studies—including on so-called "Religious Nones"
- Historical Case Studies
- Biblical-theological Analyses
- Missiological Analyses

Proposed titles with approximately 100-word abstracts are due February 29, 2024. Full manuscripts of approved paper proposals will be due July 31, 2024. Manuscript guidelines can be found on the *Global Missiology* website at http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/about/submissions#authorGuidelines.

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