

# DIASPORA MISSIOLOGY

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, “diaspora missiology” is introduced with its content, distinctiveness and methodology. It will begin with a phenomenological description of diaspora, followed by theological reflections and missiological application.

The term “diaspora” is etymologically derived from the Greek word *diaspora* or *diaspeirein* (dispersion) and historically has been used to refer to the scattering and dispersion of Jews in the OT and Christians in the NT. In contemporary literature the word is used to describe the phenomenon of people on the move or being moved. “Diaspora missiology” is “the systematic and academic study of the phenomenon of diaspora in the fulfillment of God’s mission.” The term and concept of “diaspora missiology” is a better term, descriptive of people’s residence being different from that of their “place of origin” without prejudice (e.g. the connotation of dominance in number or power such as “majority” vis-à-vis “minority”) nor confusion (e.g. “ethnic” being inadequate in the context of multi-ethnic population).

## II. PHENOMENOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

The phenomenological description is organized as answers to the questions of who and why are people moving and to where.

### 2.1 Who are moving?

Throughout human history people moved all the time but the significant increase in scale and scope in recent decades have been impressive: i.e. about “3% of the global population, live in countries in which they were not born.”<sup>1</sup> “Urbanization” is one of the global trends of diaspora - familiar to missiologists with plenty of literature in urban missions. In addition to urbanization, there are many other patterns of diaspora, such as people displaced by war and famine, migration, immigration, etc. (see Figure 1 below)

### 2.2 Why are People Moving and to What Destination?

People move on a voluntary basis for education, freedom, economic advancement, etc. People are being moved for involuntary reasons such as, refugees, human trafficking, etc. They move because of personal and/or non-personal reasons as shown in Figure 1 and Figure2.

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<sup>1</sup> David Lundy, *Borderless Church: Shaping the Church for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. UK: Authentic. 2005, p. xiv.

**Figure 1****The Push and Pull Forces Moving People**

<b>PUSH</b>	<b>PULL</b>
- war, political persecution and abuse of power, such as danger of life, exploitation of women and children, and human trafficking	- political freedom and human equality, such as safety, gender equality and greater opportunity elsewhere including urbanization
- natural disaster	- quality of life
- man- made disasters: accident, pollution, social isolation, psychological stress	- relief, opportunity, - the “American dream”
- world poverty growth in contrast to health/wealth in countries of desirable destination	- media exposure of “greener pasture” elsewhere
- obligation to improve the state of left-behind group, that is family or community	- success story of or invitation from loved ones abroad, that is family or friends

People move on the basis of two kinds of force (i.e. voluntary or involuntary), three kinds of choice (that is, more...less...least) and with five types of orientations, outward, inward, return, onward, and stay-put, as shown in Figure 2.

Seven of the world's wealthiest countries have about 33% of the world's migrant population, but has less than 16% of the total world population.<sup>2</sup> Population growth in these countries is substantially affected by the migrant population with the global trend of moving “from south to north, and from east to west.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For more discussion, see Daniele Joly ed. *International Migration in the New Millennium: Global movement and settlement*. London: Ashgate, 2004; SOPEMI, *Trends in international migration: Continuous Reporting System on Migration*. OECD ([www.SourceOECD.org](http://www.SourceOECD.org)), Myron Weiner and Michael S. Teitelbaum, *Political demography, demographic engineering*. New York: Berghahn, 2001

<sup>3</sup> Leonore Loeb Adler and Uwe P. Gielen, eds. *Migration: Immigration and emigration in international perspective*. Praeger 2003. p.16.

Figure 2

Forces and Choice for People Moving and Five Types of Orientation<sup>4</sup>

<b>People</b> <b>Moving</b> <b>Orientation</b>	Voluntary ..... Involuntary		
	More choice/option..... less choice / fewer options..... little choice/few options		
	<b>Proactive moving</b> ← ..... → <b>Reactive</b> <b>Moving</b>		
<b>Outward</b>	- tourists - visitors - students - professional transients - business travelers	- economic/labor migrants - rural- urban migrants - anticipatory refugees - people induced to move	- refugees - expellees - internally displaced people - development displacement - disaster displacement
<b>Inward</b>	- primary migrant newcomers - family reunion/formation	- visitors, students or tourists who seek asylum	- asylum seekers - refugee seekers
<b>Return</b>	- returning migrants and refugees - voluntary repatriates - voluntary returnees - repatriates long-settled abroad	- returning migrants and refugees - mixture of compulsion - inducement and choice	- deported / expelled migrants - refugees subject to repatriation - forced returnees - repatriates long-settled abroad
<b>Onward</b>	- resettlement - dispersal by strategy	- third country resettlement of refugees	- scattering - forced dispersal
<b>Stay-put</b>	- staying by choices - household dispersal strategy	- people confined to safe havens/countries/areas	- staying of necessity - containment

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from *New Diasporas: The mass exodus, dispersal and regrouping of migrant communities* by Nicholas Van Hear, University College London, p. 44.

### III. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE PHENOMENON OF DIASPORA

Reflecting theologically, there are patterns of scattering and gathering diaspora all through the Bible. For example, there is gathering in the Old Testament (chosen people - Ex 19:4-6, Is 49:5-33, etc.) and scattering in the New Testament (Christians scattered - Ac 8, 1Pet 1:1-2, etc.). Due to the limitation of this paper, we will selectively cover only scattering in the Old Testament (see Figure 3) and gathering in the New Testament (Figure 4).

#### 3.1 Scattering in the Old Testament

The following is a summary of theological reflections on scattering in the Old Testament:

**Figure 3 - Scattering in the Old Testament**

#	WHO-WHEN	SIGNIFICANCE		
		WHERE	WHY	WHAT THEN
1	Adam and Eve - After the Fall (Gen 3:22-24)	From Garden of Eden	Sin and pride	Curse disrupted harmony and turned everything into power relationship
2	Cain - After murdering Abel (Gen 4:14-17)	From the presence Of Jehovah	Envy and pride	built a city and named after son Enoch
3	Noah and family - After the flood (Gen 9)	From ark - shelter from flood	Lives spared: Due to obedience	-blessings reassured -covenant (rainbow) established
4	Rebellious group - After plotting and rebellion (Gen 11:1-9)	From tower of Babel	Rebellion: Not willing to disperse	-confusion of tongues -social separation -linguistic barriers
5	Israelite - Conquered and exiled (OT prophets and books)	From the promised Land	Idolatry and disobedience	-disobedient punished -rebellious chastised -opportunity for gentiles extended

#### 3.2 Gathering in the New Testament

Figure 4 is a summary of theological reflections on gathering in the New Testament:

Figure 4

## Gathering in the New Testament

#	WHO-WHERE	KEY CONCEPT	SIGNIFICANCE
1	John the Baptist in wilderness (Lk 7:24- 35; 16:16)	Repentance	- Announcing the coming of the Kingdom: Forerunner for the Messiah
2	Jesus of the Gospels (general) - Calling children (Mt 19:13- 15) - invitation to banquet (Mt 22:1- 14) - calling sinners (Mk 2:13- 17; Lk 5:27- 32)	“Common grace”	- Invitation extended to all to enter the Kingdom of God - “He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (1Pet 3:9)
3	Jesus Christ (specific) - Calling of the 12 (Mt 11:1- 11) - Calling of the 70 (Lk 10:1- 20) - Parable of the Kingdom (Mt 13; 15:7- 14)	“Special grace” - Fulfilling “the already” aspect of the Kingdom of God	- Ushering some into the Kingdom of God - Power demonstrated (Mt 14:15- 21; Jn 6:1- 14; Lk 9:1- 17) - multitude followed Christ; but many rejected HIM” Jn 6:66 - “For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Mt 22:14)
4	The coming of the H.S. - Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2) - household of Cornelius (Acts 10)	Manifestations of the H.S.	- Reverse of Tower of Babel (Gen 11) - The “Church”= “called out ones” (1Cor 11:18; 12:28; Acts 15:30)
5	- Calling of the elect (Mk 13:24- 30; Jn 11:47- 53; Ro 9- 11; Rev 5:9,7:9,14:6) - Kingdom of Christ - the <i>eschaton</i> (Rev 21- 22)	fulfillment of the “not-yet” aspect of the Kingdom of God	- Prophecy fulfilled - Promise kept - Plan of salvation complete - People of God enjoined with HIM forever

#### IV. THE CONTENT AND METHODOLOGY OF “DIASPORA MISSIOLOGY”

The tasks of missiologist and missions leaders are to realize the scale, frequency and intensity of people moving both internally and internationally. They are, not only demographically to describe and analyze such phenomenon, but to also responsibly conduct missiological research and wisely formulate mission strategy accordingly.

##### 4.1 Sub-Fields and Thematic Study of Diaspora Missiology

There are many sub-fields in diaspora missiology when studying the phenomenon of people moving missiologically. For example, since people move internally within a country (e.g. workers moving to metropolitan centers for jobs, refugees moving to safe areas for security, etc.), thus migrant study is one area of diaspora missiology. People also move across political boundaries and trans-continently, so immigrant study is another area of diaspora missiology. Various ethnic groups might live in close proximity due to diaspora, therefore ethnic relationships/conflicts and conflict resolution thus would be part of diaspora missiology. Academic studies related to who, how, where and why of people moving and the resultant missiological implications are within the rubric of diaspora missiology.

In diaspora missiology, researchers are to learn much about the phenomenon of diaspora from social and political scientists (e.g. human geographer, anthropologist, sociologist, psychologist, government of various levels, etc.) in the thematic study of topics such as globalization, urbanization, ethnic and race relations, ethnic and religious conflicts and their resolutions, pluralism, multiculturalism, etc. Then they must integrate the factual findings with missiological understanding in ministry planning and missions strategy.

##### 4.2 Methodology of Diaspora Missiology

Diaspora missiology is to be an interdisciplinary study of integrating Missiology with human geography, cultural anthropology, political demography, urban/ethnic studies, communication sciences, etc.

Various methodologies (quantitative and qualitative included) and research approaches (e.g. field work, case study, statistics, survey, “action research,” etc.) are to be utilized to collect factual data (e.g. demographics, ethnography, etc.), formulate mission strategy, conduct strategic planning and draft and implement ministry plans. Therefore by the origin and nature of diaspora missiology, it has to be interdisciplinary in its approach and integrative when studying the phenomenon of diaspora and strategize missiologically. Examples of resources in diaspora studies are *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*,<sup>5</sup> *Theorizing Diaspora*,<sup>6</sup> the entry of “Diaspora Studies” within the section of

<sup>5</sup> Melvin Ember, Carol R. Ember and Ian Skoggard eds. *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World. Vol. 1 and Vol. 2.* NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum. 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur (eds.) *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader.* Oxford: Blackwell. 2003. Cohen, Robin (1997) *Global Diasporas: An Introduction.* London: UCL Press. San Juan, E. Jr. (January, 2004), “Critical Reflections on the Filipino Diaspora and the Crisis in the Philippines.”

“Resource Links” at [www.globalmissiology.org](http://www.globalmissiology.org). For further reading on diaspora missiology, please see *The New People Next Door*<sup>7</sup> and the case studies on Jews, Chinese and Filipino.<sup>8</sup>

### 4.3 Local diaspora missiology and global diaspora missiology

Diaspora is a global phenomenon yet diaspora missiology is to begin at a local level and proceed to be global in perspective. The FIN movement (Filipino International Network)<sup>9</sup> is a case in point. It began locally in Canada networking among CandMA local congregations and gradually expanded to become inter-denominational and global.

FIN is illustrative of how diaspora missiology in action is helpful and being an impetus to expand globally. Prior to 2006, there were several international gathering to deal exclusively with Filipino diaspora in various countries but the “Global Diaspora Missiology Consultation” was held at Taylor University College in Edmonton, Canada on November 15-19, 2006 sponsored by FIN. At the gathering, practitioners, researchers and missiologists gathered, not only sharing insights and experience but cooperated with their expertise globally to reach various diaspora groups, Vietnamese, Chinese, Latino, etc. A compendium volume is planned to report and publish their research findings.

## V. WHAT IS THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF “DIASPORA MISSIOLOGY”?

“Traditional missiology” is represented by organizations such as the “American Society of Missiology” (with the journal *Missiology*) and “Evangelical Missiological Society” (with the publication *Occasional Bulletin* and annual monograph). Diaspora

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<http://quezon.buffaloimc.org/news/2004/01/67.php> Sunday January 11, 2004 at 03:17 PM. Georgiou, Myria. (2001 December) “Thinking Diaspora: Why Diaspora is a Key Concept for Understanding Multicultural Europe” On-Line/More Colour in the Media: The multicultural skyscraper newsletter, Vol. 1 No. 4. Tuesday, December 4, 2001

<sup>7</sup> *The New People Next Door: A Call to Seize the Opportunities*. Occasional Paper No. 55. Produced by the issue Group on Diaspora and International Students at the 2004 Forum hosted by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in Pattay, Thailand, Sept. 29 to Oct. 5, 2004.

#### <sup>8</sup> Case study of diaspora missiology - Jew:

- Tuvya Zaretsky, “A new publication about Jewish evangelism,” Published in Global Missiology, Spiritual Dynamics, July 2005, [www.globalmissiology.net](http://www.globalmissiology.net)
- Tuvya Zaretsky, “ 2004 *Jewish-Gentile Couples: Trends, Challenges, and Hopes*, William Carey Library, Pasadena, California.

#### Case study - Chinese:

- Wan, Enoch. "[Mission among the Chinese Diaspora: A Case Study of Migration and Mission.](#)" *Missiology: An International Review* 31:1 (2003): 34-43.

#### Case study – Filipino:

- Luis Pantoja, Sidira Joy Tira and Enoch Wan, (eds.) *Scattered: The Filipino Global Presence*, LifeChange Publishing. Manila. 2004

<sup>9</sup> “Filipino International Network: A Strategic Model for Filipino Diaspora Glocal<sup>®</sup> Missions” by Sadiri Joy B. Tira Published in Global Missiology, Featured Article, October 2004, [www.globalmissiology.net](http://www.globalmissiology.net)

missiology is different in focus, conceptualization, perspective, orientation, paradigm, ministry styles and ministry pattern as illustrated in Figure 5 and Figure 6.

### 5.1 Differences In Focus, Conceptualization, Perspective Orientation and Paradigm

**Figure 5**

**“Traditional Missiology” Vis-A-Vis “Diaspora Missiology” – 4 Elements**

#	ASPECTS	TRADITIONAL MISSIOLOGY ↔ DIASPORA MISSIOLOGY	
1	<b>FOCUS</b>	Polarized/dychotomized - “great commission” ↔ “great commandment” - saving soul ↔ social Gospel - church planting ↔ Christian charity - paternalism ↔ indigenization	- Holistic Christianity with strong integration of evangelism with Christian charity - contextualization
2	<b>CONCEPTUALIZATION</b>	- territorial: here ↔ there - “local” ↔ “global” - lineal: “sending” ↔ “receiving” - “assimilation” ↔ “amalgamation” - “specialization”	- “detritorialization” <sup>10</sup> - “global” <sup>11</sup> - “mutuality” and “reciprocity” - “hybridity” - “inter- disciplinary”
3	<b>PERSPECTIVE</b>	- geographically divided: foreign mission ↔ local, urban ↔ rural - geo- political boundary: state/nation ↔ state/nation - disciplinary compartmentalization: e.g. theology of missions / strategy of missions	- non- spatial, - “borderless,” no boundary to worry, transnational and global - new approach: integrated and Interdisciplinary
4	<b>PARADIGM</b>	- 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.	- New reality in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century – viewing and following God’s way of providentially moving people spatially and spiritually. - moving targets and move with the targets

<sup>10</sup> “detritorialization” is the “loss of social and cultural boundaries”

<sup>11</sup> See Joy Tira’s study in footnote #10



## 5.2 Comparison in Ministry Pattern and Ministry Style

**Figure 6**

### Comparing Traditional Missiology and Diaspora Missiology in Ministry

#	ASPECTS	TRADITIONAL MISSIOLOGY	↔ DISPORA MISSIOLOGY
1	<b>MINISTRY PATTERN</b>	OT: calling of gentiles to Jehovah (coming) NT: sending out disciples by Jesus in the 4 Gospels and by the H.S. and in Acts (going) Modern missions: - sending missionary and money - self sufficient of mission entity	- new way of doing Christian missions: “mission at our doorstep” - “ministry without border” - “networking and partnership” for the Kingdom - “borderless church,” <sup>12</sup> - “liquid church” <sup>13</sup> - “church on the oceans” <sup>14</sup>
2	<b>MINISTRY STYLE</b>	- 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”	- no barrier to worry about - mobile and fluid, - hyphenated identity and ethnicity - no unreached people - “partnership,” <sup>15</sup> “networking” and synergy

<sup>12</sup> David Lundy, *Borderless Church*

<sup>13</sup> Peter Ward, *Liquid Church*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002

<sup>14</sup> 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*, UK: Piquant. 2007, p.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...”

<sup>15</sup> “Partnership” defined: entities that are separate and autonomous but complementary, sharing with equality and mutuality.”

## VI. MISSIOLOGICAL APPLICATION

Practical application of “diaspora Missiology” is illustrated below in terms of “missions in our door step” (see Figure 7 and publications such as *The World at Your Door: Reaching International Students in Your Home, Church, and School*<sup>16</sup>, *Missions Have Come Home to America: The Church’s Cross-Cultural Ministry to Ethnic*,<sup>17</sup> *Missions within Reach of 18 Reaching the World Next Door*,<sup>19</sup> etc.)

**Figure 7**

### The “Yes” and “No” of “Mission at Our Doorstep”

NO	YES
- No visa required	- Yes, door opened
- No closed door	- Yes, people accessible
- No international travel required	- Yes, missions at our doorstep
- No political/legal restrictions	- Yes, ample opportunities
- No dichotomized approach	- Yes, holistic ministries
- No excuse to be involved in “mission at our doorstep” USA = land of opportunity not only economically but spiritually due to the fact that God moved them here opportunity	- Yes, obligation to our neighbor = target group - Yes start locally and impact globally when they return to their homeland and Christian witness
- No sense of self- sufficiency of missions agency and unhealthy competition	- Yes, powerful partnership between various types of ministry and missions agencies. Also synergy

<sup>16</sup> Phillips, Tom and Norsworthy, Bob (1997) *The World at Your Door: Reaching International Students in Your Home, Church, and School*. Minnesota: Bethany House.

<sup>17</sup> Jerry L. Appleby, (1986), *Missions Have Come Home to America: The Church’s Cross-Cultural Ministry to Ethnic* Missouri: Beacon Hill.

<sup>18</sup> Wan, Enoch (1995) *Missions Within Reach: Intercultural Ministries in Canada*. Hong Kong: Alliance Press.

<sup>19</sup> Hopler, Thom and Marcia (1995) *Reaching the World Next Door*. Downers Grove: IVP.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

The growing phenomenon of diaspora requires phenomenological description, theological reflection, missiological adaptation as briefly outlined in this study which identifies the distinctiveness of “diaspora missiology” in contrast distinction to “traditional missiology.”