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Exit Strategy: A Case Study of the Relationship between OMF and the Alliance of Bible Christian Communities of the Philippines★



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Every missionary and every mission faces the issue of knowing when to leave. We have crossed political and cultural boundaries to bring the good news of Jesus. How long do we stay? How do you know when our job is done? Should we ever leave? I have recently met mission leaders who still work with a church that their missionaries planted 100 years ago. Their role now is to fund the projects of the church. Should they still be doing that? Will this church ever become self-funding? Does it matter?

★ 이 글은 앞의 글 “OMF와 필리핀 성서기독교동체연맹 사이의 관계에 관한 연구”의 영어원문으로 독자들의 이해를 돕기 위해 실기로 하였습니다 - 편집자주

An Exit Strategy is a clear plan indicating when the work of a mission or missionary is complete. The plan should indicate the criteria or indicators which must be in place to allow the mission or missionary to leave. The plan may also indicate the process to be followed as the mission or missionary leaves. In this paper we will consider an exit strategy in the context of cross—cultural ministry. We will also look in detail at the case study of the exit process followed by OMF in relation to ABCCOP, a Philippines national church.

An important first question to ask is, is an exit strategy biblical? There is no specific command for the cross—cultural missionary to exit, but there is the example of the greatest missionary, the Apostle Paul, and we can learn the reasons for his planned exit from the text of scripture.

A very clear example of Paul's strategy is found in Romans 15: 20—24.

It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand." This is

why I have often been hindered from coming to you. But now that there are no more places for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain.

Paul saw his responsibility as bringing the gospel to new places. If the gospel was already there, he did not need to go (v.20). When Paul has brought the gospel to a new place and the gospel had taken adequate root, Paul believed he should leave the region and find a new place to carry out his mission (v.23). Clearly not everyone had accepted the gospel when Paul determined that he should leave. Paul believed that the young church should take responsibility for the nurturing of the believers and the further spread of the gospel.

An example of Paul's strategy can be seen in the book of Titus. Although we do not have a record, Paul has been to the island of Crete to preach the gospel. There has been fruit from Paul's preaching but Paul did not feel the work in Crete was adequately mature for him to make a complete exit. The church was far from mature and the leadership structure was not adequately in place. In the book of Titus we have the record of Paul sending Titus back to Crete to put the structure

in place. Paul was not sending Titus back to build the church into a large and mature work. Rather, Titus was to work to be sure the key leadership was in place and that the leaders met the basic standard for Christian leadership. This was to guard the church from heresy and to continue the growth and maturity of the church. Paul was not expecting the church to stay accountable to him. The leaders would be ‘entrusted with God’s work’ (Titus 1:7). Paul gave specific qualifications for the leader to whom the work could be entrusted. It is significant to note that this was a very young church with many failings in their Christian maturity. Still Paul believed they could grow adequately without his involvement.

I believe that the examples from the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul make it clear that a cross—cultural missionary should have an exit strategy in place. This is an issue that is best considered as a new work is entered, but frequently it is not. However, recognizing that exit strategies have not always developed, missionaries need to begin from where they are to put these in place. Missionaries need to be asking the question of when they should leave and how they can leave in the most appropriate manner. In this paper I have identified the stages a ministry goes through and applied these to the

work of OMF International (OMF) among the lowland peoples of the Philippines. I have also proposed an exit strategy for this work. At the conclusion of this paper I will indicate the steps to be taken in preparing an exit strategy.

Historical Introduction

OMF International (OMF) has been working in the Philippines for more than 50 years. OMF came to the Philippines in 1952 following the reluctant exodus from China. The China Inland Mission Overseas Missionary Fellowship's (CIM/OMF) original reason for coming to the Philippines was to continue its outreach to the Chinese people and to do student work. These ministries were begun straight away. In the initial year of its involvement God also laid it on the hearts of mission leaders to be involved in tribal work. These were the days of the comity agreements and OMF was assigned the island of Mindoro with its six Mangyan tribes. That work has progressed to over one hundred churches and Mangyan cross-cultural missionaries being sent out to other tribes of the Philippines.

OMF began church planting among the Tagalog peoples

of the Philippines in 1954. The Tagalog language group is one of the largest in the Philippines and the language is the national language. As the mission recognized the needs among the lowland people, they initially worked with existing national churches in the Tagalog region where such churches could be found. Where there were none, OMF began to plant independent churches. Another organization was also getting underway. In 1947 following the war, the Far Eastern Gospel Crusade (FEGC, later SEND) was formed. It was made up mainly of former soldiers with a burden to reach the country for which they had fought. They also began to establish autonomous, independent churches (Allen 1990:14–15).

It was soon recognized that the churches needed to have a common identity. These churches also needed a Filipino identity. It was recognized that the approach and outcome of OMF's work was very similar to that of FEGC. It was decided to bring the churches together for fellowship. With eighteen member churches, a conference was held on November 18, 1972. By-laws were framed and ABCOP (Association of Bible Churches of the Philippines) was born. It was officially registered with the government in 1973. ABCOP later became ABCCOP (The Alliance of Bible Christian Communities of the

Philippines). From the time of the establishing of ABCOP it was agreed that all churches planted by OMF or the FEGC missionaries would become ABCOP churches. As other missions joined the relationship, they came under the same agreement.

Since the early founding days, the relationship has developed and matured. One of the unique characteristics of this relationship is that a group of independent, autonomous churches was encouraged to form an association by the missions that established the churches. From the beginning, the association was led by Filipinos with the expatriate mission organizations working alongside. The missions were committed to the strengthening of the association. The relationship has gone through both struggles and structural revisions. Two additional mission organizations joined in the relationship bringing to five the number of inter-relating organizations. ABCCOP is the central organization to which the other four missions relate.

ABCCOP as an organization is completely autonomous. Its vision statement reads: "A community characterized by mutual accountability, serving together for the purpose of establishing strong biblical churches committed to missions."

The OMF Philippines Vision Statement is complementary and reads, “To see God glorified through communities of believers in all people groups of the Philippines, transforming society and having global impact.” OMF has been working alongside ABCCOP in the desire of seeing OMF and ABCCOP’s goals fulfilled. At present, ABCCOP is a mature church organization with about 450 churches, 164 pastors and 36 ABCCOP church planting missionaries, four of which are in cross—cultural settings (Harrison 1999).

Background and Purpose of the Case Study

As I was preparing to take on a new role as Field Director for OMF Philippines, it became apparent that the work in relation to ABCCOP was in need of attention and I went on study leave to pursue this. Members of OMF were querying the need to be doing church—planting among the lowland peoples of the Philippines (like the Tagalog, Bicolano and Cebuano people groups) because of the maturity of ABCCOP and the presence of other evangelical church organizations. OMF leaders in countries sending missionaries to the Philippines questioned if they should still be sending church—planters to the Philippines. Occasionally, ABCCOP co—workers would make comments to OMFers indicating that

the presence of OMFers was no longer necessary, and even undesirable.

These factors led to the recognition of the need to evaluate the necessity of OMF's continued church planting among lowland Filipinos in relationship with ABCCOP. This study was undertaken with the awareness that it could lead to one of three possible outcomes. First, it could be decided that the existing working relationship was appropriate and no changes were needed. Second, it could be decided that OMF should make changes in its working relationship with ABCCOP but continue in that relationship. Third, it could be concluded that the relationship should be terminated and plans for a final transition would need to be put in place and carried out.

The goal of this research project was to identify the existing working relationship between OMF and ABCCOP, to determine the appropriateness of this relationship, to propose changes as necessary and to move towards a ministry maturity in which OMF's presence is no longer necessary. OMF is committed to seeing ministries nationalized. Internationally, as well as in the Philippines, OMF has quite a good track record of initiating ministries, turning them over, and moving on. For

a good number of years, OMF's church planting with ABCCOP had been the central thrust of our ministry in the Philippines. Possibly for this reason the later stages of the relationship and "exit strategy" had not been carefully planned. This needed to be worked through in conjunction with ABCCOP.

The situation as described led me to ask, "How does a large mission — in a partnership to do church—planting with several missions and the national church — transition through the final stages in its church planting relationship?" To answer this larger question there were a number of issues that needed to be addressed. Models of relationships needed to be identified, and from these, the existing relationship of OMF and ABCCOP could be analyzed and defined more precisely.

A series of other questions needed to be asked: from the perspective of ABCCOP personnel, was the existing relationship appropriate given the maturity of ABCCOP? If the relationship was no longer appropriate from the perspective of ABCCOP, what changes need to be made? From the perspective of OMF personnel, was the existing relationship appropriate given the maturity of ABCCOP? If it was no longer appropriate from the perspective of OMF, what changes

needed to be made? What was envisioned by the founders of the OMF, SEND and ABCCOP relationship with regard to the final phase—out transition of the foreign missions?

In answering this question, we need to remember that every culture is unique. Filipino culture has characteristics which must be explored and taken into consideration. Every nation has its own history which impacts the way it views itself and others. Certain aspects of Filipino culture needed to be taken into consideration as we moved through the “later stage” transitions. These issues also needed to be brought into the research so that transitions could be carried out sensitively.

Models of Transition

In order to evaluate the working relationship of OMF and ABCCOP an attempt was made to identify a working model of church and mission relations which would apply to this situation and from which conclusions could be drawn. Several writers have attempted to outline models for this issue and key models will be surveyed in this section.

1. Wagner’s Model

One of the earlier descriptions of the phases a cross cultural church—planting ministry goes through was C. Peter Wagner’s

s list of the “Four Major Phases of the Progress of Missionary Work” (1971:176):

Phase I : The mission goes out to a group of non—Christians to evangelize and to plant churches.

Phase II : The mission works at church development, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

Phase III : The mission becomes a consultant. The new church is autonomous, caring for its internal matters.

Phase IV : The church launches a mission.

Wagner’s description is useful and gives us a basic model of the stages a work goes through. What is significant in this description is the transition between phase II and III. In phase II the missionary has been nurturing the church as he teaches them what is involved in following Christ. This is where the maturing process is going on. The missionary is turning over responsibilities as the national church becomes ready. In phase III the church is now autonomous. We can assume a level of maturity and the ability to carry on their own affairs.

It would be useful to attempt to diagram Wagner’s model.

	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
Missionary Activity	Enter New Group, Evangelize, Start Churches	Teaching, Church—Development	Consultant	No Longer Involved
National Church Activity	Respond to the Gospel	Grow in Maturity	Responsible for all aspect of Church Life	Launch into Missions

Table 1: Wagner’s Model of Church/Mission Relationships

If the OMF and ABCCOP relationship were looked at through the Wagner model at the time of the study, OMF would be found to be involved in all four phases in different geographical locations. This is because of the massive size of the people group under discussion. Though this model is simple, I did not find it sufficiently descriptive. Its emphasis is on the missionary activity rather than the stage of church development.

2. Fuller’s Model

A second model of the transitions in the roles of the missionary and national church comes from Harold Fuller who draws from a vast experience in the transitions of SIM International and The Association of Evangelical Churches of

West Africa in Nigeria and surrounding countries. Fuller is looking at the transition from the perspective of the mission and missionary and her changing role in relating to the national church. This is a useful perspective for the purpose of this study.

Fuller sees the missionary's role going through four stages. Stage I: Pioneer; Stage II: Parent; Stage III: Partner; and Stage IV: Participant (1980:272). Much thought and observation has gone into this model. Drawing heavily from Fuller's presentation, the role and relationship development can be further defined as follows (1980:272):

Stage I: Pioneer

Requires the gift of leadership, along with other gifts. No believers — missionaries must lead and do much of the work themselves.

Stage II: Parent

Requires the gift of teaching. The young church has a growing child's relationship to the mission. But the "parent" must avoid "paternalism."

Stage III: Partner

Requires a change from parent—child relationship to

adult—adult relationship... Difficult for both to change, but essential to the churches becoming a mature “adult.”

Stage IV: Participant

A fully mature church assumes readership. As long as the mission remains, it should use its gifts to strengthen the church to meet the original objectives of Matt 28:19–20. Meanwhile, the mission should be involved in Stage I elsewhere.

This can be diagrammed as follows:

Mission—Church Relations: Four Stages of Development			
Missions Role:			
Stage I: Pioneer	Stage II: Parent	Stage III: Partner	Stage IV: Participant
Mission alone	Mission leading, Church Developing	Mission and Church working together	Church mature and leading

Table 2: Fuller Model of Church/Mission Relationships

Fuller’s model is particularly helpful when looking at a large mission work among a large people group. When a mission has had several hundred missionaries working among millions of people, for thirty or more years, there are often a significant number of churches at various stages of development. National leaders will also be at various stages of maturity and development. As the national church as a whole matures the

mission and national church will need to work through the stages of transition. New missionaries may be arriving at any stage of the relationship and need to minister appropriately at that stage.

One of the weaknesses of this model is that it only offers one possible pattern of relationships. Though this is a great pattern it may not be the best pattern in all situations or there may be other factors that have predetermined that a different pattern should be followed. This will be explored further following the presentation of one more model.

3. Steffen's Model

Another model is that prepared by Tom Steffen. Steffen identifies five stages of a ministry and into these stages he indicates six roles of a missionary and how these roles change during the transition through the stages. The stages that have been identified are: Pre—entry, Pre—evangelism, Evangelism, Post—evangelism and Phase—out. The changing roles of a missionary during these stages are: Learner, Evangelist, Teacher, Resident Advisor, Itinerant Advisor and Absent Advisor (1997:25).

This model has been diagrammed as follows :

Stage I	Stage II	Stage III	Stage IV	Stage V
Preentry	Preevangelism	Evangelism	Postevangelism	Phase—out
Learner ----- ----- Evangelist ----- Teacher ----- Resident Advisor ----- Itinerant Advisor ---- Absent Advisor				

Table 3: Steffen’s Model of Changing Missionary Role

One of the positive features of this model is the recognition that the missionaries maintain the role of learners from the earliest stages and continue with this role throughout the time of their missionary engagement. Though other models have not made this particular point, it certainly would be appropriate to have this attitude incorporated into any and all models.

Steffen’s model focuses more on the role of the individual missionary, or small group of missionaries, rather than on the relationship between a large mission and a large developing national church. This is likely because the model was developed within a smaller, more easily definable and somewhat isolated people group. In a people group

numbering millions of people, one would expect to find different regions within one people group who are at different stages in Steffen's model. The model is very helpful in showing the changing role of the missionary, who maintains the attitude of a learner, begins as the evangelist and ends as an advisor.

Within a region of a large people group, or within a smaller people group, this is an effective model to follow. Good missiological principles are evidenced within this model and ought to be followed in all cross-cultural church planting endeavors. This model does not deal with the issues of transition when a mission has needed to bring in large numbers of workers over many years to establish a national church and help that church grow, mature and establish themselves throughout their nation or people group. When a mission has needed to set up significant organizational structures to care for their missionaries and the developing church, the later stage transitions become much more complex.

Reflections on Possible Models for Church and Mission Relationships

This section will consider how various models can be

adapted to facilitate a transition from mission to church leadership.

This transition will be considered in two parts: the first will deal with the early stage of “church and mission relationships.” If we consider more closely Fuller’s model of church and mission relations, its first two stages of “Pioneer” and “Parent” would be uniform for most ministries. There are two alterations I would like to consider. In the first stage, it is now increasingly rare and increasingly unacceptable that a mission would be pioneering alone.

With the complex network of mission partnerships and maturing national churches, it is quite common and appropriate to pioneer a new work, in partnership with another similar mission or in partnership with an existing, nearby national church. We can then add the categories: P1 — Pioneering alone, P2 — Pioneering in partnership with another mission and P3 — Pioneering in partnership with an existing national church.

The second alteration I would like to make is to change the second stage from “Parenting” to “Developing.” To use

the term “parenting” in relation to a developing national church has too many unhappy connotations of paternalistic colonialism even though it does have some helpful descriptive qualities. The changes made Stages III and IV of Fullers model will be explained below.

If we put together a generic model of possible church mission relationships it would look as follows:

Stage I	Stage II	Stage III	Stage IV
Pioneer	Developer	Partner	Fusion
P1 – Pioneer alone		Dichotomy	
P2 – In partnership with other missions		Modified Dichotomy	
P3 – In partnership with a national church		Fusion	

Table 4: Integrated Model of Church/Mission Relations

When the ministry has developed through stages one and two, the mission and national church will need to decide what type of relationship to move into in stage three. If the church planting mission is also a denomination there may not be much option as to the next stage relationship. If there is

an option, both parties need to consider what the next stage should be.

In terms of the later stage, several forms of “church and mission relationships” have been identified by Louis King. These include a) mission dominance or paternalism b) no mission [only church] c) modified mission dominance d) dichotomy [co—operation of autonomous equals] e) modified dichotomy f) full fusion—integration g) modified fusion [functional integration] h) partnership of equality and mutuality (1971a: 176).

In the dichotomy form of relationship, the national church has reached sufficient maturity that it is able to carry on the full functions of a mature church with nurturing and outreach. The mission now does a similar work in a separate location. The two groups are doing the same work but the two spheres of activity do not relate. The modified dichotomy form of relationship is similar in that the mission and national church are doing similar work under different structures. The difference is that the mission does have some ministry within the national church or some of their work overlaps.

In the “fusion” form of relationship, the mission structure ceases to exist and the mission is fused into the national

church. Missionaries who continue to serve are functionally seconded to the national church. The direction for their ministry comes from the national church though their financial resources to sustain them continue to come through the mission. The primary pastoral care for the missionary also comes through the national church. The missionary serves at the invitation of the national church and is functionally integrated.

The “partnership of equality and mutuality” form of relationship sees the mission and the national church working together towards the same goals. Both are putting in resources of finance and personnel, though each may not put in equal amounts. Both the mission and the national church maintain their own structure. Normally the mission works primarily on the cutting edge of the joint work, helping to establish new churches. The national church is involved in the establishing of new churches but also takes responsibility for the on-going nurture of the existing churches.

Applying these categories of “stages of church and mission relationships,” by observation and survey research, it was apparent that the OMF and ABCCOP relationship had moved

into the partner stage. Though for the most part it was recognized that we were operating in a partnership, it became apparent that there was some lack of clarity as to the existing relationship.

This left us with two final questions to address. How satisfied were all parties with the quality of the partnership and where did we want to go from here?

Issues in Partnership

To be working effectively in partnership there must be a desire on the part of both parties to work together. The mission and the national church must be working together towards the same goal and it must be a healthy working relationship. In partnership, the missionary's work is related to the national church and the missionary must be fully involved with the church. George Peters states, "The missionary's ministry must be rendered through the church, but not mainly to the church. Principally, he works neither in the church nor for the church, but with the church" (1971b:209).

Though the existing partnership was a good working relationship between OMF and ABCCOP and there was an

invitation to continue in the relationship, there were areas that needed to be addressed: these included leadership, finance and cultural differences.

1. Leadership

Personnel from ABCCOP have always been in leadership of ABCCOP structures. I did explore the issue of whether an OMF member should be in leadership in one of the secondary director positions of ABCCOP. People were open to this if it was to fill a specific need for a limited period of time. The fact that even ABCCOP personnel were open to this speaks well for the relationship, but I believe it is less than ideal at this late stage of transition. The place where the leadership issue was more commonly a consideration was in the district level and the church—planting team. The question arose there as to who should lead. It was recognized, through experience, that leadership should be chosen by gifting and maturity rather than race or organization. It was recognized that when there is equal gifting and maturity in an OMF or ABCCOP option, the ABCCOP person should be chosen in the desire that the national church increasingly take the lead.

Different cultures value different styles of leadership. All

respondents from OMF and ABCCOP, indicated that they preferred to serve in teams that followed a participative style of leadership. No one was keen to serve in a team led by a highly directive, “one—person” rule style of leadership. It became apparent that westerners were quicker to identify something as being insufficiently participative than the Filipinos. The Filipinos had a higher tolerance for directive leadership. The survey also indicated that when a non—participative style of leadership was used, it had been a Filipino in leadership. With this information in hand I recommended that the issue of leadership style be worked through carefully as we integrated teams. Where this had not been done, workers found it hard to continue.

2. Finance

Another major area to consider in a partnership relationship is that of finance. In relation to the issue of finance the ABCCOP and Missions relationship paper reads,

The partner missions shall assist ABCCOP in meaningful ways to accomplish the goal of self—reliance in finance and to maintain self—respect as a National church body or Community. The policies of each partner mission in regard to finance will be respected. (TROAS² Relationship Paper,

1986)

George Peters (1971b:220–221) has identified three basic approaches to finance for the national church:

1. No foreign funds are being made available to the national church.
2. Foreign funds are made available to national churches conditionally.
3. Foreign funds are made available directly to the churches and without any conditions.

Peters obviously feels that to cut off all financial assistance to a developing church could quite potentially bring undesirable results and I must agree with him. The issue of concern that we must face is that financial assistance is not extended in such a way that it actually impedes the maturing of the church. As Alan Tippett observes,

Money which slows up self—support on the field is unwisely spent. Money extended in such a way as it helps the indigenous church to assume responsibility more quickly is wisely spent. (1987:383)

It is generally agreed that money from an outside source

should not be used to support local pastors. Financial assistance might be used to help local workers enter new areas but even these needs to be done with care so that the national church learns to assume its responsibility.

In the Philippines context, some of OMF's financial contributions had been designated to specific ministry and training items and some had not. The contributions that had not been designated could be spent according to ABCCOP's ministry priorities. OMF had been satisfied with ABCCOP's accountability for funds given. OMF is presently recognizing that insufficient input has been given to ABCCOP on how to develop their own support base. National partners rarely know the skills missionaries have had to learn and the effort put into developing a partnership base so that foreign missionaries can engage in ministry. In recognition of this, OMF has begun giving training to ABCCOP leaders and church planting workers on how to be effective responsible partners so that they can increase their local partnership base.

3. Cultural Differences

Cultural issues are always a consideration when working in partnership. Although OMF places high priority on language

and cultural study, it is always easiest to function within the values of one's native culture. OMF missionaries come from around twenty nations and therefore cultural awareness is always an issue.

A useful tool for understanding one's own cultural values and those of one's host culture has been drawn up by Lingenfelter and Mayers. This allows multicultural teams to work through sets of questions to better understand why they value certain things differently. As I have compared North American culture to Filipino culture, the two cultures usually came out on the opposite end of the spectrum of choices. When I asked in my research survey if there were aspects of Filipino culture in which missionaries frequently cause offence, all the ABCCOP workers who did respond gave the same answer — the issue of frankness. The issue of “frankness” fits very well into Lingenfelter and Mayers' sixth set of values — that of willingness to expose or not expose vulnerability (Lingenfelter and Mayers, 101ff.). If we consider together, the strong Filipino value of respect, the importance of not causing shame, and the need to maintain smooth interpersonal relationship, frankness is seen as offensive. It does not show respect, causes shame, and therefore upsets relationships.

Obviously, for effective partnership, even greater effort needs to be placed on cultural sensitivity.

The Final Stage of Church and Mission Relationships

It should not be expected that even a good partnership should go on indefinitely. Every partnership needs regular evaluation. Both sides of the partnership need to determine if they want to continue in the partnership. I inquired of the missionaries who had been involved in initiating the OMF and ABCCOP relationship if they had worked through an end vision for the relationship. Their answers were uniform. ABCCOP had come into existence out of a felt need. Everyone expected it to grow and mature. No one had set out an end vision or tried to define the maturity criteria which would be necessary for the missions to withdraw.

Given the present maturity of ABCCOP, the number of years OMF has worked with ABCCOP, the size and maturity of the evangelical church in the Philippines, the need to stay on the cutting edge of church—planting and the pressing needs in other countries of the world, I have proposed that OMF move towards the “fusion stage” with ABCCOP. (My proposal was that this stage be reached within five years of writing which was 2005. At that point we could either withdraw our workers or if invited, leave appropriate workers under the

supervision of ABCCOP³.)

There are also other matters that needed to be addressed to bring the work of OMF to a place where OMF could move to a “fusion” relationship with ABCCOP. ABCCOP is structured in regional districts. In the early church—planting stages of a district, it can be under the supervision of any of the partner missions or of ABCCOP. At the time of writing there were still two districts under the supervision of OMF. My proposal was that within five years these districts would be brought to a stage of maturity where they can be responsibly turned over to ABCCOP. The intention was that at that point we could withdraw our OMF structure and any remaining missionaries would be there at the invitation and under the supervision of ABCCOP.

To accomplish this goal there was a need for OMF and ABCCOP workers to desire to move to the next stage. In order to do this OMF leadership began to familiarize OMFers and ABCCOP leadership with the stages of a church and mission relationship. Workers were encouraged to envision a responsible completion of OMF’s task rather than to have an open—ended continuation. Past partnership agreements have

been revisited. Previous agreements had bound the foreign partners organizationally to ABCCOP. This meant that the lowland church planting ministries of the Mission partners had to be done in conjunction with ABCCOP. It has now been proposed and agreed that the Partners will partner around a shared vision rather than being bound by organizational considerations. This has set ABCCOP clearly in the lead in setting and declaring vision. ABCCOP went through a process of redefining its vision and invited the partner missions to join it.

To be prepared for this final transition, OMF needed to pour its resources into the two districts that were still under OMF administration. These needed to be brought up to the place where they could be responsibly turned over to ABCCOP. In fact, OMF turned over the first district to ABCCOP in November 2005. OMF and ABCCOP agreed to jointly supervise the other district, recognizing that OMF did not have the necessary personnel to lead the district to the point where it could be turned over. As OMF turned over the first district (in Albay) in 2005, we took responsibility for opening up a new area. Presently OMF is supervising the work but there are no OMF members on the teams.

ABCCOP and its partner missions had set out criteria which must be met for a district to be turned over to ABCCOP. These include having five growing churches in the district, each with at least fifty active baptized members. It also includes having a minimum of 300 active members in the district. There needs to be adequate leadership, finance and vision to see the work go forward.

Conclusion — Considerations for Mission Organizations

The OMF and ABCCOP relationship has progressed in a healthy manner from the pioneer to developer and into the partner stage. It is now appropriate to have made a transition to the fusion stage of the relationship. In order to do so it was necessary for all stakeholders to see this as the appropriate step to take. With the vision embraced, the aspects of the ministry that were not yet ready to be turned over to ABCCOP needed to be brought to this stage of readiness — this involved primarily the Bicol and Quezon districts of the Philippines.

All missions should be working towards completing the task to which God has called them. The first step a mission organization must take is to determine at what stage they are

in the model of National Church and Mission relations. The second step is to determine the final relationship they desire to have. With this information they need to plan their way through the transitions towards the final transition. Mission organizations must learn to continually operate with their end goal in mind. All activities must work towards this end goal. This will keep the mission from establishing itself for life.

Each transition must be planned carefully recognizing all parties involved. The primary parties to consider are the missionaries, the national organization, the supporting constituency and the target constituency. Before any transition is made, the readiness of the national organization must be determined. Following this, a strong mandate for change must be developed through adequate communication and developing a vision for transition. Action steps should be developed, followed and regularly reviewed. With careful planning and the grace of God, a mission should be able to leave a work in the hands of God and his chosen, local servants.

Planning an Exit Strategy

1. Workers must have an exit mind set. Hudson Taylor said, ‘missionaries are scaffolding.’ They are not part of the structure but enable the structure to be built. At the appropriate time the scaffolding is removed.
2. An exit mind set will impact every aspect of the ministry. Because the missionary knows they are not there forever, they must intentionally invest in other people to learn every aspect of the ministry. Each aspect of the ministry must be turned over as early as possible. The goal as described by Henry Venn of CMS was a church that is Self—Supporting, Self—Governing and Self Propagating. Some have added to this, Self—Theologizing.
3. Assess the stage the ministry is in. (Pioneering, Developing, Partnership···)
4. Determine the final stage model the organization is working towards. (Equal Partnership or Fusion or···)
5. Commit to move towards the next stage.
6. Decide what needs to be done to reach the next stage. What aspects of the ministry need to be turned over? What training needs to be done?
7. Exit in a healthy manner.

Richard Schlitt and his wife, Marilyn, went to the Philippines with OMF in 1980 and began church—planting in a Catholic setting. Following this they served amongst the Maguindanao people for four years, and then he completed his MA from Wheaton. After nine years as Regional Director in the Southern Philippines, Richard completed his D.Miss. And then he served as Field Director of the Philippines. Presently Richard is the Deputy General Director of OMF International, based in Singapore.

NOTES

1. Comity agreements involved different missionary organizations dividing up different geographical areas of a country along denominational or organizational lines.
2. TROAS is the acronym of the consortium of mission agencies —TEAM, RBMU, OMF, ABCCOP and SEND.
3. One district was turned over in November 2005 and OMF and ABCCOP agreed to jointly supervise another district.

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The 'three—self' phrase ("self—governing, self—supporting and self—propagating") used here, and in particular the unquestioned assumption of a self—supporting church, occur in the writings of Henry Venn, the Honorary Clerical Secretary of the Church Missionary Society from 1841 to 1872.

<http://www.cms—uk.org/tabid/151/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/133/Mission—and—the—Fourth—Sector.aspx>



선교의 출구 전략에 관한 소고



김종헌

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서론

오늘날 선교계는 건강한 출구 전략보다 효과적 진입 전략만 편향되게 강조하는 불균형에 빠져있다. 어떻게 사역을 잘 마무리할 것인지는 관심이 없고 선교지 진입 방도에만 집중하는 경향이 있다. 지구촌 선교현장의 급변하는 상황으로 과거 어느 때보다 접근이 어려워진 현실을 고려할 때 어느 정도 이해할만한 현상이다. 그러나 출구 전략에 대한 우리의 일반적 태도는, 때가 되면 어떻게 되겠지 하는 막연한 생각에 머무는 편이다. 이 글에서 살펴보겠지만, 그런 생각은 헛된 기대에 지나지 않는다.

¹ Frontier Mission Fellowship (FMF)은 미국 세계선교센터(the U.S. Center for World Mission)와 윌리엄 캐리 대학교(William Carey International University)의 상위 조직이다.

“끝을 염두에 두고 시작하라”는 말이 있듯이, 선교의 목표를 거론하지 않고 출구 전략을 논할 수 없을 것이다. 선교의 참된 목표는 무엇인가?² 역사적으로 토착 교회의 설립이나 교회 개척운동, 예수 운동 등이 거론되곤 했다. 벤과 앤더슨으로부터 시작하여 21세기에 이르는 역사적 추이를 살펴보면 “교회”를 세우는 일이 크게 강조되고 있음을 알 수 있다. 다시 말해서, 성장하는 토착 교회의 개발이 선교의 목표로 가장 많이 제시되었다. 과연 그것이 선교의 바른 목표인지 뒤에서 검토해 볼 것이다. 또한 출구 전략을 논하려면 우리가 하고자 하는 일의 정의(what)뿐 아니라 그 방법론(how)을 깊이 생각해봐야 할 것이다.

또한, 한민족 선교의 짧은 역사를 통해 우리가 저지른 오류를 검손하고 진지하게 인정할 때 출구 전략에 관해 훨씬 더 많은 교훈을 배울 수 있으리라는 점을 부언하고 싶다. 그간의 시행착오를 문서화하고 폭넓게 나누는 작업이 꼭 필요하다. 우리의 부족함이나 실패를 인정하지 않으면 차세대가 유사한 잘못을 거듭 반복하게 될 것이다. 따라서 선교공동체가 경각심을 가지고 진솔한 반추를 게을리 하지 말아야 할 것이다.

역사적 개관

헨리 벤과 루퍼스 앤더슨으로부터 시작하는 게 좋겠다. 두 사람은 1796년생 동갑내기로 ‘위대한 세기’로 알려진 19세기 개신교 선교 전략

2 여기서 하나님의 선교의 목적을 다루지는 게 아니라, 우리의 선교, 즉 하나님의 도구로서 인간의 노력과 활동에 관해 논의하려는 것이다.

의 양대 산맥이었다. 벤은 영국의 교회선교협의회(CMS)를 섬겼고, 앤더슨은 미국 해외선교회(ABCFM)를 섬겼는데, 둘 다 동시대(19세기 중 후반)를 풍미한 최고 지도자요 행정가이자 사상가였다. 두 사람의 선교신학은 차이보다 유사점이 더 많았는데,³ 식민주의가 절정이던 당시의 상황을 고려할 때 그들의 생각이 당대와 후대의 선교학보다 훨씬 앞서고 세련되었다는 사실이 놀랍기만 하다. 더구나 그들은 해외 선교사로 사역한 경력조차 없었다. 교회선교협의회 총무로 일하던 기간(1841-1872년)에 벤은 선교 현장을 단 한번도 방문하지 않았다. 그는 “선교의 안락사”라는 용어를 만들었는데, 한 마디로 선교사는 현장의 한시적 존재이지 영구적 존재가 아니라는 의미이다. 벤에 따르면, 안락사는 “현지 목회자 아래 잘 훈련된 회중이 있어서 목회사역을 그들의 손에 넘겨줄 수 있고, 현지 목회자를 감독하는 일도 점차 줄어들어 더 이상 필요해지지 않아서 제반 사역이 선교로부터 확립된 토착 신앙공동체에게 넘어갈 때 일어나는 현상”(Warren 1971, 28)이다. 벤과 앤더슨 모두 토착 교회의 자립, 자치, 자전이라는 삼자 원리의 강력한 지지자였다.

비버에 따르면, “앤더슨의 기본 주장은 ‘선교란 성경적이고 자전하는 기독교의 확산을 위해 존재하며, 그것이 선교의 유일한 목표다. 그 결과 토착 교회가 자립하고 (대부분의 경우) 자전하는 데까지 나아가야 한다’는 것이다”(Beaver 1979, 95). 앤더슨은 “참으로 성숙한 지역

3 두 사람이 유사한 확신을 가지고 있었다는 사실이 흥미롭다. 피차 서신 교환을 나누긴 했지만, 둘이 직접 만난 건 단 한차례뿐이었다.

교회는 복음을 전하고 선교하는 교회, 성장하는 교회, 타자에게 다가가는 교회”(Beaver 1979, 95)라 믿었다. 그는 성숙한 교회의 참된 표지는 자전하는 능력을 갖춘 교회라고 주장했는데, 그것이야말로 우리(외지인)의 목표가 되어야 할 것이다. 당시 앤더슨이 보지 못했던 것은 선교 구조의 필요였다. 앤드류 월즈는 그의 책(The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith)에서 이것을 “선교협의회와 교회의 다행스러운 전복(顛覆)”이라 표현했는데, 뒤에서 이 주제를 좀 더 다룰 생각이다.

다른 주제로 이동해 보자. 맥스 워렌은 “벤은 영적 제국주의는 철저히 배제했지만 당대의 가부장적 정신을 공유하고 있었다”(Warren 1971, 26)고 평가한다. 비버는 앤더슨에 대해 유사한 비판을 한다: “그는 새로운 그리스도인들이 유럽과 미국 그리스도인들의 행동 양식이나 표준을 따라서는 안 된다고 경고하면서도 서구 문명의 우월성을 의심하지 않았고 선교지 교회들의 철저한 문화 적응의 필요를 보지 못했다”(Beaver 1979, 96). 벤과 앤더슨이 당대보다 훨씬 앞선 생각을 가진 점은 높이 사야 하지만, 그들 역시 서양 문화의 우월성과 가부장적 자세로 선교지 교회들을 대하던 당시의 흐름에서 완전히 벗어나지는 못했다.

그들의 선교신학은 식민 시대의 강력한 가부장적 정신에 묻히고 있는데, 1912년 롤랜드 알렌이 “바울의 선교방법론”이란 책을 발간하면서 다시 거론된다. 그러나 알렌의 주장은 다소 근시안적이고 청중의 주의를 크게 끌지 못했는데, 이는 그가 바울과 그의 방법론을 당시의

독특한 상황과 배경 및 사역의 성격에 비춰 균형 있게 제시하지 않고 지나치게 일반화시켜 강조했기 때문이다. 그럼에도 불구하고 알렌의 결론은 매우 설득력이 강하고 오늘날에도 유효한 주장인데, 특히 끝부분에 나오는 “원칙과 성령”이라는 장에 잘 담겨있다:

우리는 스스로를 필수불가결한 존재로 생각하고 행동해 왔다. 회심자들로 하여금 매사에 우리에게 기대고 우리의 안내를 받도록 만들었다. 우리는 그들에게 그저 순종하도록 강요했고 그리스도의 자리에 우리를 대치하도록 가르쳤다. 우리에게 영감을 주시고 인도하시는 분이 그리스도의 성령이시라고 믿지만, 동일한 성령께서 그들을 인도하고 영감을 주시리라고는 믿지 못한다. 성령께서 참된 도덕의 개념과 교리, 의전을 우리에게 가르쳐 주셨고 지금도 가르쳐 주신다고 믿지만, 동일한 성령께서 그들을 가르치실 것은 믿지 못한다. (Allen 2011, 191)

종속은 자유를 위한 적절한 훈련이 아니다. 힘은 단련을 통해 길러진다. 사람들의 일을 대신해 주는 것은 스스로를 위해 일하도록 훈련하지 못한다. 날이 갈수록 우리는 교사의 첫 번째 의무가 학생들을 위해 모든 문제를 풀어주거나 정답을 제공하는 게 아니라, 어려운 문제를 그들 앞에 던져주고 그것을 어떻게 접근해서 극복하는지 보여줌으로써 그들의 사기를 북돋아 자기 안에 내재한 힘을 인식하도록 돕는 일임을 깨닫는다. (Allen 2011, 193)

그(바울 사도)는 마지 못해서가 아니라 기꺼이 은퇴를 감행했다. 그는 모든 지위를 그리스도께 드렸다. 회심자들이 그의 도움 없이 발전하는 모습을 향

상 기뻐했다. 그는 그들의 자유를 환영했다... 그는 대가 없이 주었고, 그들이 그리스도 안에서 소유한 힘을 활용하는 법을 깨닫도록 자리를 비켜주었다.

이것을 실천하려면 위대한 믿음이 필요했는데, 이 믿음은 곧 바울을 승리하게 만든 영적 능력이었다. 그는 성령을 믿었는데, 단순히 막연한 힘으로서가 아니라 회심자들 안에 내주하시는 인격체로 믿었다. 따라서 그는 회심자들을 신뢰했다. 그들의 타고난 선이나 지적 역량을 신뢰한 게 아니라 - 그랬다면 그의 믿음이 흔들렸을 것이다 - 그들 안에 내주하시는 성령을 믿었다. 그는 그리스도께서 그가 의탁한 일을 능히, 그리고 기꺼이 이루실 줄 믿었다. 그는 그리스도께서 그분의 교회를 완성하실 것과 회심자들을 세우시고 힘주시며 견고히 하실 것을 믿었다. 그는 믿었고, 믿는 자답게 행했다. (Allen 2011, 198)

알렌의 말은 오늘날 우리 상황에도 적용된다. 그는 현지 교회의 자립은 곧 그들에게 처음 복음을 전해준 자들로부터 자유로워지는 것이라 믿었다.⁴ 그의 다른 주안점은, 성령께서 새로운 회심자들 가운데 역사하심을 우리가 믿을 수 있는지 여부이다. 알렌에게 이것은 은퇴나 출구 전략을 위한 결정적 분기점으로 인식되었던 것 같다. 우리는 그들 안에 계시는 성령을 믿을 수 있는가? 우리는 그리스도께서 그들 안에 역사하시도록 자리를 내드릴 수 있는가? 바울에 관한 알렌의 말을 기억하자: “그(바울)는 그리스도께서 그 분의 교회를 완성하실 것과 회심자들을 세우시고 힘 주시며 견고히 하실 것을 믿었다.” 뒤에서 이 개념을 다시 살필 것이다.

4 필자는 이 자유개념을 “참의력 증진”의 선언과 연결한 바 있다. International Journal of Frontier Missiology 2010, Summer (27:2). http://www.jifm.org/PDFs_UFM/27_2_PDFs/27_2%20Kim.pdf

이어지는 지구촌 역사는 두 차례의 세계대전과 식민지 나라들의 독립 운동으로 더욱 복잡해진다. 20세기 전반부는 선교가 위축되는 양상으로 치닫는다.⁵ 심지어 위대한 학생자원자운동(SVM)도 시들면서 1960년대 격동의 혁명시대까지 선교운동은 좀처럼 재기하지 못했다. 그러나 이 시기에 일어난 “제3세계” 교회의 급성장을 주목하지 않을 수 없다. 이 사실이 우리의 선교 참여와 “출구 전략”에 대해 무엇을 말하는가? 한편, 1970년대 초반에 일단의 제3세계 교회 지도자들이 서구 선교의 중단(moratorium)을 요청하는 중대 선언을 하게 된다. 이 선언의 심각성에 대해 당시 미국선교신학회(ASM) 회장이던 제럴드 앤더슨은 다음과 같이 말했다:

이 제안이 아무리 충격적이어도 유럽과 북미주의 그리스도인들은 이 이슈를 반드시 직면해야 할 것이다. 한 가지 이유는, 교회연합운동과 연관된 대부분의 개신교 선교회나 단체들이 다뤄야 할 핵심 현안이기 때문이고, 또 다른 이유는 가투(Gatu)가 발언한 내용을 아시아와 아프리카, 라틴 아메리카의 수많은 교회 지도자들이 (유럽과 미국에서도) 공감할 것이기 때문이다. (Anderson 1974, 43)

학생자원자운동(SVM)이 절정을 이루던 때에도 선교학적 이해는 19세기에 비해 훨씬 취약했는데, 이는 고등교육을 받은 SVM 출신 선교사들이 제대로 교육받지 못한, 그래서 무능한 것으로 간주된 현지 지도

5 여기에는 다양한 요인들이 공존한다. 한 가지 핵심 요인으로, 제3세계 교회들 가운데서 발원하여 증폭된 신학적 현안이 선교적 열정과 관심을 집중한 일을 들 수 있다. 예컨대, 역사적 에딘버러 1910 선교대회 이후로 태동된 국제선교협의회(IMC, 1921년)는 시간이 흐르면서 선교지 교회들의 신학적 논의와 현안에 묻히고 말았다. 그 후 세계교회협의회(WCC, 1948년)가 구성되어 IMC는 WCC의 세계선교 및 복음화를 위한 산하 기구로 축소, 재편된다.

자들 위에 군림하며 지도력을 발휘했기 때문이다. 그들은 교육수준이 낮은 현지 지도자들이 현지 교회를 이끌만한 자질을 갖추지 못했다고 여겼다.

1990년대 중반에 “교회개척운동”(CPM)이 세계 곳곳에서 일어나는 하나님의 비범한 역사를 표현하는 용어로 사용되기 시작했다. 데이빗 개리슨은 2004년에 쓴 그의 책(*Church Planting Movements*)에서 “교회개척운동에서 선교사에게 요구되는 역할은 새로운 게 아니라 오히려 과거의 역할로 돌아가는 것”이라며, 롤랜드 알렌의 책을 추천하면서 “선교사들이 바울의 모델 따르기를 멈추고 식민시대의 모델로 옮겼다”(Garrison 2004, 268)고 지적한다. 선교사들이 식민시대 모델로 가버렸는가? 개리슨은 우리가 가부장주의의 함정과 현지 성도들에 대한 우월감에서 빠져 나오지 못했다고 말한다. 이러한 태도는 효과적인 출구 전략의 방법론보다는 그리스도의 제자에게 요구되는 기본적 영성과 관련된다. 개리슨은 계속해서 “바울의 선교사 역할은 현지 지도자를 세우고 자신은 아직 복음의 씨앗이 뿌려지지 않은 곳으로 이동하는 것”(Garrison 2004, 268)이라고 말한다. 교회 개척운동에 동의하는 사람에게 선교의 목표는 건강하게 성장하는 토착 교회의 설립이다.

반추와 적용

4자 원리로 돌아가자

4자 원리는 아마도 선교 역사상 가장 널리 회자되면서도 가장 실천

되지 않는 원리일 것이다. 1985년 히버트는 기존의 3자 원리에 자신학화 원리를 추가하면서, 그것은 서구의 제국주의적 신학이 담아내기 가장 힘든 원리라고 말했다. 이와 관련해 데이빗 보쉬는 두 가지 바른 말을 했는데, 그는 먼저 히버트의 주장에 동의하면서 “자신학화는 19세기 선교 이론가들이 생각하지도 못한 원리”(Bosch 1995, 451)라고 말했고, 이어서 “실제로는 수많은 자신학화 시도가 있었지만 은밀히 진행되어 감지되지 못했고, 대부분 ‘선교교회’ 바깥에서 일어났기 때문에 선교사들의 시야에 들어오지 못했을 뿐 아니라 어차피 혼합주의 현상으로 치부되어 무시될 수밖에 없었다”(Bosch 1995, 452)고 지적했다.

자립 원리는 근래 들어 실천적으로 더욱 복잡한 원리가 되었는데, 이는 글로벌 경제시대의 도래 때문이다. 지역 경제가 지역에 머물면서 지구촌 현실에 휘둘리지 않고 독자적으로 발전하던 시대는 이미 지나갔다. 자립 원리가 구현되려면 생존하고 지속하는 경제 체제의 개발이 선행되어야 한다. 이것은 선교사역의 정의를 새롭게 해야 할 도전을 우리에게 던진다. 오늘날 효과적인 선교는 영적인 사역과 경제 개발을 분리할 수 없는 상황이 되었다. 그간 전자는 진정한 선교사역으로 인식되었지만, 후자는 실제 사역과 무관하거나 거리가 먼 사역으로 치부되었다. 이 인식에 변화가 필요하다. 선교지에 어떤 유형의 사역자가 필요하고, 어떻게 선교사를 훈련하며, 우리의 사역을 근본적으로 어떻게 봐야 할 것인지 결정하고 적용하는 일이 이 문제와 결부되어있기 때문이다.

자전 원리는 선교구조의 설립으로 구현되어야 한다.⁶ 이것은 2세기 이상 진행된 현대 개신교 선교운동이 간과한 영역이다. 선교는 서구 교회가 감당할 것이고, 선교지에는 지역 교회들을 세우면 된다는 전제가 깔려있었다. 이는 심각한 맹점인데, 지금까지 나타난 비서구 선교구조는 대부분 서구의 도움이나 격려 없이 태어났다. 1970년대 들어 드물게나마 변화가 일기 시작했다는 게 필자의 관찰이다. 교회개혁과 선교운동 사이에 틈이 벌어져서는 안 된다. 선교지에 신앙공동체가 생기자마자 세계선교의 책임을 심각하게 인식하고 자문화를 뛰어넘는 사역을 감당할 상황화된 선교구조를 구축하도록 격려해야 한다.

4차 원칙 전반에 지도력 양성의 개념이 담겨있는 게 사실이지만, 자치가 지도력 이슈와 가장 직결된 원리이다. 현지 지도자들의 교육과 훈련은 해묵은 화두이다. 필자의 관찰에 따르면, 혼합주의 및 통제력 상실에 대한 염려 때문에 우리는 지도자 양성에 관한 “바른 내용”의 전달을 지나치게 강조하거나 고집스럽게 강요해왔다. 그러나 많은 경우 “바른 내용”은 현지 상황에 맞지 않았다. 우리가 내세운 내용이 옳았을 지라도, 그 전달방식 때문에 현지인에게 진리로 받아들여지지 않았다. 또한 그것은 현지인들이 자기네 상황에서 씨름하는 이슈가 아니었기 때문에 그들의 진리로 소유할 수 없었다.

자신학화는 실천하기 가장 어려운 원리이다. 필자는 앤드류 월즈가

6 필자는 이 자유개념을 “창의력 증진”의 선언과 연결한 바 있다. International Journal of Frontier Missiology 2010, Summer (27-2). http://www.jifm.org/PDFs_UFM/27_2_PDFs/27_2%20Kim.pdf

“신학은 신성모독의 위험 부담을 안고 진행되는 예배행위”라고 말하는 것을 들은 적이 있다. 우리는 우리의 신학이 하나님의 진리와 맞지 않을 가능성을 인정해야 한다. 그런 점에서, 자신학화 원리를 받아들일 때 우리는 랄프 윈터가 말한 ‘복음의 비서구화’ 개념을 먼저 생각해야 한다. 우리가 이미 가지고 있는 신학이 하나님의 진리라고 전제하면 결코 자신학화를 구현하지 못할 것이다. 월즈는 말한다: “비서구 교회가 서구의 지성과 신학적 지도력을 가지고 있는 것은 모순이다… 교회의 지성적, 신학적 지도력은 점진적으로 아프리카와 아시아와 라틴 아메리카에서 나와야 한다”(Walls 2011, 238). 맥스 워렌은 150년 전 헨리 벤의 전기를 쓰면서 벤의 확신에 대해 이렇게 언급했다: “그의 관점에서, 서구 형식에 매인 토착 교회는 비극이다”(Warren 1971, 26). 월즈는 계속해서 말한다: “안전한 신학이란 없다. 우리에게는 문화적 과업이 있다. 그리스도께서 아프리카와 아시아와 라틴 아메리카의 사상적 전통을 돌파하셔야 한다. 그리스도께서 서구 세속사회로 침투하셔야 한다. 우리는 열방을 제자 삼도록 부름 받았다.”(Walls 2011, 240). 열방을 제자 삼는 부르심에 대해서 뒤에 다시 다루고자 한다.

교회 개척(church planting)인가 복음 전파(gospel planting)인가?

그간의 출구 전략은 건강하고 성장하는 토착 교회의 설립과 긴밀한 상관관계에 있었음이 자명하다. 그 일이 일어나면 선교사의 역할이 끝나고 목표가 완수되어 현지에서 떠날 수 있게 된다는 공식이다. 그 단계에서 실제로 떠날지 여부는 계속 논란거리가 될 것이다. 예수께서 ‘교회’를 단 세 번만 언급하셨음을 감안할 때, 이런 전제가 필자에게는

다소 이상하게 여겨진다. 특히 이 주제와 연관성 있게 ‘교회’가 언급된 유일한 경우는 예수께서 “내가 내 교회를 세우리라”(마 16:18)고 하신 말씀이다. 주님은 우리에게 교회를 세우라고 하시지 않았고, 자신이 그분의 교회를 세우리라 말씀하셨다.

사도행전에 기록된 바울의 사역을 살펴볼 때, 필자는 그가 교회 개척을 했다는 확신이 서지 않는다. 우리의 선입견이 바울의 상황과 방법론을 그런 식으로 풀어낸 게 아닌가 싶다. 바울은 대부분 회당을 방문하여 그리스도만을 전하고, 기적을 행하고, 제자들과 믿는 자들을 굳게 하고 양육하며 가르치는 일을 주로 했다. 여러 곳에서 그는 장로들을 세웠고, 복음 전파를 위해 일꾼들을 모집하여 선교단을 조직했다. 그는 “내가 너희 중에서 예수 그리스도와 그가 십자가에 못 박히신 것 외에는 아무 것도 알지 아니하기로 작정하였다”(고전 2:2)고 말했다. 바울의 초점은 그리스도—곧 그가 누구시고 십자가에서 무엇을 행하셨는지—를 선포하는 데 있었던 것 같다. 그는 물론 기존 사회 네트워크의 틀 안에 조성된 믿는 자들의 지역모임인 “교회들”을 인정했다. 따라서 바울의 사역이 교회 개척을 중심으로 진행되었다고 주장하기보다, 왕국 제자도로 이어지는 복음 전파(gospel planting)⁷ 중심이었다고 봐야 할 것이다.

7 Band Barnabas의 설립이념 중 하나가 이 주제와 연관된다. “교회 개척이란 용어는 새로운 구조의 창립을 시사한다. 그 ‘교회’가 아무리 상황화되어도 여전히 현지인에게 생소한 (외부에서 들어온) 새 구조이다. 다양한 자원의 상황화된 교회를 세워야 할 필요가 있는 경우도 있다. 그러나 우리의 우선적 관심은 문화적으로 적절한 복음운동이 기존의 네트워크를 통해 자발적으로 확산되는 일이다.” (Mission Frontiers 2005: September–October, 15)

복음 전파에서 왕국 제자도(Kingdom Discipleship)로

이제 마태복음의 지상명령, 곧 열방에게 가서 성부와 성자와 성령의 이름으로 세례를 주고 예수께서 분부한 모든 것을 가르쳐 지키게 함으로써 제자 삼으라는 명령에 주목해 보자. 마태복음에 “왕국(kingdom)”이란 단어가 성경의 어느 책보다 많이 (54회) 나온다는 사실이 “왕국 제자도”를 시사한다. 라이트(N.T. Wright)는 말한다: “예수의 제자들은 가서 장차 예수의 본보기와 가르침으로 빚어질 제자들과 학생들과 추종자들을 양성함으로써 그분의 왕국을 구현할 사명을 받았다.” 우리는 이 땅에 그분의 왕국을 구현할 제자들을 양성해야 하는데, 주께서 기도하는 법을 가르치신 주기도문에 그 개념이 가장 잘 담겨있다(마 6:9-13).

교회 개척에 초점을 맞추지 말아야 할 또 다른 이유는 선교지에 교회를 세울 때 교회가 어떠한지 하는지에 대한 우리의 문화적 편견을 주입하려는 경향 때문이다. 예수를 따르는 방식에 관한 문화적 성향은 대부분 교회를 운영하는 방식과 맞물려 있다. 지역 교회는 해당 문화의 상황적 산물이고, 또 그렇게 되어야 마땅하다. 문제는 특정 문화에서의 교회 경험이 선교지 교회에게 특정 형태를 강요하는 경향이 있다는 것이다. 우리의 초점을 교회 개척으로부터 복음 전파로 옮기면 특정 문화를 강요하는 교회의 관점을 벗어나 초문화적 왕국 패러다임으로 이동하게 된다. 복음은 왕국의 실재로부터 분리될 수 없다. 하나님 나라가 빠진 복음은 복음이 아니다. 교회의 존재는 하나님 나라에 기초한다. 따라서 왕국의 실재를 품어낸 이들로 하여금 교회와 선교구조

를 자연스럽게 표현하고 조직하게 하는 것이야말로 우리의 우선적 과업이다. 우리의 역할은 촉진하고 격려하며 듣고 배우고 문제를 제기하는 것이다. 우리가 굳이 대답해야 할 경우에는, 그 대답을 우리 문화의 상황에 국한시키되 타자의 대답인 양 전제하지 말아야 한다. 이런 일은 세심한 감성과 큰 겸손이 요구되는데, 그렇게 될 때 토착 지도력이 길러질 것이다. 이것이야말로 ‘제한의 기적’ 또는 ‘신적 조바심’이 작동되는 모습이다.

실제적 차원에서 우리는 귀납적 성경연구를 격려해야 한다. 귀납적 연구는 동등한 동역의 장을 만들어 우리의 역할을 관찰자나 촉진자로 제한해 준다. 이렇게 하는 이유는 종교(기독교)가 아닌 성경이 최종적 권위이자 표준이기 때문이다.

기타 해야 할 일

우리는 아직 왕국이 구현되지 않은 곳에 그리스도께서 성육하신 것처럼 다가감으로 제자 삼는 일을 감당해야 한다. 우리는 현지에 스며 들어가 현지인들로부터 겸허하게 배워야 한다. 가능한 최선을 다해 그들처럼 되려고 노력해야 한다. 우리는 그들에게 세례를 베풀어야 하는데, 달라스 윌러드의 말처럼 그들을 성부와 성자와 성령의 실재로 감싸야 한다. 라이트(N.T. Wright)는 이렇게 표현한다: “그들을 성부, 성자, 성령이신 참되신 하나님의 이름과 삶과 성품 속에 빠지게 하라.” 우리는 또한 그들을 순종하도록 가르쳐야 한다. 가르침의 목표는 교리적 정확성이 아닌 순종이다. 하나님 나라의 법도와 역설적 왕국원리, 특

히 사랑의 대계명을 예수께서 “내가 분부한 모든 것”으로 요약하셨는데, 그 모든 것을 순종해야 한다. 우리 스스로 왕국을 구현하고 순종하지 않은 채 다른 이들을 순종하도록 가르칠 수 있을까?

무엇을 가르칠 것인지도 중요하지만, 어떻게 가르칠 것인지도 매우 중요하다. 필자는 말콤 노울즈에 의해 널리 알려진 “자율 학습”을 실천해야 한다고 믿는다. 자율 학습의 반대는 교사 중심 (또는 선교사 중심) 학습이다. 노울즈는 말한다: “교사 중심의 학습은 학생이 본질적으로 의존적 존재이며 교사는 학생이 무엇을 어떻게 배워야 하는지 결정해야 한다는 전제가 깔려있다. 자율 학습은 인간의 능력이 계속 자라며 스스로 이끄는 일이 성숙의 본질적 요소로서 이러한 역량이 최대한 신속하게 길러지도록 여건을 조성해줘야 한다는 전제를 갖는다” (Knowles 1975, 20). 예컨대, 훈련시키는 자의 목표를 추구하는 훈련(T4T)은 관계 네트워크를 가로질러 신속하게 재생산하는 교회들과 제자 집단들을 세운다는 점에서 가치가 있지만, 여전히 교사 중심의 학습이므로 아직 갈 길이 먼 틀이다. 가르침과 학습이 어떻게 일어나는지가 바른 내용의 전달을 확보하는 일 보다 중요하고 어려운 과제다. 1981년 해럴드 풀러가 선교와 토착 교회의 관계를 네 가지 발전단계로 표현한 모델(개척자, 부모, 동역자, 참여자)을 살펴보자. 필자의 생각은 선교사의 역할이 부모 단계를 생략하고 개척자 단계에서 바로 동역자 단계로 이동해야 한다고 본다. 이를 위한 한 가지 중요한 열쇠는 위에 언급한 노울즈의 교수법이다. 또 다른 중요한 열쇠는 순종의 부르심과 연관되는데, 이는 가르치는 자와 배우는 자가 함께 동행해야 할

여정이다. 아무도 다 이루지 못했으므로 우리는 마치 다 이룬 것처럼 행동해서는 안 된다. 우리 모두는 함께 배우고 일시적으로 체류하는 동료들이다.

결론

출구 전략은 적시에 이뤄져야 한다. 외부 사역자들이 떠나야 할 바른 때를 어떤 상황이 결정하는가? 적시는 앞에서 거론한 선교의 목표와 긴밀하게 연관되어 있다.

출구 전략을 위한 몇 가지 기준을 정리해 본다.

1. 향후 지역 신앙공동체(교회)와 선교구조의 형성을 염두에 둔 복음 전파에 헌신하라. 우리는 종교가 아닌 복음을 전파하고 있는가? 이것은 복음이란 무엇인가, 또한 교회란 무엇인가에 대한 깊은 성찰과 이해를 우리에게 요구한다.

2. 왕국 제자도 과정이 일어나고 있는가? 예수의 추종자들 또는 제자들이 양성되고 있는가? 그리스도의 제자가 무엇을 의미하는지 우리가 역할모범을 보여주고 있는가? 우리가 시행하는 “훈련”이 의존심을 키우지 않고 하나님 나라에 순종하는 열매를 맺는가?

3. 진지한 귀납적 성경연구가 정기적으로 일어나고 있는가? 선교사가 현지 신자들에게 성경공부를 격려할 수 있지만, 그들 스스로 지속하는 자발성이 필요하다. 선교사는 성경교사의 자리에서 물러나 현지인들 스스로 질문과 해답을 찾게 하고 성령께서 그들을 친히 인도하시는 과정을 신뢰해야 한다. 물론 이 일은 현지인들의 모어로 성경 전체 또

는 일부가 번역되어 있어야 가능하다.

4. 지속 가능한 최소한의 경제체제가 구축되어 있는가? 두 가지 이유로 필자는 경제개발이 가장 큰 도전이라 생각한다. 첫째는 지역 경제와 글로벌 경제간 상호작용의 복잡성 및 불확실성 때문이고, 둘째는 경제 개발이 영적 사역의 일부분이라는 사실에 대한 이해나 확신 부족 때문이다. 결국 이것은 우리 삶의 다른 모든 영역들과 더불어 왕국 제자도의 일부분이 될 것이다.

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REFLECTIONS ON EXIT STRATEGIES IN MISSIONS★



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INTRODUCTION

Today, there is an unhealthy imbalance of placing far more emphasis on effective “entry” strategy than on “exit” strategy. We are more concerned about how to enter and engage the work of missions rather than about how to exit properly. To be fair, this is understandable, particularly because of the changing nature of the “fields” worldwide, making the entry part of our strategy far more challenging than at any other

★ 이 글은 앞의 글 〈선교의 출구전략에 관한 소고〉의 영어 원문으로 독자들의 이해를 돕기 위해 심기로 하였음 -편집자주

¹ Frontier Mission Fellowship (FMF) is the parent organization to the U.S. Center for World Mission and William Carey International University.

time in history. However, our general attitude toward exit strategy is one that says we will figure it out once we get there; we hope that we will know when and how to exit. We will see, in the course of this paper, that this is merely wishful thinking.

We heard the saying, “Begin with the end in mind.” Thus, we cannot possibly talk about exit strategy without talking about the goal of missions.² What is the true goal of missions? Historically, we have seen competing as the true goal of missions, the establishment of an indigenous church, church planting movements, and Jesus movements, among others. When we take a look at the historical landscape from Venn and Anderson to the second decade of the 21st century, there is heavy emphasis on the development of “church.” In other words, the development of church (that is indigenous and multiplying) triumphed as the goal of missions. We will reexamine whether this is and should be the goal of missions. Furthermore, in order for us to bring exit strategy into our radar, we must ponder deeply about not only what it is that we want to do, but also how we should go about doing our

2 Frontier Mission Fellowship (FMF) is the parent organization to the U.S. Center for World Mission and William Carey International University.

work.

One more initial comment here. When it comes to exit strategy, there is so much we can learn if we recognize and readily and humbly admit our (Korean workers') mistakes and failures in our rather short history of engaging in missions. We need to pay our due diligence in documenting these and commit to communicate our stories of failure far and wide. If we do not admit our short-comings and/or mistakes, we will continue to make mistakes and will witness the next generation of leaders making similar mistakes that we've made. So this is a fair warning as to the kind of honest reflections we need to do collectively.

A BROAD OVERVIEW OF HISTORY

A good place to start the overview is with Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson. They were born in the same year of 1796. Venn and Anderson were great contemporary pillars of the 19th century Protestant missions movement, known as the Great Century. Venn served with Church Missionary Society, while Anderson was with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. They served as top leaders, administrators, and thinkers during approximately

the same years (mid to late 19th century). Their missiology (though they had differences, they had more similarities³) was far more advanced and sophisticated than the following generations of missiology, which is laudable, given their unique context of colonialism in its heyday. It is worth noting here that neither Venn nor Anderson ever worked overseas as missionaries. During his years as chief secretary of Church Missionary Society (1841 to 1872), Venn never even visited the mission fields. Venn coined the term, “euthanasia of a Mission,” basically meaning that missionaries are to be temporary, not permanent. According to Venn, euthanasia “takes place when a missionary, surrounded by well-trained Native congregations under Native Pastors, is able to resign all pastoral work into their hands, and gradually relax his superintendence over the pastors themselves, till it insensibly ceases; and so the Mission passes into a settled Christian community” (Warren 1971, 28). Both championed the principle of indigenous church and three selfs: self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating.

According to R. Pierce Beaver, “Anderson’s fundamental

3 Frontier Mission Fellowship (FMF) is the parent organization to the U.S. Center for World Mission and William Carey International University.

thesis was that ‘missions are instituted for the spread of a scriptural, self–progagating Christianity. This is their only aim,’” eventually leading up to the “stage of independence and (in most cases) of self–propagation” (Beaver 1979, 95). Anderson believed that “a truly mature local church is an evangelizing, missionary one, a growing church, a church going out to others” (Beaver 1979, 95). According to Anderson, one true sign of a mature church is whether it has established the capacity for self–propagation; that should be our (oursiders’) aim. What Anderson failed to see was a need for sodality structures. (Need footnote here) Andrew Walls, in his book, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, refers to this as “Missionary Societies and the Fortunate Subversion of the Church.” I will further develop this topic below.

Moving onto another topic, Max Warren, in critiquing Venn’s position, notes, “Venn shared to the full the paternalism of his contemporaries. But of him it can surely be said that he was totally devoid of any kind of spiritual imperialism” (Warren 1971, 26). Beaver makes a similar but less favorable criticism of Anderson, “While he warned that new Christians should not be expected to conform to the behavior patterns

and standards of European—American Christians, he did not question the superiority of western civilization and failed to see the need for thoroughgoing cultural adaptation in the young churches” (Beaver 1979, 96). We should give due credit to Venn and Anderson that they were ahead of their times. At the same time, neither of them could escape their immediate and accepted cultural background of being paternalistic and feeling superior in dealings with younger churches.

Venn and Anderson’s missiology eventually overshadowed by a more paternalistic mentality drawing from the colonial period until Roland Allen brought it up again in 1912, when he penned the book, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours*. However, Allen’s assertion was perceived parochial in scope and did not gain much traction in terms of hearers, because he over—emphasized Paul and his “methods” without balancing them with Paul’s unique context, his background, and the nature of his work. Nonetheless, Allen’s concluding plea is convicting and still rings true in our day. This is best captured in one of his concluding chapters called, “Principles and Spirit.”

We have imagined ourselves to be, and we have acted so as to become, indispensable. In everything we have taught our converts to turn to us, to accept our guidance. We have asked nothing from them but obedience. We have educated our converts to put us in the place of Christ. We believe that it is the Holy Spirit of Christ Which inspires and guides us: we cannot believe that the same Spirit will guide and inspire them. We believe that the Holy Spirit has taught us and is teaching us true conceptions of morality, doctrine, ritual: we cannot believe that the same Spirit will teach them. (Allen 2011, 191)

Slavery is not the best training for liberty. It is only by exercise that powers grow. To do things for people does not train them to do them for themselves. We are learning more and more in things educational that the first duty of the teacher is not to solve all difficulties for the pupil, and to present him with the ready-made answer, but to awaken a spirit, to teach it to realize its own powers, by setting before it difficulties, and showing it how to approach and overcome them. (Allen 2011, 193)

He (Apostle Paul) practiced retirement, not merely by

constraint, but willingly. He gave place for Christ. He was always glad when his converts could progress without his aid. He welcomed their liberty. . . . He gave freely, and then he retired from them that they might learn to exercise the powers which they possessed in Christ.

To do this required great faith; and this faith is the spiritual power in which St. Paul won his victory. He believed in the Holy Ghost, not merely vaguely as a spiritual Power, but as a Person indwelling his converts. He believed therefore in his converts. He could trust them. He did not trust them because he believed in their natural virtue or intellectual sufficiency. If he had believed in that, his faith must have been sorely shaken. But he believed in the Holy Ghost in them. He believed that Christ was able and willing to keep that which he had committed to Him. He believed that He would perfect His Church, that He would establish, strengthen, settle his converts. He believed, and acted as if he believed. (Allen 2011, 198)

Notice how Allen's words are still very much applicable to our time and contexts. Allen rightly equates a desperate need for independence of the younger church with liberty from

those who initially brought the gospel to them.⁴ His other main point has to do with whether we can trust the Holy Spirit to work among the new converts. To Allen, this seems to be a decisive turning point when it comes to retirement or exit strategy. Can we put our faith in the Holy Spirit in them? Can we give place for Christ to work in them? Keep in mind also what Allen says about Paul: “He (Paul) believed that He (Jesus) would perfect His Church, that He would establish, strengthen, settle his converts.” We will revisit this very thought later in my paper.

Of course, what follows on a global scale historically becomes more complex with the two world wars and the colonized nations moving to gain their independence afterwards. Generally, missions suffered and began to wane during the first half of the 20th century.⁵ Even the great Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) began to decline, and missions in general did not make a come back until after the global level tumultuous decade of the revolutions of

4 I connect this concept of liberty with our call to “empowering creativity” in *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 2010, Summer (27:2), http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_UJFM/27_2_PDFs/27_2%20Kim.pdf

5 There are many contributing factors to this development. One of the major factors was a growing theological concern coming out of the Third World churches that eventually submerged missions zeal and interests on a global scale. For example, the eventual birth of the International Missionary Council (in 1921) after the historic 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland was over time swallowed up by the theological concerns and agenda of the national, younger churches. Subsequently, the World Council of Churches was formed in 1948 and the IMC became subsumed with the WCC as its Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, officially in 1961.

the 1960s. We cannot fail to mention the incredible fact that during the same period of time, the Church in the “Third World” grew rapidly. What does this fact say about our involvement on the mission fields and about our “exit strategy?” Furthermore, in the early 1970s, a number of Third World Christian leaders made a demand that led to a call for “moratorium,” a suspension of Western missionaries working in the Third World. The call was serious enough that Gerald H. Anderson, who was then the president of American Society for Missiology made the following statement.

However shocking this proposal may seem, it is imperative that Christians in Europe and North America face the issue squarely—for one reason, because it will probably be a major item for discussion on the agenda on virtually every Protestant mission board and society that is related to the ecumenical movement; for another, because the feelings voiced by Mr. Gatu are shared by a number of church leaders in Asia, Africa and Latin America, as well as in Europe and in the United States. (Anderson 1974, 43)

Even in the heydays of SVM, its missiology was far less superior to the 19th century counterpart. Highly educated

SVMers took on the roles of leadership over the young indigenous churches, due to the missionaries' perception that the indigenous leaders were uneducated, and thus, incompetent. They deemed the native leaders as being poorly educated and not very well equipped to lead the national churches.

The term, "Church Planting Movements," came into being in the mid-1990s to describe God's extraordinary works in various places around the world. David Garrison wrote the summary of these findings in his book, *Church Planting Movements*, in 2004. Garrison writes, "What is required of missionaries in a Church Planting Movement is not a new role, but rather a return to an old role" (Garrison 2004, 268). He then endorses Roland Allen's work and describes that we "missionaries stopped following a Pauline model and shifted to a colonial model" (Garrison 2004, 268). Had the missionaries "shifted to a colonial model?" Garrison precisely means that we haven't escaped the trap of being paternalistic and feeling superior compared to the local believers. This prevailing attitude has very little to do with the methodology of an effective exit strategy, but has more to do with our basic spirituality as disciples of Jesus. Garrison continues, "The

Pauline missionary role raises up local indigenous leadership and then moves on to places where the gospel has not yet been sown” (Garrison 2004, 268). For those who subscribe to CPM principles, the end goal is to plant indigenous, multiplying, and healthy churches.

REFLECTIONS AND APPLICATIONS

Back to Four Selfs Principle

The 4 selfs principle is probably one principle that is most widely talked about, but least practiced by the expat workers in the history of missions. Paul Hiebert in 1985 added the fourth self, self—theologizing, and highlighted the fourth self as the most persistent holdout of the Western imperialistic theology. David Bosch is right in two accounts. First, he agrees with Hiebert by saying, “self—theologizing is an aspect about which the missionary theorists of the nineteenth century never thought” (Bosch 1995, 451). Secondly, Bosch continues, “Of course a lot of self—theologizing had already taken place, often unnoticed or clandestine, more frequently outside of the ‘mission churches’ and thus of the purview of missionaries—to whom much of this was at any rate unacceptable since it was deemed to be syncretic” (Bosch 1995, 452).

Self—supporting principle in practice has become a bit more complex in recent decades, mainly because of the globalized economy. The days when local economies stay local and thrive, impervious to the global reality, are over. A viable economic development and sustenance must take place in order for the principle of self supporting to be a reality. This adds or shatters, depending upon how one looks at it, what missionaries work should be about. Today's effective missionaries cannot separate spiritual work from economic development and vice versa. The former was and is still perceived as the real work of the missionaries while the latter work is stigmatized and is viewed as far from being the real work. This has got to change. This has all kinds of impact and applications to what kind of people are needed on the field, how we train, and how we fundamentally view our work.

Self—propagating principle must translate into “planting” mission structures.⁶ This was a significant oversight for more than two centuries of the modern Protestant missions movement. There was an assumption that the West would carry out the work of missions and that the West would only

6 Ralph D. Winter presented a seminal paper on this topic, “The Planting of Younger Missions,” in 1971 at Joint Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (IFMA) and Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA) Conference at Green Lake, WI.

plant churches (local congregations). This was such a huge blind spot that most majority world (or Global South) mission structures that were birthed got birthed without the West's help or encouragement, by and large. In my mind, this began to change in the 1970s, but even then, it was a rarity. There should not be a gap between church planting and mission planting effort. As soon as the local believers are in place, they should be encouraged to take missions seriously and to form contextual missions structures to carry out the work beyond their cultures.

It is true that the concept of leadership development is pervasive in all 4 selfs, but it is most relevant in the self-governing principle. Training and educating the local leaders is an age old topic. My observation is that, due to a fear of syncretism and of loss of control, we have put too much emphasis and perhaps even stubborn insistence that the “right content” gets communicated. More often than not, the “right content” was not right for their contexts. Even if our right content was right to begin with, because of the ways in which it was delivered, it did not stick with them as truths. Relevancy and propriety was much to be desired. Furthermore, because these were not the issues that they were already grappling

with in their own contexts, they could not own the truths.

Self—theologizing principle is the most difficult practice to embrace. I heard Andrew Walls aptly say, “Theology is an act of adoration with a risk of blasphemy.” We have to accept that our theology may not be in line with the truths of God and that our theology is in need of “sanctification” process. Thus, in this sense, Ralph Winter’s de—westernization of the gospel concept must be a prelude as we begin to embrace the self—theologizing principle. When we assume that our theology is the truths of God, then we will never be able to put self—theologizing into practice. Walls writes, “It is incongruous to have Western intellectual and theological leadership of a non—Western church . . . Intellectual and theological leadership of the Church must increasingly come from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. . .”(Walls 2011, 238). Max Warren, in his biography of Henry Venn some 150 years earlier, refers to what was Venn’s conviction: “A native church tied to a Western pattern would be from his point of view a tragedy” (Warren 1971, 26). Walls continues, “There is no safe theology. We have a cultural task: Christ is to penetrate the traditions of thought of Africa and of Asia and Latin America; Christ is to break into Western secular society. We are called

to disciple the nations” (Walls 2011, 240). “We are called to disciple the nations”, says Walls. We will revisit this thought later.

Church Planting or Gospel Planting

We can surmise that our current collective and historical tie—in with the exit strategy has to do with planting churches that are healthy, indigenous, and multiplying. Under this scenario, our job as missionaries is done (if we can qualify and discern when that might be) with the above goal at hand, thus leading us to exit. Whether we do exit at that time will be a matter of ongoing dispute. The above surmise seems perplexing to me, because Jesus only mentioned “church” three times. And the only time that is pertinent to our topic was when Jesus said, “I will build My church.” (Matthew 16:18) Jesus doesn’t tell us to plant churches, but that He will build His church.

When looking at Paul’s ministry described in the Book of Acts, I am not convinced that Paul “planted” churches. In my mind, it is our assumption that leads us to read into the Paul’s context and his methodology. What he did do was to visit synagogues for the most part, preach Christ and Him only,

perform miracles, strengthen, instruct, and teach the disciples and believers. He appointed elders in various places. He also recruited and organized a band of missionaries to do the work of preaching the gospel. Paul notes, “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2 NIV). Paul’s focus seems to lie with preaching Christ, who He is and what He did on the cross. He did recognize “churches” as in local fellowships of believers, primarily within the framework of pre-existing social networks. Thus, rather than to say that Paul’s ministry revolved around church planting, it seems his ministry was more in line with gospel planting⁷ that led to kingdom discipleship.

From Gospel Planting to Kingdom Discipleship

I would like for us to turn our eyes to Matthew’s rendition of the Great Commission, that is to make disciples of all nations, by going, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and by teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded us. When we consider

7 One of the founding ethos of Band Barnabas is related to this topic, “The term, ‘Church Planting’ implies inventing a new structure. No matter how contextualized the ‘church’ may be, it is still a new structure that is foreign to the people group. Church—planting work of various levels of contextualization is necessary in some contexts. However, our primary desire is for the spontaneous spread of culturally relevant Gospel movements through pre-existing networks”. (Mission Frontiers 2005: September–October, 15)

that Matthew's gospel includes the "kingdom" words 54 times, more than any other book in the Bible, it would be safe to equate the disciple making to "kingdom" disciple making, or what I call, "kingdom discipleship." Listen to what N.T. Wright says: "Jesus' followers are to implement his kingdom by going and making disciples, learners, students, followers who will be shaped by Jesus' example and teaching." We are to make disciples to implement his kingdom on this earth, which is best captured in the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray (Matthew 6: 9–13).

One other dimension to why we should not plant churches has to do with our tendency to bring our cultural aspects of how to do church when planting churches elsewhere. (Footnote here) Most of the cultural aspects of how we follow Jesus are wrapped in how we do church. Local churches are and should be wrapped in their respective cultural contexts. However, the problem is these become expectant outcomes in cross cultural missions work and can become overbearing burdens to the native churches. When our focus shifts from church planting to gospel planting, we then move away from culturally riddled churches to a supracultural kingdom paradigm. The gospel cannot be separated from the kingdom

reality. The gospel without the kingdom, by definition, is not the gospel. The church is an expression of the kingdom. The church exists for the kingdom. Thus, letting those who have embraced the kingdom reality naturally express and organize themselves as churches and sodality structures is a prime task before us. Our role has to be the one of facilitator, empower—er, listener, learner, and questioner. If we have to give our answers, it would help greatly if we can tie our answers with our cultural contexts, not assuming that our answers would and should be their answers. Qualifying our answers this way would require a great deal of sensitivity and humility that would in turn empower the local leadership. This is a miracle of restraint or divine shyness at work.

On a practical level, we should encourage studying the Bible inductively. Inductive studies should level the playing field and we should remain strictly either as observers or at most as restrained facilitators. We do this, because the Bible is the ultimate standard, not christianity.

What else are we to do?

We should do our work of missions by going—going to where the kingdom is not yet a reality and going as Jesus

came to us, incarnationally. We must immerse ourselves and learn from the people we are going to, humbly. We must try to become like them as much as we can. We must also “baptize” them. “Surround them with the reality of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” is how Dallas Willard describes it. N.T. Wright says, “plunging them into the very name and life and character of true God, who is Father, Son and Spirit.” We are also to teach them to obey. Obedience is the goal of our teaching, not doctrinal correctness. Obedience to the kingdom rule and upside down kingdom principles, particularly the Great Commandment is how Jesus summarized “everything I commanded.” And can we teach obedience without our obeying and living out the kingdom ourselves?

Not only do we need to concern ourselves to *what* we teach, but also *how* we teach needs to be addressed. This is where I believe we need to start practicing the “self-directed learning” popularized by Malcolm Knowles. The opposite of self-directed learning is teacher (or in our case, it is missionary or outsider) directed learning. Knowles writes, “Teacher-directed learning assumes the learner is essentially a dependent personality and that the teacher has the responsibility of deciding what and how the learner should

be taught; whereas self-directed learning assumes that the human being grows in capacity (and need) to be self-directing as an essential component of maturing, and that this capacity should be nurtured to develop as rapidly as possible” (Knowles 1975, 20). For example, Training for Trainers’ goal (T4T) is worthy, which is to establish rapidly reproducing churches and groups of disciples across relationship networks. However, if it is still teacher-directed learning, we have not gone far enough. How we go about teaching and learning is more important than trying to make sure that the right content gets communicated. Here it is worth revisiting Harold Fuller’s 1981 model of mission—church relations in four stages of development, Pioneer, Paternal, Partner, and Participant. It is my assertion that we can move from Pioneer stage to Partner Stage without going through Paternal stage. One important key is in how we teach, as captured by Knowles above. One other corresponding key has to do with the call to obedience, which is a journey we should all be a part of. Nobody has arrived, and thus, we should not act as if we have arrived. We are all fellow learners and sojourners.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Exit strategy, undoubtedly, has much to do with timeliness. When

is the right time for expatriate workers to pull out and under what circumstances? The timeliness is linked closely with desired outcomes or what we view as the goal of missions, as we have seen.

A few criteria for exit strategy to be possible.

1. Commit to gospel planting that leads to or organizes the local believers as church and mission structure formations. Are we preaching the gospel, not christianity (as in how we organize and do church)? This puts pressure on us to deeply ponder and understand what the gospel is. Also what the church is.

2. Kingdom discipleship process in place? Are there followers or disciples of Jesus that are being trained? Are we modeling what it means to be a disciple of Jesus? Is our “training” resulting in kingdom obedience without creating dependency?

3. Serious regular inductive Bible study in place? Of course, we can initially encourage the local believers to study the Bible, but it should be their ongoing aspiration. We need to step aside as the teachers of the Bible. Let them find questions and answers on their own and trust the process of the Holy Spirit guiding them. This also assumes that there is a Bible or at least portions of it in their own heart languages.

4. Viable economic sustenance in place? In my mind, the most challenging aspect is the economic development piece because of two main reasons. First has to do with the complexities and uncertainties of how local and global economy works. Second is tied with our lack

of understanding and conviction that economic development is part of our spiritual work. In the end, this is and should be part of the kingdom discipleship along with all other aspects of life.

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