

**DEFINING TERMS AND PRINCIPLES OF
INDIGENOUS CHURCH PHILOSOPHY:
TOWARD A RENEWED SURRENDER TO A
SPIRIT-DRIVEN MISSIOLOGY AND PRAXIS**

By

DeLonn Rance

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Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help,
 who rely on horses,
who trust in the multitude of their chariots
and in the great strength of their horsemen,
but do not look to the Holy One of Israel,
 or seek help from the LORD. Is. 31:1

No king is saved by the size of his army;
 no warrior escapes by his great strength.
A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;
 despite all its great strength it cannot save.
But the eyes of the LORD are on those who
 fear him,
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,
 to deliver them from death
and keep them alive in famine Ps. 33:16-19

The LORD gives victory to his anointed.
He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary
with the victorious power of his right hand.
Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
 but we trust in the name of the LORD our
 God. Ps.20:6-7

Unless the LORD builds the house,
 the builders labor in vain.
Unless the LORD watches over the city,
 the guards stand watch in vain. Ps. 121:1

Assigned topic: Defining Terms and Principles of the Indigenous Church Philosophy

Globally Assemblies of God leadership, particularly missions leadership like those present in this room, are familiar with the term “Indigenous Church.” In fact, I am assuming that some have even presented lectures, papers and have taught on the subject. However, increasingly our fellowship experiences missiological drift. Pastors and laity may recognize the term, even be able to articulate the three “selfs,” but the principles of the indigenous church do not guide their missiological decision making.

Even for missionaries who seem to understand, **the truths of the indigenous church do not shape their missional discernment or practice.** I’m privilege to teach a course on the indigenous church to new missionaries to Latin America while they are in language school. I

¹Portions of this paper were originally presented as the 2008-2009 J. Philip Hogan Professor of World Missions inaugural address on October 15, 2008 at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri. See Appendices E and F for the complete text of Lectures I and III or at http://www.agts.edu/news/news_archives/2008_10rance_lecture.html.

asked, “What is the indigenous church?” After some coaxing a brave young missionary responded, “It’s what we say we do, but we don’t do.” I appreciated his honesty, so I asked him how he came to that conclusion. His answer, it was what he observed and what every veteran missionary he had talked to had told him (i.e. it is the party line but it is not doable so don’t worry about it). Apparently we do not practice what we preach. So much so that an influential pastor recently stated, “I used to understand what Assemblies of God missions stood for, the indigenous church, but not anymore, it’s all about projects, every missionary that comes through wants support for their project. Projects that don’t seem connected to any integrated strategy or philosophy.”

Is the philosophy of the indigenous church antiquated and inadequate for the contemporary missional context? Has the Assemblies of God lost its indigenous church DNA? Is it just triumphal numbers that validate its adherence? Is it just one method among many that are equally valid? Why should the missionary enterprise of today even consider it?

Let me emphatically state that adherence to the principles of the indigenous church is not only possible today but crucial to the fulfillment of the missionary task because it is grounded in biblical truth. In a global context where missionaries, missions agencies, “missional” churches and “mission minded” believers increasingly rely on their own resources to complete the missionary task, the indigenous church principles call God’s missionary people back to the New Testament’s total dependence on God to fulfill the missionary mandate. Today, I will attempt to briefly address: the historical context that birthed the principles of the indigenous church, seek to redefine the terms and rearticulate the principles of the indigenous church in the twenty-first century, pose few questions to facilitate a correction to our missiological drift in principle and praxis and conclude with a personal narrative.

The Historical Context that Birthed the Principles of the Indigenous Church

The principles of the indigenous church emerged as a prophetic voice in an historic era of missionary expansion, the great century of missions. “Civilization” and colonial dominance accompanied the gospel message resulting in a “Christianization” of many nations. Small choices, seemingly good choices, resulted in a “missionary compound” that isolated the believing community both literally and culturally from the people they intended to reach. The missions stations were foreign controlled and rarely evidenced the vitality of the New Testament Church. Rather, these communities of faith were anemic often dependent on the missionary with very little indigenous outreach or growth.

Over time supporters, administrators and a few missionaries began to see the ineffectiveness of the paradigm. Missions administrators like Anderson and Venn called for a national church, an indigenous church, that could take care of itself (i.e. They recognized that they could not raise enough support in their sending churches to sustain all the missions stations that would be needed to reach the world). Nevius made practical recommendations for its implementation and Allen called the Church back to the “methods” of the biblical text². Unfortunately for the most part, their prophetic words fell on ears deafened by the seduction of power.

My point here is not to critique the “Great Century” of missions, but to note that missional ineffectiveness does not usually occur because those involved in missions are selfish

²Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962).

power mongers who desire to have the nations of the world under their control. Rather, with access to resources and motivated by compassion, guided by reason and a desire for the excellence (through their own cultural lens of progress, civilization and what is “right”), missions decisions are based on available assets and empowered by human resources rather than Spirit direction and empowerment (i.e. they did not intend to build a dependent church, missiological drift took them there). However,

Whenever in any period of the Church’s history a little company has sprung up so surrendered to the Spirit and so filled with His presence as to furnish the pliant instruments of His will, then a new Pentecost has dawned in Christendom, and as a consequence the Great Commission has been republished; and following a fresh tarrying in Jerusalem for the endowment of power has been a fresh witnessing for Christ from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the earth.³

Pentecost is the Trinity’s answer to the “how” of the Great Commission. Not what men and women can do, but what the Spirit of Christ does through them. Jesus declared, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18b)⁴. Pentecostal missions emerges from the fire of the Spirit and when guided by the principles of the indigenous church results in communities of faith that bear the DNA of the New Testament church, a church directed and empowered by the Spirit, giving witness to the resurrected Christ to people and peoples of the world.

Early Assemblies of God missionaries did not automatically embrace the principles of the indigenous church when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. The power of culture and tradition continued to dominate the missionary enterprise, but many Pentecostal missionaries impelled by the Spirit, travelled to distant lands without adequate support. They had to ask themselves, “Is it possible to do missions without resources?” They found a resounding “yes!” in the biblical text. For it is “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty” (Zech. 4:6) and in the theological/missiological writings of Roland Allen as the following narrative demonstrates:

In response to the call of God and the invitation of several small independent congregations that had experienced a new Pentecost, missionary Ralph Darby Williams and his young family entered the city of Santa Ana, El Salvador on Christmas Eve 1929. Immediately, he began visiting the various congregations and surveying the country in order to develop a strategy to reach the entire nation. He detailed his plan in a letter to his supervisor, Noel Perkin, requesting five additional missionary couples in order to complete the task. He writes in his memoirs:

Brother Perkin’s reply to my carefully worded letter was a disappointing answer at first reading. Although written with Brother Perkin’s accustomed grace, it declared, “We have no missionaries available for the field; furthermore, even if we had such men ready, we have no funds to support them. Beyond this we have no surety that we can keep *you* on the field and are trusting that we will not have to retrench.”

³A. J. Gordon, *The Holy Spirit in Missions* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893), 52-53.

⁴Melvin Hodges first articulation of the principles of the Indigenous Church occurred in Spanish under the title of “Edificare Mi Iglesia” [I Will Build My Church].

Could anything have seemed more discouraging in light of our prayers? Yet, I do not remember more than a passing regret over the letter. There was too much moving over the field and the Lord's presence was working with us. Almost immediately, I found myself constantly saying, "Our missionaries are already on the field. They are here; I see them every day for they are many. The Lord will use them and the devil cannot stop them."

This was soon to be a great and visible miracle. The constant outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the fact that God was calling these untrained believers into his work and burdening them with the care of the rapidly growing groups was a blessing. It was a revival carried forward by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as the believers were more open to what the Bible said about their conduct.⁵

Although familiar with the writings of Roland Allen and others, the New Testament provided Williams with the model for missionary work. He identifies "Three Holy Spirit Principles. . . . The Lord carried this work forward by the Holy Spirit in perfect, practical harmony with the three principles of self-propagation, self-government, and self-support."⁶ In the New Testament and the missiology of the indigenous church, Williams discovered God's model for missions. This model affirmed the need for contextualization in terms of forms and strategy yet simultaneously was Spirit-directed and dependent. Even in a context of extreme poverty with little or no outside resources,⁷ the church could be planted and grow, members could be equipped for ministry, and the gospel could be communicated in word and deed to those who had never heard, thereby fulfilling the apostolic mandate.

Some might argue that these "Holy Spirit Principles" no longer apply or would be ineffective in another context. Along with his missionary colleague, Melvin Hodges, Williams heard these same arguments when advocating for a Spirit-driven missiology and praxis in the last century. What the Church knows today, evidenced by the spectacular growth of the Pentecostal movement around the world, particularly in the Assemblies of God, is that an indigenous church can be planted. Paul and the apostles did it in the New Testament. Williams and Hodges did it in El Salvador and throughout Latin America. Other missionaries did it in Africa and areas of Asia. As Hodges, the missionary statesman and pioneer Assemblies of God missiologist, so clearly articulates, an indigenous church patterned after the New Testament church is "possible because the Gospel has not changed. We serve the same God and His Holy Spirit is with us as He was with the church in the New Testament times."⁸ Hodges contended that converts empowered by the Spirit could carry on the work of the Church. The key was that the missionary "must have faith in the power of the gospel to do for others what it has done for us."⁹

The question is, do we, the apostolic/missionary people of God, truly believe that what God has done for us, He can do in others—and even greater things? Will we seek and depend on Spirit direction and empowerment? Will we ask, not only "What is our task?" but also the theological question, "From where does the power for ministry and missions come?" **Williams planted an indigenous church out of conviction but also out of necessity. Will missionaries**

⁵Lois Williams, *Hands That Dug the Well* (Springfield, MO: RDM, 1997), 41-42.

⁶*Ibid.*, 61.

⁷*Ibid.*, 176. The Assemblies of God in El Salvador was birthed during the Great Depression. Rather than the national church borrowing from the missionary, Williams observes, "Many times I borrowed from a national brother to meet unavoidable household needs."

⁸Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), 14.

⁹*Ibid.*, 14, 21.

today work out of that same conviction in the midst of abundant resources? Will believers resist and refuse the seductive powers of a donor-driven, market-driven, ministry-driven, personality-driven, program-driven, or missionary-driven missiology? Will the Church fulfill the apostolic mandate in apostolic power?

The missiology of the indigenous church has been the standard for the Assemblies of God almost from the beginning. Alice Luce, Ralph William's mentor, first outlined this philosophy in a series of articles in the *Pentecostal Evangel* in 1921.¹⁰ Donald Gee spelled it out for the Assemblies of God of Great Britain and Ireland in 1937 in a booklet entitled *The Indigenous Principle: An Explanation of a Great Missionary Policy*.¹¹ Official Assemblies of God documents and popular publications advance the principles of indigenous church missiology, but what does it mean to pastors of local sending churches? How do the leaders of fraternal assemblies around the world and missionaries define and practice it?

Redefining the Indigenous Church in the Twenty-first Century: Terms and Principles

Hodges' articulates a seminal definition of the indigenous church in his classic and world impacting work, "The Indigenous Church" which he penned in 1953:

"The New Testament church then was first, self-propagating; that is, it had within it sufficient vitality so that it could extend throughout the region and neighboring regions by its own efforts. It produced its own workers and the work was spread abroad by the effort of the Christians themselves. Second, it was self-governing; that is it was governed by [people] who were raised up by the Holy Spirit from among the converts in the locality. Third, it was self-supporting; it did not depend on foreign money in order to meet the expenses of the work."¹²

McGee notes, "The book came at a time when leaders discerned that Assemblies of God missions stood at a crossroads: either to follow New Testament methods and realize more conversions through evangelistic activities of indigenous churches or to see needed funds continue flowing to charitable institutions resulting in fewer conversions."¹³ A key issue for Hodges was what would remain if for any reason the missionary had to leave the field or financial support from the mission cut off? "The church must be built in such a way that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her."¹⁴

The indigenous church is not a singular methodology but rather the principles and values of the indigenous church emerge from a biblical theology of missions forming a philosophy of missional praxis that guides missionary attitudes, decision making, and actions. The brief Williams narrative above communicates some of the core values of the principles of an indigenous church, a Spirit-driven missiology:

¹⁰Alice E. Luce, "Paul's Missionary Methods," *Pentecostal Evangel*, January 8, 1921, 6-7; January 22, 1921, 6-7; February 5, 1921, 6-7.

¹¹Donald Gee, *The Indigenous Principle: An Explanation of a Great Missionary Policy* (London, UK: Redemption Tidings, 1937).

¹²Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 12.

¹³Gary B. McGee, *Miracles, Missions, and American Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 172.

¹⁴Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 13.

- (1) **the Lord fulfills mission through His Church by the direction and power of the Holy Spirit,** (The goal of missions is the planting of New Testament churches)¹⁵
- (2) **all members of the Church carry the responsibility for the apostolic mandate to reach all peoples with the good news of the kingdom,** (A responsible self-propagating church)
- (3) **leadership equips the Church by creating space for supernatural encounters that are held to the standard of the Word in contextually appropriate ways,** (A self-governing church where leadership development and discipleship occurs in culturally appropriate ways. A contextual church that develops its own theology, missiology and missional praxis)
- (4) **effective missional praxis requires the church to paradoxically exert great effort while relying fully on the power of the Spirit,** (A self-supporting, responsible church) and
- (5) **reliance on the Spirit requires a commitment to prayer.** (New Testament method and New Testament power).

Parallel to this summary statement is a document titled “*Fundamental Missiological Declarations*” developed by “Together in Missions” a network of Assemblies of God missions agencies in Latin America. The adoption of these declarations in March of 2001 by representatives of Assemblies of God national churches throughout Latin America clearly indicates that missions leaders from the Majority World or Global South understand the principles of the indigenous church to be biblical principles to be universally applied in contextually appropriate ways. Regardless of their sending nation or receiving nation, these principles are to be practiced by all missionaries, missions agencies, and churches. (See Appendix A for the complete document and Appendix B for a complementary document on missionary, agency and receiving church relationships.)

The following excerpted missiological statements are most germane:

1. OUR REASON FOR BEING

1.1. The Urgency of the Hour

WHEREAS we live in the last days in a world rife with great challenges, full of many unreached people groups and God has raised up the Latin American church for such a time as this, **WE MUST**, like Esther, recognize that God has brought us to the Kingdom for this hour (Esther 4:14) and reaffirm our commitment to the great commission.

1.2. Our Reason for Being

WHEREAS God has blessed the church of Latin America in a supernatural way, and blessings are to bless others, and the final imperative of Jesus is the great commission, and the arrival of Pentecost was to initiate and prepare the church to fulfill that commission, **WE MUST** declare that missions is our reason for being.

2. PENTECOSTAL MISSIOLOGY

2.1. The Fire of the Holy Spirit

WHEREAS the New Testament church expanded throughout the known world through messengers

¹⁵The parenthetical statements in these bullets represent the language of Hodges (parallel to the chapters in the book) in order to bridge the classical definition of the Indigenous Church to the present articulation.

full of the Holy Spirit beginning with the day of Pentecost, **WE MUST** as the Assemblies of God of Latin America affirm that the purpose of the fire and baptism of the Holy Spirit is to give witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations, and recognize that missionary work depends wholly on the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

2.2. The Call of the Spirit

WHEREAS the Biblical model is that the work of God is accomplished by men and women called by the Spirit, and that the strategy of the Spirit manifests itself through those who are called, and that it is the Holy Spirit who calls and not the church, **WE MUST** as a church identify and support those who have a call to go thereby fulfilling the call to send, (Romans 10:14) giving priority both to the missionary call in the selection and formation of the missionary and to divine direction in the development of missionary strategies.

2.3 The Pentecostal Message

WHEREAS the Bible demands stewardship of the message of the Gospel (I Tim. 6:20, II Tim. 1:12-14, II Cor. 4:1-2) and states that only “the truth will set them free” (John 8:32) **WE MUST** lift up the communication of the Christ-centered message of the full gospel in order to respond in the power of the Holy Spirit to the felt needs of our world and of every human being, affirming the fundamental doctrines and integrating the Word and experience in the life of the believer.

2.4. The Pentecostal Strategy

WHEREAS the strategy of the New Testament was the raising up local churches, using the five ministries and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, **WE MUST** have as a strategic focus the founding, developing and strengthening of indigenous local and national churches filled with the manifestations of the Holy Spirit including signs, wonders, and miracles.

2.5. The Missionary Prayer

WHEREAS the Lord himself ordered “Pray that the Lord of the harvest send forth workers to his harvest,” (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2) **WE MUST** intercede to the Lord with words and in the Spirit for divine direction in the development of missions and for future workers, open doors, missionaries in the field, a growing church, the persecuted church, the sending church, and the growth of the work around the world.

3. MISSIONARY METHODS AND STRATEGY

3.1. The Indigenous Church

WHEREAS the New Testament church depended on the Holy Spirit for its economic support, leadership, and growth, and used a variety of strategies and methods, **WE MUST** be flexible in our strategies and methods in order to respond to the context of the field, depending on the Spirit, maintaining our focus on raising up self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating indigenous churches which fulfill the ministry of the church: to worship and serve God, edify its members, and communicate the gospel to the world showing compassion to those in need.

3.2. The Career Missionary and the Role of Short Term Missions

WHEREAS raising up and establishing the church in a unreached people requires a long term investment, **WE MUST** commit ourselves to long term missions and to career missionaries as the key to the growth of the work and its permanence, recognizing and valuing short term ministries as support to those that sow their lives in the establishment of the indigenous church. Therefore, all

short term missions activity and short term missionaries should go in support and submission to the career missionary and the national church for the establishment of new works.

3.3. The Priority of the Local and National Church

WHEREAS the goal and objective of the missionary work in the New Testament was to establish local churches that related to one another, **WE MUST** follow the example of making disciples, integrating new believers in local churches and local churches in national fraternities (councils) in order that every activity and ministry have as its objective contributing to the strengthening and development of the local church and national church.

3.4. The Formation of Leaders

WHEREAS the method of Jesus and Paul was shaping disciple-leaders in theory and practice, **WE MUST** prioritize the formation and action of an indigenous Pentecostal leadership that operates in the power of the Spirit.

3.5. Pioneer Missions

WHEREAS Paul and the leaders of the New Testament church focused on fields that were unreached, **WE MUST** develop a pioneer spirit in our missionary activities that focuses on the unreached and on innovative ministries.

The apostolic mandate involves planting the Church because the Church disciples the missionary people of God to go to the ends of the earth, baptizing new converts, and teaching them to obey all His instructions (Matt. 28:18-20). **The apostolic mandate is the gospel of the Kingdom communicated in word and deed by the Church to the world. The Church is central to the plan of God in mission and to the goal of missional endeavor. The greatest act of social compassion (of social justice) is to plant a local church.** In love, the community of God, the Church, gives witness to the world of its resurrected Lord and continues His ministry by the power of the Spirit (Acts 1:8). (For a clearer definition of the Apostolic People of God and a working missiology of Acts 1:8 see Appendix C.)

A false dichotomy exists today between kingdom and Church, between incarnational ministry and representational ministry, between the missiology of Jesus and the missiology of Paul.¹⁶ As Scot McKnight asserts, based on his study of the Gospels,

There is no kingdom without faith and attachment to Jesus Christ, and there is no kingdom without attachment to Jesus' followers. In other words, Jesus' kingdom vision is not that far from Paul's church vision . . . According to the New Testament, the kingdom vision of Jesus is, it seems, only implemented through the church.¹⁷

The apostolic community, birthed at Pentecost, is to be a signpost of the Kingdom of God. The Church is not the kingdom, but when believers yield to Spirit-direction and empowerment, both individually and corporately, the rule of the King is manifested on earth. The purpose of the apostolic people of God is expressed in community (*koinonia*: "love one another"), in proclamation (*kerygma*: "Jesus is Lord"), in service (*diakonia*: "the least of these my brethren"), and in testimony (*martyria*: "you shall be my witnesses; be reconciled to God").¹⁸

¹⁶David J. Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2005), 141-165, 315-356.

¹⁷Scot McKnight, "McLaren Emerging," *Christianity Today*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/september/38.59.html> (accessed October 1, 2008).

¹⁸Charles Van Engen, *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 87-99.

Pentecostals resolve the tension between *missio Dei*, the mission of God, and *missiones ecclesiarum*, the missions of the Church, by recognizing and affirming that the activity of the Church in missions proceeds out of the mission of God as directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit communicates the good news of the kingdom of God through the agency of the Church.

Hodges framed it by stating, “The Goal of Missions—a New Testament Church.”¹⁹ This does not signify that the Church is mired in the first century; rather, the characteristics—the signs which identify the Church should be the same: revelation and reconciliation. The gospel remains unchanged, but is communicated uniquely according to context. The Church is one Church, the body of Christ, but each local congregation is unique. The seed remains the same, but the distinct soils produce diverse expressions within the community of faith. “The gospel has been designed by God himself, so it fills the need of the African, the Chinese, or the Indian. As a result, there is no place on earth where, if the gospel seed be properly planted, it will not produce an indigenous church.”²⁰

Hodges identifies the relationship between mission, missions and the Church:

Missions refers to the carrying out of the redemptive purpose of God for [humankind] through human instrumentality, wherever [women and men are] found. Obviously, missions does not begin with the missionary or evangelist. The missionary is only the instrument. Moreover, [he or she] does not stand alone—[he or she is] a member of the Church and its representative. Hence, the importance of the study of ecclesiology in the study of missions.

What is the Church? What is the *mission* of the Church? The Church is not in itself the source of missions. We must go farther back. The Church is the result of God’s redemptive purpose and plan. The Church is the object of Christ’s love. The Church is the body of Christ through which the eternal purpose is carried out. The Church is of Christ and Christ is God’s (1 Cor. 3:23).

The study of missions then becomes the study of the Church. *A weak theology of the Church will produce a weak sense of mission.* However, the study cannot begin with the Church. We must go back to the source—the plan and purpose of God. Missions takes us back to the heart of God.²¹

Every believer and every local congregation need to assume responsibility for the apostolic mandate. By definition, the Church serves as the apostolic people of God. Even as missional praxis is not optional to the Church, neither is it possible outside of the Church. The objective of all missionary activity focuses on planting and nurturing the Church. Local and national churches are essential in missions, for they serve as tangible expressions of God’s community of the redeemed and His redeeming community.

The **task of the missionary** is not to produce seed or shape the church (birthed by the Spirit) to the trellis of the sending church, but rather to prepare the soil, remove the rocks, nurture the church, and foment the development of leadership.²² The missionary’s must

¹⁹Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 9.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 14 Hodges added the critical element of contextualization to the principles of the Indigenous Church. Appendix B in the *The Indigenous Church* is the “Standard of Faith and Fellowship,” a contextual catechism for converts in El Salvador that defined what it meant to be a member of the church in that “soil.”

²¹Melvin L. Hodges, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1977), 10.

²²Leadership development serves as a key dynamic in both the writings of Allen and Hodges.

competently discern divine direction and walk in obedience through the power of the Spirit modeling and facilitating surrender to the Spirit. The primary task is discipleship²³ (soul winning) and leadership development. The missionary's role focuses on pioneer ministries such as planting the church among an unreached people or initiating innovative ministries in response to the needs of the national church. This requires incarnational ministry where the missionary commits to a lifetime of service, while willingly following divine direction to another people at a moment's notice. "His [or her] work is to make Christ the permanent factor, and ... pass on to other pioneer tasks as quickly as he [or she] can. ... The true measure of success is not that which the missionary accomplishes while on the field, but the work that still stands after he has gone."²⁴

According to Hodges, the New Testament church planted in Acts characteristically proclaimed the gospel to the lost, gathered new believers for worship and instruction, and chose leadership from among them in order that they could equip the membership for ministry and witness (in culturally appropriate ways). Stated in the language of Anderson, Venn, Nevius, Allen, Luce, and Gee the characteristics of the New Testament church are those of an indigenous church—a contextual self-propagating, self-governing, and self-supporting church.²⁵

An indigenous church can be defined as a community of believers birthed in a specific context who are Spirit-driven (Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered) to accomplish God's purposes for and through that community. Like the various churches described in the New Testament, particularly in Acts, these local and national communities of faith are to be Spirit-governed, Spirit-supported and Spirit-propagated. God, by His Spirit, calls and equips local leaders to disciple and mobilize believers in the faith and guides them in discerning and fulfilling the will of God for their community - Spirit-governed. As a responsible community, the indigenous church turns to the unlimited resources of the Spirit for its sustenance so as not to depend on the missionary, institutions, ministries, or agencies – Spirit-supported. As a community of faith, indigenous church members are impassioned and empowered by the Spirit to reach their neighbors, their nation, and their world with the gospel - Spirit-propagated.

The Three-Self formula, espoused by indigenous church proponents, was never intended to create a "self"ish church, as critics contend.²⁶ Rather, it marked the fact that churches, properly planted on the mission field, should be independent of the missions that planted them and the missions stations that sought to control and fashion them in the image of the mission culture. Allen, Gee and Hodges alike affirmed the central role of the Holy Spirit to empower the Church and never separated method from Spirit-direction and empowerment. Methods can inhibit the work of the Spirit, but they can never, of themselves, produce fruit. The missionary must seek methods through which the Spirit can flow and then trust the Spirit for the results. Gee states:

Paul's methods succeeded simply and solely because they were directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. . . .The establishing of indigenous churches that

²³Hodges often used the term "soul winner" to refer to discipleship.

²⁴Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 18.

²⁵ Alan Tippett and others suggest that additional "self's" are critical to an indigenous church including self-image, self-functioning, self-determining, self-giving, self-theologizing, and self-missionizing. While these additional terms may nuance aspects of Spirit dependency, I believe they are sub-categories of the three-self formula; for example, self-theologizing is an expression of being Spirit-governed. See Alan Tippett, *Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1973).

²⁶Robert Reese, "The Surprising Relevance of the Three-Self Formula," *Mission Frontiers*, July-August 2007, 25-27. Reese provides a concise response to critics of the Three-Self formula.

conform to the pattern of the New Testament will remain a practical impossibility without that Pentecostal dynamic which can alone account for the existence of the true church anywhere.²⁷

Allen felt it was a grave error to create missionary dependence in place of Spirit dependence.²⁸ New believers in any land receive the Spirit of Jesus, which is the missionary Spirit which seeks the lost. When believers learn dependence on the Holy Spirit, the Church reveals its true character and self-propagates.²⁹ Allen expresses a passionate belief in the power of the Holy Spirit in missions:

The Holy Ghost is given to Christians that He may guide them, and that they may learn His power to guide them, not that they may be stupidly obedient to the voice of authority. ... The work of the missionary is education³⁰ in this sense: it is the use of means to reveal to his converts a spiritual power which they actually possess and of which they are dimly conscious. As the converts exercise that power, as they yield themselves to the indwelling Spirit, they discover the greatness of the power and the grace of the Spirit, and in so doing they reveal it to their teacher. ... The moment they are baptized they are the Temple of the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost is power. They are not so incapable as we suppose. ... The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of initiative. If they had no initiative without Christ, with Christ they should not fail to have it. That power is in them by the gift of the Holy Ghost.³¹

The problem was not the converts; it was the missionaries. The principles of the indigenous church require missional leadership (missionaries, leaders of the sending church, and leaders of the receiving church or church plant) to hold or steward control/power as modeled in the New Testament (servant leadership under the authority of Christ.) Allen argued that many missionaries desire growth, but growth they could control.³² “Such missionaries pray for the wind of the Spirit but not for a rushing mighty wind. I am writing because I believe in a rushing mighty wind, and desire its presence at all costs to our restrictions.”³³ The issue is power and control.

When followers of Christ in any land or context are filled with the Spirit, they are empowered to give witness. Hodges observes,

On the mission field, the emphasis which Pentecostal people place on the necessity of each individual believer receiving a personal infilling of the Holy Spirit has produced believers and workers of unusual zeal and power. ... The faith which Pentecostal people have in the ability of the Holy Spirit to give spiritual gifts and supernatural abilities to the common people ... has raised up a host of lay preachers and leaders of unusual spiritual ability—not unlike the rugged fishermen who first followed the Lord.³⁴

²⁷Gee, 15.

²⁸Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*, 81.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 93-94.

³⁰(i.e. create space)

³¹Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*, 145-146.

³²Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962), 5.

³³*Ibid.*, 12.

³⁴Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 132.

A practical manifestation of Spirit dependence and a constant challenge to a Spirit-driven missiology and the implementation of indigenous principles is the use of finances and other material resources. Effective missional praxis requires the church to paradoxically exert great effort while relying fully on the power of the Spirit, a Spirit-supported, responsible church. A dual temptation exists: those without seek those who have for material gain without effort rather than depending on the Spirit, and those who have access to resources (e.g. the sending church, the missionaries, funded national leaders) depend on the power of those resources rather than the power of the Spirit and frequently are seduced in an abuse of power undermining their spiritual authority.

Hodges observes that “Self-support is not necessarily the most important aspect of the indigenous church, but it is undoubtedly the most discussed.”³⁵ Gee concurs, “One of the most delicate and crucial points in the practical application of the Indigenous Principle affects the financial support of native workers.”³⁶ After noting that many affirm the principle in theory but view it as a “practical impossibility,” he cites an Indian brother as stating, “My people know how to receive but not how to give.”³⁷ but argues that this perspective was also true among believers in Great Britain “until people’s hearts are touched by the grace of God. And even then it is a fact that much faithful teaching is constantly needed.”³⁸ Converts from any land would experience richer spiritual blessings as they were taught “to give to the support of the work of the ministry in their midst from the very outset.” . . . “Such teaching may be one of the most difficult tasks that the faithful missionary, like the faithful pastor at home, will have to face; but it is one of the “all things” that Christ commanded His servants to teach men to observe when He gave to us all the great Commission.”³⁹ An indigenous church from its inception must be a generous Spirit-dependent, Spirit-supported church, God’s apostolic people.

Latin American missionaries serving around the world have encountered a “dependency mentality” both in the sending church and among the people whom they serve. In an articulated response to this challenge, they affirmed the need to plant churches that supported the missionary enterprise and relied on God for provision from the first gathering. Latin American missions leadership affirmed,

“A missionary is a missionary, not due to access to economic resources, but because of a divine call and a ministry realized in the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Regardless of a missionary’s origin, the gospel is the same, the Caller is the same, the Empowerer is the same, and the cost is the same – complete surrender (will, family, culture etc.)”⁴⁰

To plant an indigenous church the missionary must be able to trust the Holy Spirit to do what he has done in the life and ministry of the missionary (and even greater works) in the lives of the people with whom the missionary labors.

Where does the power for authentic ministry find its source? According to Paul, the source is Christ’s resurrection power (Eph. 1:17-23). Paul prays that the church might be

³⁵Ibid., 74.

³⁶Gee, 9.

³⁷Ibid., 12.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰“The Latin American Missionary and the Obstacle of the Dependency Mentality” See complete text in Appendix D.)

strengthened with power through His Spirit, rooted and established in love (Eph. 3:14-19). “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen” (Eph. 3:20-21).

God can and does use human ingenuity and effort if placed on the altar of surrender to His will. Our gifts, personalities, cultures, resources, and strategies are useful to Him in mission, but only as they are yielded to His rule. Historically, Assemblies of God missions leadership affirmed that planning and spirituality could work in harmony when directed by the Holy Spirit, but that one without the other could jeopardize missionary work.⁴¹ In the conclusion to Hodges’ classic work, he states:

A great revival can die out or become ineffective if it is not channeled in a scriptural course toward New Testament goals. Furthermore, even the best methods will produce nothing unless accompanied by the work of the Holy Spirit. What gasoline and spark are to the mechanism of a well-tuned motor, spiritual power is to indigenous church methods, for two essential factors combine to make the church a going concern. The mechanics of a successful church on the mission field are the New Testament methods: the dynamics are the power and ministries of the Holy Spirit. Either factor alone is incomplete and inadequate.⁴²

The New Testament church was a dependent church—dependent on the direction and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. The relationship between the churches in Antioch, Jerusalem, and Rome was not one of dependence on one another or independence, but one of mutual dependence on the Spirit—one body with many members mutually reliant on the Head, Jesus Christ. Likewise **today, the relationship between the missionary and the indigenous church is not characterized by dependence one on the other or even characterized by interdependence—but by mutual dependence on the Spirit.** As the Spirit leads, the members of the body meet each other’s needs and fulfill the task of reaching the lost.

Questions for Assemblies of God Missions Leadership in light of Indigenous Church Principles in the Twenty-first Century

- Is our priority the communication of the gospel through the establishment of local and national churches?
- Is our missiology and missional praxis birthed in prayer and dependent on the Spirit?
- Will our decisions, our attitudes and our actions exalt the Name of Jesus?
- Does the power for our action find its source in gospel and the activity of the Spirit?
- Are people, like the bystanders in Acts 2, asking the question, “What does this mean?”
- Do our decisions, our attitudes and our actions conform to the teaching of Scripture?
- Do our decisions, our attitudes and our actions build up the Body of Christ?
- Do our decisions, our attitudes and our actions emerge from spiritual discernment and empowered by the Spirit or are they driven by other sources?

⁴¹Gary B. McGee, *This Gospel Shall Be Preached: A History and Theology of the Assemblies of God Foreign Missions Since 1959*, vol. 2 (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), 106.

⁴²Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 131.

- Do our decisions, our attitudes and our actions empower others to spiritual discernment, Spirit empowerment, and obedience?
- Are missionaries today equipped to “do theology” (i.e. discern the mind of Christ for any given reality)?
- Is the missionary DNA of the New Testament, our DNA?
- Do our organizational structures and cultures empower the people of God, particularly field agents (missionaries), to make decisions and act in accordance with the principles of the indigenous church in the midst of abundant resources and ecclesial success?
- Is there missional accountability to the standards of the indigenous church among missionaries, missions leadership, local church leadership, and the individual members of the Body of Christ?
- Will the missionary enterprise resist and refuse the seductive powers of a donor-driven, market-driven, ministry-driven, personality-driven, program-driven, or missionary-driven missiology?
- Is the goal of the missionary enterprise to plant the church thereby making disciples bringing glory to God?

Conclusion

I seek to call the Church, the apostolic/missionary people of God, specifically the Assemblies of God to a Spirit-driven missiology that recognizes the need for dependence on the Spirit for direction, empowerment, and fruit in the missionary enterprise. This Spirit-driven missiology does not merely give lip service to the Spirit’s activity but depends on the Spirit in missional praxis and seeks to fulfill the apostolic mandate in apostolic power.

To do so we must remember our history to be reminded of God’s faithfulness in order to step out into the future. We need to begin and continue to converse on the meaning and implications of our missiology and missional praxis. What is our missiological DNA as AGWM missionaries? What does the Indigenous Church look like in our diverse contexts? What should it look like?

Williams, Hodges, and a host of missionaries—both from the United States and the majority world—affirm that it can be done; an indigenous church can be planted, and the indigenous principles can be followed. Valerie and I personally adhere to these principles. In 1984, God called us to mobilize the Assemblies of God of El Salvador to missions.⁴³ The country suffered the ravages of a civil war; the economy was devastated, yet I felt compelled to begin to preach and teach missions. Young people responded to the altar calls in numbers I never expected—so much so that there came a point in my preaching that I no longer wanted to make

⁴³I was called be a missionary at age 8 when missionary David Kensinger came and preached at the church my father was pastoring in Grafton, ND. That same year (1968), he prophetically challenged his fellow missionaries to redefine the indigenous church in order to develop national churches with world missions vision. He declared that “every Christian in every church throughout the world IS EQUALLY OBLIGATED to spread the gospel to the entire world either by going or by giving.” He asserted, “We are falling short in our concept of the indigenous church. That is on the point of emphasizing self-propagation instead of world wide propagation.” The demand of the world’s unreached required that the missionary help national Christians to catch a vision of their responsibility to reach out to the whole world. If this could be done, “it could mean a whole new dimension in missions.” David Kensinger, “Integrating National Missions into our World Evangelization Program,” Unpublished Address to Assemblies of God Missionaries (Springfield, MO: AGWM Archives, 1968).

altar calls, because logistically the realization of that call seemed unlikely. A veteran missionary I deeply respected publicly challenged me, “Can you send missionaries to other countries on a budget of one dollar? That’s the only way we’ll be able to send missionaries from our countries.” His message was clear: “It is impossible. These people do not have the resources to send missionaries, so stop encouraging them.” In the natural, he was correct. Sending missionaries seemed impossible. All I could respond was: “I don’t know how God will do it, but the Word says that it is the responsibility of every disciple to communicate the good news to the entire world. He did not say “if you go” but “in your going make disciples.” I countered his challenge by saying, “I believe that if God calls a Salvadoran to be a missionary then He will make a way for that call to be fulfilled just like he did for this boy from North Dakota.”

I still adhere to that statement today, but I must admit that as I served as the Missions President for the Assemblies of God of El Salvador, my youthful exuberance was tempered. Many times, Salvadoran missionaries on extremely limited budgets in difficult places would call me and say, “Brother Rance, if you don’t send money soon, my children are going to starve.” It kept me up at night. It forced me to my knees. If I would have had money in my account, I might have been tempted, but I didn’t. I went to the churches, the pastors, the members, and the leadership of the churches in El Salvador. I challenged them, “These are your missionaries. God can and does provide for them miraculously, but He wants to do it through you.” It took time to develop disciplined sacrificial giving, but today the churches of the Assemblies of God of El Salvador support over eighty missionaries serving in twenty-two nations of the world.⁴⁴ These missionaries believe in the indigenous church because they have seen it in practice. They boldly go to the ends of the earth, because they know the resources needed to plant an indigenous church are made available by the Spirit. It can be done. The apostolic mandate can and will be fulfilled, but it can be done only in apostolic power. Jesus said, “I will build my Church.”

Hear again the words of Hodges, “The Holy Spirit can work in one country as well as in another. To proceed on the assumption that the infant church in any land must always be cared for and provided for by the mother mission is an unconscious insult to the people that we endeavor to serve, and is evidence of the lack of faith in God and in the power of His gospel.”⁴⁵ “Not only must the missionary have the right concept of his own ministry, but also he must have faith in the power of the gospel to do for others what it has done for us.”⁴⁶ This statement is at the core of a Spirit-driven missiology and praxis. As missionaries, we must trust the Spirit to empower others as He has empowered us and even to a greater degree.

An indigenous New Testament church does not just emerge. It is birthed by intentionally following the way of the cross in the power of the Spirit. The antidote to a donor-driven, market-driven, ministry-driven, or missionary-driven missiology is to surrender personal rights to power and recognize that it is not “my” ministry, but rather God’s ministry. The Church must avoid being seduced by its own devices and fulfill His mandate in His power.

J. Philip Hogan made the following significant missiological statements to the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA) in 1970, as president of that association:

⁴⁴According to the annual report provided by the Foreign Missions Department of the Assemblies of God of El Salvador, the Assemblies of God churches of El Salvador gave \$341,596 to missions in 2007. “Together in Missions,” the network of Assemblies of God missions agencies for the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America and Spain, report that a total of \$3,564,032 was given to support 832 missionaries serving in 72 countries.

⁴⁵Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 14.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 21.

Make no mistake, the missionary venture of the church, no matter how well planned, how finely administered and finely supported, would fail like every other vast human enterprise, were it not that where human instrumentality leaves off, a blessed ally takes over. It is the Holy Spirit that calls, it is the Holy Spirit that inspires, it is the Holy Spirit that reveals, and it is the Holy Spirit that administers . . .

I have long since ceased to be interested in meetings where mission leaders are called together to a room filled with charts, maps, graphs and statistics. All one needs to do to find plenteous harvest is simply to follow the leading of the Spirit. . . . The essential optimism of Christianity is that the Holy Spirit is a force capable of bursting into the hardest paganism, discomfiting the most rigid dogmatism, electrifying the most suffocating organization and bringing the glory of Pentecost.⁴⁷

Pentecostal optimism in fulfilling the apostolic mandate is based on His promise of apostolic power. Gee concludes,

And so, at the heart of it all, the success of our missionary endeavour to plant scriptural Assemblies of God in other lands by means of following the Indigenous Principle finally depends upon our whole Fellowship keeping filled with the Spirit and possessing the sacred Fire ever burning upon the altar of its heart. We welcome a missionary policy that constitutes such a sanctifying challenge. Let us be up, and doing.⁴⁸

The founders of the Pentecostal movement and the Assemblies of God relied on God to do the impossible through them by the power of His Holy Spirit. They were about “keeping filled” and being “up, and doing.” The following two paragraphs are my summary of Assemblies of God missiology as it emerges from its historical narrative:

Based on the conviction that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on all flesh as a prelude to the second coming of Christ in order to empower the church to give witness to all nations, the founding members of the Assemblies of God committed themselves to the evangelization of the entire world. They believed they were a part of God’s cosmic eschatological design. Though the realization of the plan seemed improbable by human standards, these believers were grounded in the biblical truth that God’s glory is revealed in weakness. They were humbled and empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Every member of the body of Christ was responsible for the task, for every member was a temple of the Spirit of the living God.

Strategic planning, accountability and missional structures were to be submitted to the Spirit’s guidance. Personal experience and biblical truth were integrated in the life of the believer, the life of the church, and the missionary endeavor. In the New Testament narrative patterns were sought and adhered to on the conviction that biblical patterns were Spirit empowered patterns, missiological truth was to be biblical truth and the New Testament narrative was to be a

⁴⁷J. Philip Hogan, “The Holy Spirit and the Great Commission,” *United Evangelical Action* (October 1970): 4-5, quoted in Everett Wilson, *A Strategy of the Spirit: J. Philip Hogan and the Growth of the Assemblies of God Worldwide 1960-1990* (Carlisle, UK: Regnum Books International, 1997), 136-137. This article was later published in *World Pentecost*, 1st Quarter, 1972 and *The Essential J. Philip Hogan*, ed. Byron D. Klaus and Douglas P. Petersen (Springfield, MO: Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2006), 31-35.

⁴⁸Gee, 16.

contemporary narrative. The individuals and peoples of the world, according to Scripture, were condemned without Christ. Pentecost was the empowering agent of the church to communicate God's plan of salvation to all in preparation for the coming of Christ and the final judgment.⁴⁹

In the opening ceremony Lausanne III in Cape Town 2010 a video presentation of God's redemptive activities in history examined the advances, the failures and the challenges of the mission of God through the Church. Just when it seemed that the Church was on the verge of extinction, and "Many thought it was the End of the World," a new generation of God's people cried out to Him and a new push for the evangelization of the world emerged, proclamation became the priority "because the time is short." In response I blogged the following:

Maybe it's time to realize once again that we are coming to the "End of the World." Time **is** short. Perhaps the Church is too comfortable in the present. Apparently, we are in no hurry for His return. The hope of the Church seems to be increasingly the "transformation of society" and the coming of the Kingdom in the present. Have we forgotten that we are citizens of another country, that we are foreigners and aliens on this planet? Salvation is not just a "get out of hell for free card." It is a blood stained passport of a citizen of heaven who proclaims the death and resurrection of the Lord until He comes.

What will be the summary statement of the apostolic/missionary people of God of this generation? Could it be that missionally we are as anemic as the lame beggar at the Beautiful Gate in Acts 3? Like him, we work hard, put in long hours for a good cause. We are strategically placed, but our missiology is trapped by a limited expectation. We play it safe, relying on our own possibilities. We do good things, but good things can be done in disobedience. Good things may not be the best thing. The beggar sought money for a temporary respite to his problem. God, through His emissaries, gave him a new life. Because we follow Jesus' loving example in revelation and reconciliation, the church must relieve temporary suffering. However, as Hodges notes, "We should avoid fixing up the pigpen or the prodigal son may be comfortable in the far-off country. Our task is to arouse in the prodigal a desire to return to his father's house."⁵⁰

Today much "good" is done in the name of missions, in the name of ministry, but unless it leads to revelation and reconciliation, to new life in Christ, it is not ministry nor is it missions. Are we willing to step out in faith in obedience to the voice of the Master and serve in the midst of the wind and the waves at the edge of missional chaos and allow the Holy Spirit to bring order, to make the impossible possible? "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain." (Ps. 127:1a). As my colleague Earl Creps noted, in Acts God by His Spirit did the unexplainable, and the task of the Church was to explain it by proclaiming the gospel.⁵¹ The missionary people of God must create space for the actions of the God of the impossible. The greatest miracle of all is a sinner saved by God's amazing grace. **May this be the generation of the apostolic/missionary people of God that surrenders to a Spirit-driven missiology and praxis and experiences the fulfillment of the apostolic mandate in apostolic power. It can happen. He promised it** (Matt. 24:14; Acts 1:8).

⁴⁹DeLonn L. Rance, *The Empowered Call: The Activity of the Holy Spirit in Salvadoran Assemblies of God Missionaries* (Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest Information and Learning Company, 2004), 81.

⁵⁰Hodges, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission*, 103.

⁵¹Earl Creps, "Message on the Day of Renewal" (Sermon, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, MO, January 24, 2008).

The Homeless Church of San Francisco

I would like to conclude this lecture with another narrative that illustrates a Spirit-driven missiology. A few years ago on Mother's Day, my wife received a call from our oldest daughter, LaDawn. She had just finished celebrating a missions service in a park in downtown San Francisco with Pastor Evan Prosser and the Homeless Church. Several weeks earlier, as a desperate Missionary in Training candidate, she was trying to book ten services a month in order to receive her salary. As she worked her way through the district directory of churches without much success, she came upon the number for the "Homeless Church." Pastor Evan graciously spoke with her on the phone but pointed out that the church met in a park and that the members had no money. LaDawn pleaded for an opportunity. He consented, noting that it might be good for his membership to hear from a missionary. They settled on Mother's Day since most other churches chose not to book missionaries on that holiday. LaDawn was well received; an offering of \$18 was collected, and Pastor Evan had prepared an honorarium of \$200. As LaDawn walked back to her parked car, the tears flowed as she recounted the events of the day to her mother on the phone. Pastor Evan's wife had come up with the idea that if every member of the church brought four aluminum cans for recycling each week, the church could support LaDawn at ten dollars a week. The church accepted the challenge.⁵²

Pastor Evan Prosser responded to the call of the Spirit to do the impossible, plant a church among the homeless of San Francisco. He used his God-given leadership skills to disciple and empowered the indigenous church he serves. They participate in communion, for they are the community of the redeemed, but they are also the redeeming community living out kingdom principles, literally, in the streets of San Francisco. Their vision is not limited by their circumstances; like the church of the New Testament, Jesus has commissioned them to reach the world. Do the men and women interviewed understand the nuances of a theory of a Spirit-driven missiology? Probably not, but do they understand that their lives have been transformed by the power of the gospel? Do they understand that they have a responsibility to be obedient to the Word and the direction of God and their pastor? Do they believe that in Christ they, the dispossessed and disempowered by the standards of the world, can impact the nations by their actions? The answer is an emphatic yes! There is no limit to what God can do through willing people. By saying "yes" to Jesus in word and deed, they are empowering a young woman, who just happens to be my daughter, to take the love of Jesus to the marginalized of the Dominican Republic. That we are shocked and shamed by their example just illustrates how far the contemporary church has drifted from what it means to be the Church.

The indigenous church, the apostolic/missionary people of God who meet as the Homeless Church of San Francisco, are practicing a Spirit-driven missiology. In obedience, they are doing their part and allowing God to do His part in building the Church. God called pastor Prosser and his wife. God called LaDawn. God touched the lives of these men and women. In response, they collect cans for the Kingdom. They pass out prayer cards and pray.

A few months after the service in the park, LaDawn spoke at a church nearby. After the evening service, for security reasons, the pastor's wife walked LaDawn to the train station. As

⁵²See video presentation: "Homeless Church: 'Diamonds in the Rough'," available from Assemblies of God World Missions Newsbreak video December 2007 at <http://www.wmm.ag.org/worldbeat.cfm> or to order call (417) 862-3420 or e-mail at worldbeat@ag.org. Also available in Spanish "La Iglesia Indigente: Diamantes en Bruto," January 2008.

they neared the station, a group of homeless people emerged from under the station. At first both LaDawn and the pastor's wife were apprehensive, but as the group approached, they heard, "It's our missionary! It's our missionary! LaDawn, we need more prayer cards! We've passed them out to all of our homeless friends. We need more so we can pray for you!"

A Spirit-driven missiology begins by creating space for encounters with God in prayer. In prayer we discern His direction and are reminded that God can, we cannot. The power to fulfill mission must come from above. God's answer to the challenge of the harvest is clear: Pray (Luke 10:2). When we pray, we renew our surrender to the Spirit and yield to apostolic power. We become in reality what we are already by faith—the apostolic/missionary people of God, fulfilling the apostolic mandate in apostolic power.

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APPENDIX A
FUNDAMENTAL MISSIONARY DECLARATIONS
“Together in Missions” (MEC) of the Assemblies of God of Latin America

Prepared by MEC committee, Oct. 25-26, 2000

And considered and approved by Supt. and Missions Leaders, in their
Pre-congress meeting in Guatemala, March 12-13, 2001

1. OUR REASON FOR BEING

1.1. The Urgency of the Hour

WHEREAS we live in the last days in a world rife with great challenges, full of many unreached people groups and God has raised up the Latin American church for such a time as this, **WE MUST**, like Esther, recognize that God has brought us to the Kingdom for this hour (Esther 4:14) and reaffirm our commitment to the great commission.

1.2. Our Reason for Being

WHEREAS God has blessed the church of Latin America in a supernatural way, and blessings are to bless others, and the final imperative of Jesus is the great commission, and the arrival of Pentecost was to initiate and prepare the church to fulfill that commission, **WE MUST** declare that missions is our reason for being.

1.3. What is the Priority of Missions in the Lives of Our Fellowships?

WHEREAS we have been blessed by missionary efforts, great revivals, and a phenomenal growth, but without a corresponding missionary outreach, **WE MUST** truthfully ask ourselves if missions is the priority of life in our fraternities.

1.4. Moving Missions Commitment to Practice

WHEREAS the majority of leaders, local churches, and national churches of the Assemblies of God of our countries lack both missions commitment and practical response, **WE MUST** take concrete and practical steps in the realization of the missionary commitment among which are:

- 1.4.1. Organize missionary short term trips of executives to unreached countries.
- 1.4.2. Schedule a night of missions in the annual conference (general council) and in the pastor retreats of each of our countries.
- 1.4.3. Raise awareness in the national churches that missions is more than a division or department (It functions as an missions agency): it is the heart of God, of the church, and the work of all.
- 1.4.4. Make a financial pledge supporting missions and/or a missionary.
- 1.4.5. Promote missionary conferences and conventions in every local church and at regional and national levels in order to motivate missions and the formation of missions departments and committees in each local congregation.
- 1.4.6. Celebrate concerts of prayer and all night prayer meetings for missionaries and for missions.
- 1.4.7. Encourage every believer to participate in foreign missions through a minimum faith promise of \$1 a month.
- 1.4.8. Invest with integrity the funds raised up in the name of foreign missions in the same making sure that administration costs do not exceed 10-15% clarifying the difference between foreign missions, intercultural evangelism and domestic evangelism in order that the offerings be used for that which they were raised.
(It is advisable to prioritize individual missionary offerings even if a general missions fund exists.)
- 1.4.9. Rejoice as a fraternity when missionary investments surpass the administration budget of the national church council.
- 1.4.10. Challenge every leader of the local and national church to be practically involved in the missionary vision.

2. PENTECOSTAL MISSIOLOGY

2.1. The Fire of the Holy Spirit

WHEREAS the New Testament church expanded throughout the known world through messengers full of the Holy Spirit beginning with the day of Pentecost, **WE MUST** as the Assemblies of God of Latin America affirm that the purpose of the fire and baptism of the Holy Spirit is to give witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations, and recognize that missionary work depends wholly on the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

2.2. The Call of the Spirit

WHEREAS the Biblical model is that the work of God is accomplished by men and women called by the Spirit, and that the strategy of the Spirit manifests itself through those who are called, and that it is the Holy Spirit who calls and not the church, **WE MUST** as a church identify and support those who have a call to go thereby fulfilling the call to send, (Romans 10:14) giving priority both to the missionary call in the selection and formation of the missionary and to divine direction in the development of missionary strategies.

2.3 The Pentecostal Message

WHEREAS the Bible demands stewardship of the message of the Gospel (I Tim. 6:20, II Tim. 1:12-14, II Cor. 4:1-2) and states that only “the truth will set them free” (John 8:32) **WE MUST** lift up the communication of the Christ-centered message of the full gospel in order to respond in the power of the Holy Spirit to the felt needs of our world and of every human being, affirming the fundamental doctrines and integrating the Word and experience in the life of the believer.

2.4. The Pentecostal Strategy

WHEREAS the strategy of the New Testament was the raising up local churches, using the five ministries and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, **WE MUST** have as a strategic focus the founding, developing and strengthening of indigenous local and national churches filled with the manifestations of the Holy Spirit including signs, wonders, and miracles.

2.5. The Missionary Prayer

WHEREAS the Lord himself ordered “Pray that the Lord of the harvest send forth workers to his harvest,” (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2) **WE MUST** intercede to the Lord with words and in the Spirit for divine direction in the development of missions and for future workers, open doors, missionaries in the field, a growing church, the persecuted church, the sending church, and the growth of the work around the world.

3. MISSIONARY METHODS AND STRATEGY

3.1. The Indigenous Church

WHEREAS the New Testament church depended on the Holy Spirit for its economic support, leadership, and growth, and used a variety of strategies and methods, **WE MUST** be flexible in our strategies and methods in order to respond to the context of the field, depending on the Spirit, maintaining our focus on raising up self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating indigenous churches which fulfill the ministry of the church: to worship and serve God, edify its members, and communicate the gospel to the world showing compassion to those in need.

3.2. The Career Missionary and the Role of Short Term Missions

WHEREAS raising up and establishing the church in a unreached people requires a long term investment, **WE MUST** commit ourselves to long term missions and to career missionaries as the key to the growth of the work and its permanence, recognizing and valuing short term ministries as support to those that sow their lives in the establishment of the indigenous church. Therefore, all short term missions activity and short term missionaries

should go in support and submission to the career missionary and the national church for the establishment of new works.

3.3. The Priority of the Local and National Church

WHEREAS the goal and objective of the missionary work in the New Testament was to establish local churches that related to one another, **WE MUST** follow the example of making disciples, integrating new believers in local churches and local churches in national fraternities (councils) in order that every activity and ministry have as its objective contributing to the strengthening and development of the local church and national church.

3.4. The Formation of Leaders

WHEREAS the method of Jesus and Paul was shaping disciple-leaders in theory and practice, **WE MUST** prioritize the formation and action of a indigenous Pentecostal leadership that operates in the power of the Spirit.

3.5. Pioneer Missions

WHEREAS Paul and the leaders of the New Testament church focused on fields that were unreached, **WE MUST** develop a pioneer spirit in our missionary activities that focuses on the unreached and on innovative ministries.

4. MISSIONARY SENDING STRUCTURES

4.1. The National Organization

WHEREAS the New Testament model emphasizes unity and stewardship of resources in missionary sending structures, **WE MUST** unify efforts at the national church level, utilizing missionary sending structures such as national missions departments or agencies that facilitate and allow the called to be sent and every local church to participate.

4.2. The Preparation of the Missionary

WHEREAS those called by the Spirit in the Word are also shaped by the Spirit and the church, **WE MUST** foment the formation of future missionaries beginning in the local church and taking advantage of complementary missionary formation offered by missionary training structures such as Bible Schools, schools of missions, missionary training centers, and missiological educational programs.

4.3. The Economic Support of the Missionary

WHEREAS the sent require adequate, long term economic support, **WE MUST** create missionary awareness in local churches in order to support the missionary in the field through a national structure responsible for the receiving and responsible administration of economic resources, recognizing that there is not a lack of resources in our churches of Latin America but a lack of missionary vision and commitment.

4.4. The Care of the Missionary and His/Her Family

WHEREAS the sending of missionaries means more than financial support, but also includes moral support and pastoral care, **WE MUST** include in our sending structures practical ways to fulfill the church's responsibility to morally and spiritually support the missionary caring for his/her family, ministry, and spiritual life.

4.5. Missionary Categories

WHEREAS there is a diversity of gifts and ministries reflected in the Word in the sending of missionaries in

the first century, **WE MUST** be open, allowing and facilitating the missionary in the fulfillment of his/her call, through missionary structures which are flexible in their forms but stable in their principles.

5. HOW TO RELATE TO EACH OTHER THROUGH NETWORKING

5.1. Cooperation (What does cooperation mean or not mean?)

WHEREAS the Church of Christ is one, but with a diversity of members, and cooperation and unity are much discussed in Latin America, **WE MUST** participate in a Biblical unity that gives witness to the world (John 17) but allows freedom that the many members (I Cor. 12:12) be able to respond to the call of our Lord without losing their identity and Pentecostal missionary philosophy.

Note: What does cooperation mean or not mean?

5.1.1. What cooperation does not mean:

1. It does not mean: A single world organization (organic unity).
2. It does not mean: A single Latin American Assemblies of God nor a single Latin American missions agency.
3. It does not mean: Giving up our identity and working philosophy as the Assemblies of God to satisfy other missionary movements.
4. It does not mean: Raising up local and national churches on the mission field that do not directly identify nor affiliate with the Assemblies of God because of pressure from the ecumenical community.

5.1.2. What cooperation does mean:

1. It does mean: Communicating with and sharing our support and respect with other missionary movements of the body of Christ, even when they have a different missionary working philosophy
2. It does mean: Respecting the national church of the Assemblies of God that already exists and not raising up various national churches of the Assemblies of God in a single country and/or people group.
3. It does mean: Uniting the missionary efforts of the Assemblies of God of different countries with the purpose of establishing, developing, and serving a single national Assemblies of God church in the target people group while allowing and supporting missionaries in the exercise of a diversity of gifts given by God for the edification of the national work.
4. It does mean: Communication between Assemblies of God missions departments and agencies of Latin America and the world while respecting the autonomy of each nation.

5.2. Communication between Assemblies of God Missions Departments/Agencies of Latin America.

WHEREAS the Assemblies of God has a common doctrine and philosophy and the challenges of the world are great, **WE MUST** recognize the urgency of cooperation between the Assemblies of God missions departments/agencies of our countries in order to take advantage of the resources, contacts, and experiences of everyone.

Note: For this reason, we affirm the benefits of the network called “Together in Missions” in order to share information through:

1. Communication:

- 1.1. Reports of missionary activity.
- 1.2. Communication by way of electronic mail.
- 1.3. An electronic journal.

2. Contacts and Resource Sharing:

- 2.1. A database of Latin American missionaries
- 2.2. Resources related to missionary contacts and needs from the mission field.
- 2.3. Current statistics.
- 2.4. Activities and resources for missionary training.
- 2.5. Resources for the development of the missionary vision and the organization of the missions department and agencies.

3. Meetings and Conferences of Missionary leaders which:

- 3.1. Address current issues and trends.
- 3.2. Dialogue with missiological issues.
- 3.3. Form an ongoing network of fellowship and information.

5.3. Communication with Receiving Countries.

WHEREAS there are many unreached people groups that lack a national church, but at the same time there are many national churches already established in many mission fields that must be respected by those that come from other countries, **WE MUST** concern ourselves with establishing the national church together with other Assemblies of God missionary efforts already functioning in the receiving country; when a national church already exists, all missionary effort should be to strengthen and support it.

5.4. Communication between Multinational Missionary Teams

WHEREAS in the actual missionary context, Assemblies of God missionaries are arriving from many countries, **WE MUST** work together in the development of multinational missionary teams, in which there is cooperation, mutual respect, maximizing of resources, and opportunities for each missionary to realize their diverse gifts through the national church.

(The study of English is advisable to facilitate communication between missionaries, as English has become the common tongue among missionaries internationally.)

5.5. Communication between Missions Departments/Agencies and the local sending church.

WHEREAS it is the local churches who send the missionary through the missions agency/department, **WE MUST** facilitate communication between the agency/department, the local churches, and the missionaries.

History and Development of the Present Document

Developed by the committee of "Together in Missions" for Latin American missions, October 25-27, 2000 in Guatemala City, Guatemala. The committee is composed of: Brad Walz (Argentina) - President, Enrique Vargas (Costa Rica), Efrain Arosemena (Panama), DeLonn Rance (El Salvador) - Secretary, Rodolfo Saenz (Costa Rica) - President of CELAD.

Amended and approved by Latin American Assemblies of God Missions Leaders and National Superintendents present in a Missions Pre-conference March 12-13, 2001 in Guatemala City, Guatemala. Presented to those present at the Historical Missions Conference of the Assemblies of God of Latin America Reaching Out to the 10-40 Window, March 13-16, 2001 in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

Original translation to English by Brad Walz on November 11, 2000. Modified and amended by DeLonn Rance, April 28, 2001

APPENDIX B

“Together in Missions” of the Assemblies of God of Latin America
presents:

GUIDELINES FOR MISSIONARY RELATIONSHIPS:

The Interrelationship between Sending Church, Missionaries and Receiving Church

Originally prepared in August, 1994, in Puerto Rico, by the Celad Missions committee
(Detailed explanation at the end of the document)

Justification:

It is interesting to note that two-thirds of the Pentecostal population comes from the continents of: Africa, Asia and Latin America; and the eighty-eight percent of Assemblies of God believers reside in these areas of the world.

In light of the missionary awakening in the church of Latin America and the Caribbean and its participation in the sending of missionaries to established works, new relationships have emerged between the sending church, the receiving church and the missionaries that are sent. In view of this reality, we present this document for study and analysis.

The purpose of this document is to improve the interrelationship between the sending church, the receiving church and the missionaries, and thereby, fulfill the great commission by taking advantage of the available resources.

General Principles:

Our challenge is to examine the new realities of a world Pentecostalism to find ways to integrate all the needed resources brought by each entity to advance toward mutual cooperation between the missionary fellowships and the national work. The concept involves a reciprocal partnership which produces “partners” in the missionary fellowships and the national work.

We recommend a teamwork which demonstrates an interrelationship of missionary resources and strategies. We must base this interrelationship on a theology, missiology, and practice which is advantageous to all.

1. THE SENDING CHURCH’S RELATIONSHIPS

Biblical Foundations: Acts 13:1-3, Romans 10:14-15, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

1.1. THE SENDING CHURCH’S RELATIONSHIP TO THE RECEIVING CHURCH.

- 1.1.1. Create and maintain communication channels.
- 1.1.2. Present available resources and possible projects, keeping in mind that all investments on the mission field should be made in the name of the receiving work.
- 1.1.3. Request information concerning needs.
- 1.1.4. Clarify procedures (introductory letters, approval processes, tithing and others).

1.2. THE SENDING CHURCH’S RELATIONSHIP TO THE MISSIONARY.

- 1.2.1. Establish the procedures responsible for missionary selection including a minimum of basic requirements in the areas of abilities, formation and ministerial experience.
- 1.2.2. Train and equip missionaries for their field of service.
- 1.2.3. Send only those missionaries that have been approved as being capable of going to the mission field.
- 1.2.4. Do a cost of living study of the country where missions work is being done and make the necessary adjustments each year to be responsible for the missionary’s economic stability.
- 1.2.5. Keep the missionary informed as to the current reality of the national sending church (minutes, magazines, changes and others).
- 1.2.6. Encourage the missionary families, noting special dates, birthdays, the children and others.
- 1.2.7. Develop integral pastoral care of the families on the mission field.

- 1.2.8. Establish the appropriate context and time for the missionary's return for promotion.
- 1.2.9. Create a fund for the missionary in order to provide support for some months after returning from the field.

1.3. THE SENDING CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE LOCAL CHURCH.

- 1.3.1. Teach the church its missionary responsibility.
- 1.3.2. Develop an intercessory prayer movement and a missionary discipleship.
- 1.3.3. Teach the church to develop an effective continual missions promotion.
- 1.3.4. Provide materials to local churches and keep them informed of missionary work.

1.4. THE SENDING CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER MISSIONS AGENCIES.

- 1.4.1. Have a free interchange of missionary reports, achievements and projects.
- 1.4.2. Cooperate in areas of missionary logistics.

2. THE RECEIVING CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIPS

2.1. THE RECEIVING CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE SENDING CHURCH

- 2.1.1. Provide information related to missions needs.
- 2.1.2. Request in writing, missionary assistance and when informed of a possible candidate, extend an official letter of invitation.
- 2.1.3. Come to a mutual agreement between the missionary, the sending church and the receiving church regarding the needs and areas of missionary service.
- 2.1.4. Send an annual report of developments in missionary work.
- 2.1.5. Communicate unique cultural values and church polities.
- 2.1.6. Inform the sending church, through the leadership of the missions department (or agency), of any accusation directed at the missionary which may require ministerial discipline, keeping in mind that the sending church can terminate the missionary's service at any time, but it is the sending church who applies disciplinary measures according to the information presented and trial outcome.

2.2. THE RECEIVING CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE MISSIONARY

- 2.2.1. Recognize both North American and Latin American missionaries under the same conditions, regardless of the missionary's origin there should be no economic expectations, rather missionaries should be received as God's ministers not as "sources of material goods."
- 2.2.2. Communicate to the missionary and his family unique cultural values and church polities.
- 2.2.3. Receive the missionary and formally present him/her to the appropriate authorities.
- 2.2.4. Allow the missionary freedom to work in the agreed upon areas of service.
- 2.2.5. Provide the missionary with the needed documentation for immigration and residency.
- 2.2.6. Inform the missionary of any accusation which may require ministerial discipline.

3. THE MISSIONARY'S RELATIONSHIPS

3.1. THE MISSIONARY'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE SENDING CHURCH.

(Agency and Local Churches)

- 3.1.1. Maintain contact with the national missions committee and the pastors and members of supporting local churches.
- 3.1.2. Periodically provide information related to the work: problems, triumphs and projects.
- 3.1.3. Pray for supporting churches, pastors and leaders.
- 3.1.4. Send visual materials of the missionary's activities.
- 3.1.5. Be gracious hosts to missions related visitors.
- 3.1.6. Dedicate time to supporting churches during promotional period.
- 3.1.7. Keep in mind that without the support of the church, missionary work is paralyzed.
- 3.1.8. Request permission from the Missions Department to leave the country where assigned as a missionary whether it is for study, to attend seminars or to return to one's own country.

3.2. THE MISSIONARY'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE RECEIVING CHURCH.

- 3.2.1. Present yourself to church authorities and maintain a good relationship with them, informing them of trips outside the country.
- 3.2.2. Be aware of the unique cultural values and church politics of the receiving church.
- 3.2.3. Establish goals and work projects, always in harmony with the national receiving church being aware of and respecting its norms and by-laws.
- 3.2.4. Maintain neutrality in regards to the politics of the country in which one ministers.
- 3.2.5. Go with an attitude of service.
- 3.2.6. Be a blessing to the national church.
- 3.2.7. Make an effort to win respect through the exercise of your ministry.
- 3.2.8. Maintain harmonious relationships with executives, leaders and ministers of the national work.
- 3.2.9. Foment missionary vision in the receiving church.

3.3. THE MISSIONARY'S RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER MISSIONARIES.

- 3.3.1. Recognized that even though there is not a legislative relationship with missionary agencies from other countries, there is a need to cooperate with missionaries from other agencies.
- 3.3.2. Organize, where possible and with authorization of the national church, a meeting with all officially recognized missionaries that work in the receiving country in order to encourage, respect, learn from one another, be mutually edified and work in harmony.

Conclusion:

In all these relationships one must respect the lines of authority and service, respecting each person and their abilities, gifts and call in order to have a united church, all under the authority and unity of the body of Christ and the divine love that unites the church.

Historical Development of the Present Document.

The beginnings of this document were developed for CELAD under the title of "A Proposal for a Guide to Missionary Work in the Area" in June of 1993 in San Jose, Costa Rica by: Rev. Rodolfo Sáenz Salas (National Superintendent of Costa Rica and President of CELAD), Rev. Enrique Vargas (National Assistant Superintendent and Missions President of Costa Rica) and Rev. Douglas Petersen (Area Director for Central America, DFM, U.S.A.). The document was presented at the CELAD superintendents meeting March 7-10, 1994. The superintendents made observations and referred the document to the Missions Committee for CELAD.

The Missions Committee for CELAD met in Caguas, Puerto Rico on September 13-14, 1994. In that meeting the superintendent's observations were incorporated and substantial modifications were made to the document under the title of "A Proposal for a Guide to Missionary Work in Latin America." The following participated in the document's revision: Rev. Félix Hernández (President of the CELAD Missions Committee), Rev. Enrique Vargas (Missions President of Costa Rica and CELAD Missions Committee member), Rev. Josué David Flores (Missions President of Guatemala), Rev. DeLonn Rance (Missions President of El Salvador and CELAD Missions Committee member), Rev. Brad Walz (Vice-President of Missions of Argentina and Missions Representative of CADSA), Rev. Saturnino González (Superintendent Puerto Rico District, U.S.A. and CELAD Missions Committee member) and Rev. Carmen H. Pérez (Missions President of Puerto Rico).

As the modified document had not been presented to the superintendents nor missions leaders of CELAD, the "Together in Missions" committee took the document off the table in their meeting on July 1-2, 2002 in Miami, FL re-titling the document, "Guidelines for Missionary Relationships: The Interrelationship between the Sending Church, Missionaries and the Receiving Church" and added points 2.1.6. and 2.2.6. This latest revision will be presented to the Third Encounter of Missions Leaders of Latin America to be held in San Jose, Costa Rica, June 11-14, 2003. The "Together in Missions" Committee consists of: Rev. Brad Walz (Argentina) - president, Rev. Enrique Vargas (Costa Rica) -member, Rev. Efraín Arosemena (Panama) - member, Rev. Samuel Rodríguez (Venezuela) - member, Rev. DeLonn Rance (El Salvador) - secretary. Rev. Rodolfo Sáenz, (Costa Rica) - counselor, was unable to attend. English version translated by DeLonn Rance.

APPENDIX C
THE APOSTOLIC PEOPLE OF GOD:
DEFINING PENTECOSTAL MISSIONS IN
A WORKING ASSEMBLIES OF GOD MISSIOLOGY
Acts 1:8

DeLonn Rance
Presented at the
Missions Leadership Forum of
World Missions Congress of the Assemblies of God
Buenos Aires, Argentina
April 23-27, 2007

Introduction

The time to fulfill the vision of communicating the gospel to every person and planting the church among every people is now. The Assemblies of God worldwide is experiencing the blessings of God and is responsible to seize the moment and opportunity by becoming what it is called to be, the apostolic people of God. The purpose of this paper is to define Pentecostal missions as a part of a working Assemblies of God missiology as it emerges from Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and **you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” by affirming that God is the author of missions (you will be **my** witnesses), by recognizing that the church is the agency of missions (**you** will be my witnesses), and by committing to the action of missions (you will be my **witnesses**). This paper’s conclusion is followed by a working glossary of key missiological terms to facilitate missiological dialogue.

Melvin L. Hodges, missionary statesman and pioneer Assemblies of God missiologist, provides the following definition to Pentecostal missions:

Missions refers to the carrying out of the redemptive purpose of God for [humankind] through human instrumentality, wherever [women and men are] found. Obviously, missions does not begin with the missionary or evangelist. The missionary is only the instrument. Moreover, [he/she] does not stand alone— [he/she are] a member of the Church and its representative. Hence, the importance of the study of ecclesiology in the study of missions.

What is the Church? What is the *mission* of the Church? The Church is not in itself the source of missions. We must go farther back. The Church is the result of God’s redemptive purpose and plan. The Church is the object of Christ’s love. The Church is the body of Christ through which the eternal purpose is carried out. The Church is of Christ and Christ is God’s (1 Corinthians 3:23).

The study of missions then becomes the study of the Church. *A weak theology of the Church will produce a weak sense of mission.* However, the study cannot begin with the Church. We must go back to the source—the plan and purpose of God. Missions takes us back to the heart of God (Hodges 1977:10).

The Author of Missions: The Apostolic People of God “You Will Be My Witnesses”

As noted by Hodges above, missions does not start with an individual missionary nor does it find its source in the church, but rather missions begins in the heart of God who purposed to reveal himself to all people and reconcile them to himself through the Son, Christ Jesus. The entire Godhead collaborates in the redemptive plan. In the garden God, the Father, calls out to fallen Adam (human), “Where are you?” (Gen. 3: 9). The Son proclaims that he came “to seek and to save that what was lost” (Luke 19:10). “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come!’ . . . Let those who are thirsty come; and let all who wish take the free gift of the water of life” (Rev. 22:17). The Spirit continues the ministry and mission of Jesus through the apostolic people of God, the church. Mission and missions belong to God.

It is in God that the church, the earthly manifestation of the kingdom of God in the present age, finds its definition. It is God who sets the agenda for missions not the church.⁵³ This agenda of revelation and reconciliation is reveal in the words of God, the acts of God and the *logos* of God which have been recorded authoritatively by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. From creation, to the calling of Abraham and the people of Israel to be a missionary people to the nations, to the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, to the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and ultimately, to the second coming of Christ and the fullness of the kingdom of God, God has purposed to redeem a people unto himself.

Hodges summarizes the biblical verities that under gird missions:

1. The Scriptures, the final authority for faith and practice, are final in determining the nature and scope of the Church's mission.
2. The lostness of [humankind], separated from God and without the ability to save [oneself], is a tragic fact which finds its remedy only in the salvation offered through the gospel of Christ.
3. The uniqueness of Jesus Christ as God's Son and [humankind's] Savior.
"Neither is there salvation in any other." (Acts 4:12)
4. All [people] are candidates for salvation in Jesus Christ on the condition of repentance from evil works and faith toward God through Jesus Christ.
5. The Church, composed of true believers in Jesus Christ, is God's own possession and His agent for world evangelism.
6. The Holy Spirit dwells in the Church and becomes the source of power and equipment for missions as believers receive of His fullness.

⁵³ See also “The Four Fold Aspect of the Paradigm of Christ in Ministry” Ray S. Anderson 1979, 1986.

7. The return of Christ to the earth is the hope of true believers and the final solution to earth's ills. The kingdoms of this earth shall become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ, and He shall reign forever (1977:19).

God, the author of missions, is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9), but his desire is that every person and every people be restored to relationship with him and each other. He waits patiently for the church to fulfill their commission (2 Peter.3:15). The Father has set the date of the coming of the fullness of the kingdom (Acts 1:6-7), but until that moment, the apostolic people of God continue the ministry of revelation and reconciliation of Jesus through the continuing presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals resolve the tension between “*missio Dei*” the mission of God and “*missiones ecclesiarum*” the missions of the church, by recognizing and affirming that the activity of the church in missions proceeds out of the mission of God as directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit communicates the good news of the kingdom of God through the agency of the church.

**The Agency (Agencies) of Missions: The Apostolic People of God.
“You Will Be My Witnesses”**

In this age between the comings of Jesus, he has called out a people unto himself and declared that they will be his agents of missions. “You,” referring to his disciples, “will be my witnesses.” As Hodges notes, “The Church is the result of God’s redemptive purpose and plan. The Church is the object of Christ’s love. The Church is the body of Christ through which the eternal purpose is carried out. The Church is of Christ and Christ is God’s (1 Corinthians 3:23)” (1979:10). The Church is both the community of the redeemed, the people of God, and the redeeming apostolic (sent, commissioned) community (1977:165). One cannot be a member of one community without being a member of the other (i.e. one cannot be truly a follower of Jesus without fulfilling his missionary mandate.) **Missions is not optional.** “You will be my witnesses.”

Every believer and every local congregation is responsible for the missionary mandate. By definition the church is to be the apostolic people of God. Even as missions is not optional to the church, neither is missions possible outside of the church. **The objective of all missionary activity is to plant and nurture the church.** Local and national churches are not optional in missions for they are God’s community of the redeemed. It is in local congregations that disciples of Jesus are made. Thus “the study of missions then becomes the study of the Church. *A weak theology of the Church will produce a weak sense of mission.*”(Hodges 1977:10).

What unites individual believers as an organic community is their mutual need of forgiveness and restored relationships, symbolized in the Lord’s Supper by the cup and the bread, and their apostolic commission, “you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11:26). These redefined relationships are described as the three fold ministry of the church: 1. a ministry to serve and worship God (John 4:23-25; Acts 13:2), a restored vertical relationship with God in which every believer comes under the rule of God 2. a ministry to other members of the church community, a restored horizontal relationship to one another where each member uses their God given gifts and resources for the building up of other members (1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:16). and 3. a ministry to communicate the gospel to the world, a horizontal reaching out to the lost in love

(Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8) (cf. Hodges 1977:77). The baptism of the Holy Spirit opens the door to the empowerment of the Spirit to live under kingdom rule to live a life in worship, in service and in holiness which results in the building up of the body and witness to the world. “. . .you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. . . .” (Acts 1:8)

The apostolic community birthed at Pentecost is to be a signpost of the kingdom of God. The church is not the kingdom but when believers yield to Spirit direction and empowerment both individually and corporately, the rule of the King is manifested on earth. The purpose of the apostolic people of God is expressed in community in *koinonia*: “love one another”; in *kerygma*: “Jesus is Lord”; in *diakonia*: service to “the least of these my brethren”; and in *martyria*: “you shall be my witnesses; be reconciled to God” (Van Engen 1991:87-99). This apostolic witness is accomplished in the power of the Spirit.

The Action of Missions: The Apostolic People of God “You Will Be My Witnesses”

The apostolic people, the “sent ones” of God, are commissioned by Jesus to give witness to his resurrection, witness to the good news of the kingdom of God, and witness to the continuing ministry of revelation and reconciliation of Jesus in the power of the Spirit. This gospel of the kingdom never changes and is for every person and all peoples. It affirms that the kingdom of God has come in the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, but that the fullness of the kingdom will arrive with the second coming of the Christ.

The apostolic people of God are to communicate the “full gospel” message with signs following which proclaims Jesus Christ as Savior, responding to humankind’s spiritual needs; as Healer, the supplying people’s physical needs; as Baptizer, meeting the emotional and volitional needs of individuals and as Soon Coming King, providing both hope and reason for being for humankind. The Assemblies of God of the United States describe the message as being:

Bible-Based: God’s inspired and infallible Word is the seed of the world harvest, the bread for the spiritually hungry, and the light that proclaims God’s grace and deliverance to a world that is lost and bound in the darkness of sin. **Spirit-Empowered:** The Spirit convicts of sin, brings assurance of sins forgiven, imparts peace that passes understanding, and guides into all truth. We are totally dependent on the Holy Spirit to empower our message so it can bear the fruit God has promised. **Christ-Centered:** Jesus, . . . God who became man, . . . is the Savior of the World. He offered up his life to redeem sinful mankind. Like the missionary-apostle Paul, our message to a lost world is “Jesus Christ and him crucified” 1 Cor. 2:2 (Pentecostal Evangel 2001a:32).

Paul summarizes the universal core of the gospel:

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised

on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, . . . (1 Cor. 15:1-6a).

However, Paul is also clear that to give witness to this gospel God's apostolic people must follow Jesus' example and identify with the people to be reached, incarnating the gospel in contextualized forms that will be understood by the hearers (1 Cor. 9:19-23). Jesus states, ". . . As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." (John 20:21). Therefore, the apostolic people of God must give witness to Jesus by following his example in the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection (Philippians 2:5-11; John 13:12-17, 34-35).

The communication of the gospel (evangelism) should constitute an ongoing cycle that includes: The establishment of a Christian **(1) presence** in a community as a witness to unbelievers (Matt. 5:13-16). This presence must be accompanied by the **(2) proclamation** of the good news (Luke 24:46-48; Mark 16:15-16) whose objective is the **(3) persuasion** of women and men to accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord (2 Cor. 5:11; Acts 26:28-29). Having received Christ, **(4) participation** in the body of Christ should follow including service, good works and the building up of fellow believers (Gal. 6:8-9; Matt. 5:16; Eph. 4:16). The cycle should come full circle when the convert becomes an additional evangelistic presence in the **(5) propagation** of the gospel (Hodges 1977:77).

The Assemblies of God of the United States frames missions and witness in terms of:

Reaching: We are proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ to the spiritually lost in all the world through every available means. **Planting:** We are establishing churches in more than 150 nations, following the New Testament pattern. **Training:** We are training leaders throughout the world to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ to their own people and to other nations. **Touching:** We are touching poor and suffering people with the compassion of Jesus Christ and inviting them to become his followers (Pentecostal Evangel 2001b:2).

In order to give witness in any community or society indigenous, local and national churches must be planted. These congregations and national organization are to be Spirit supported, Spirit governed and Spirit propagated (i.e. It is the Spirit that provides for the needs of the church, the Spirit that directs and leads the congregation, the Spirit that enables their apostolic witness to the world). These churches are to be patterned after the New Testament church. Hodges seminal work notes, "The mechanics of a successful church on the mission field are the New Testament methods; the dynamics are the power and the ministries of the Holy Spirit. Either factor alone is incomplete and inadequate" (1953:131). Pentecostal missiology clearly recognizes that the missionary mandate cannot be fulfilled unless the entire church community (the priesthood of all believers) both local and global is empowered and directed by the Spirit. Therefore the most important competency for ministry and missions is to be able to discern the voice of the Spirit and in obedience yield to Spirit empowerment, both natural and supernatural (miracles, signs and wonders).

Apostolic witness includes simultaneously communicating the gospel in word and deed to the people of one's own community (Jerusalem), to other communities of their own culture (Judea), to other geographically nearby cultural groups (Samaria), and to all the cultural people groups of the earth (ends of the earth). As the apostolic people of God, each local congregation and national organization should have an intentional plan for simultaneous witness to each of these groups. At every level of witness the apostolic community must discern divine direction, the strategies of the Spirit. This requires commitment to prayer. Jesus states "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Luke 10:2).

To communicate the gospel to all people at every level requires that every member of the apostolic people of God be committed to the commission to go and the commission to send. There is a diversity of calls, but all are members of the one body of Christ, and all are needed in the fulfillment of the commission. All are called to give witness in their own community (Jerusalem) and to give witness to the other spheres by participating in the missionary disciplines of missionary prayer, missionary giving and a willingness to do whatever the Spirit indicates in order to contribute to the global cause of Christ. To mobilize local believers to become global Christians who practice the missionary disciplines and are obedient to the call to send missionaries, requires constant missions promotion and missions formation.

Since the apostolic people of God are commissioned to reach all people, local and national churches should prioritize frontier missions, "the ends of the earth." While the people of God affirm and support those who are called to communicate the gospel to other communities of their own culture (Judea) and other geographically nearby cultural groups (Samaria), the most pressing challenge of the hour is to send missionaries and missionary teams to those people groups of the world who are unreached (i.e. they have no access to the apostolic people of God).

Conclusion

Based on the conviction that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on all flesh as a prelude to the second coming of Christ in order to empower the church to give witness to all nations, the founding members of the Assemblies of God committed themselves to the evangelization of the entire world. They believed they were a part of God's cosmic eschatological design. Though the realization of the plan seemed improbable by human standards, these believers were grounded in the biblical truth that God's glory is revealed in weakness. They were humbled and empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Every member of the body of Christ was responsible for the task, for every member was a temple of the Spirit of the living God.

Strategic planning, accountability and missional structures were to be submitted to the Spirit's guidance. Personal experience and biblical truth were integrated in the life of the believer, the life of the church, and the missionary endeavor. In the New Testament narrative patterns were sought and adhered to on the conviction that biblical patterns were Spirit empowered patterns, missiological truth was to be biblical truth and the New Testament narrative was to be a contemporary narrative. The individuals and peoples of the world, according to

Scripture, were condemned without Christ. Pentecost was the empowering agent of the church to communicate God's plan of salvation to all in preparation for the coming of Christ and the final judgment (Rance 2004:81).

There is urgency to the hour. No one but the Father knows when Christ will return. Those without Christ will be condemned to an eternity in hell. The need of every human being, whether they live in the Far East, Europe, Asia, Africa or the Americas, is the same: every person needs a Savior. Jesus is that Savior. To be the apostolic people of God the church must reach all peoples "the ends of the earth." The challenge of the unreached is that though the need is the same, the reality is that not everyone has the same access to the gospel. Approximately half the population of the world has absolutely no witness to the gospel. The good news is not available to hundreds of millions of people.

This reality motivated early majority world missions advocate David Kensinger to issue the following challenge to his missionary colleagues in 1968:

Our purpose, then, in speaking to you on the subject of national missions is to emphasize the fact that this Biblical pattern for the evangelization of the world is not the prerogative or responsibility of one certain segment of the Christian church located in the U.S., and a few scattered countries of Europe, but that every Christian in every church throughout the world is **EQUALLY OBLIGATED** to spread the Gospel to the entire world either by going or giving.

It took fifty years for the Assemblies of God of the United States to begin to recognize that the indigenous church planted among the unreached was responsible for more than just "Jerusalem" and "Judea." The urgency of the hour and the imperative of Jesus require that every Assemblies of God church, local and national, give witness not only to those of their own community but to their "Samaritans" and to the "ends of the earth."

As the people of God, members of the Assemblies of God enjoy the blessings of God every moment of every day. To be the **apostolic** people of God, the Assemblies of God of all nations must commit to the communicating the gospel to **all** people. This will require that every member of the Body be mobilized to become a global Christian, a person committed to the missionary disciplines of missionary prayer, missionary giving, and obedience to the Spirit's missional directives. A mobilized apostolic people of God will give witness locally and globally by sending and supporting those called by God to cross cultural barriers with the gospel.

May the Assemblies of God worldwide become in reality what it already is by faith "the Apostolic People of God" affirming that God is the author of missions (you will be **my** witnesses), recognizing that the church is the agency of missions (**you** will be my witnesses), and committing to the action of missions (you will be my **witnesses**).

A Working Glossary of Key Missiological Terms

Missionary- is a sinner saved by grace, called and empowered by Spirit and sent and supported by the church, to cross cultural barriers to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed to other sinners by planting and serving local and national indigenous churches.

Mission (*missio Dei*) (Latin- mission of God) - is the purpose and activity of God for the redemption of humankind (i.e. it is what God has done, does and will do in revelation and reconciliation). (It should be noted that for some missiologists *missio Dei* refers to everything God does for the salvation of humankind and mission is everything that the church does to point to the kingdom of God.)

Missions- is the activity and program of the church to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit across cultural barriers in specific contexts among specific peoples by sending and supporting those God has called to the task (i.e. it is what the church does in the power of the Spirit).

Evangelism- is the communication of the gospel in the power of the Spirit to those who are lost without Christ. Evangelism should constitute an ongoing cycle that includes: The establishment of a Christian **(1) presence** in a community as a witness to unbelievers (Matt. 5:13-16). This presence must be accompanied by the **(2) proclamation** of the good news (Luke 24:46-48; Mark 16:15-16) whose objective is the **(3) persuasion** of women and men to accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord (2 Cor. 5:11; Acts 26:28-29). Having received Christ, **(4) participation** in the body of Christ should follow including service, good works and the building up of fellow believers (Gal. 6:8-9; Matt. 5:16; Eph. 4:16). The cycle should come full circle when the convert becomes an additional evangelistic presence in the **(5) propagation** of the gospel (Hodges 1977:77)

Cross-cultural evangelism- is the communication of the gospel across cultural barriers. In a technical missiology this does not refer to a believer who testifies to a person of another culture who lives in his/her communities though this is witness is vitally needed. It refers to those called to set aside their own culture to take on the culture of a specific people group (missionary identification and acculturation) in order to communicate the gospel and plant the church. It can include both missionaries who cross geographic and political boundaries and those who do not (the latter are sometimes referred to as cross-cultural workers or as “home” missionaries, this term is often confusing and misleading because “home” missionaries can also refer to workers supported to plant the church in other geographic regions without crossing cultural boundaries).

Missionary (Missional) church- a local community of believers who are equipped by leadership and empowered by the Spirit to live in service and worship of God, in the mutual edification of its members, and in witness to the world. This witness includes simultaneously communicating the gospel in word and deed to the people of their own community (Jerusalem), to other communities of their own culture (Judea), to other geographically nearby cultural groups (Samaria), and to all the cultural people groups of the earth (ends of the earth). As the apostolic people of God, each local congregation should have an intentional plan for simultaneous witness to each of these groups.

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APPENDIX D

The Latin American Missionary and the Obstacle of the Dependency Mentality November 2006

The Problem:

Since the reception of Latin American missionaries by national churches of the world is still relatively new for the majority, Latin American missionaries observe that frequently there is expectancy on the part of the receiving national church that the missionary is a source of resources. This negatively impacts the work of the Latin American missionary who often does not have access to many resources.

This is not a new problem. The document “Guidelines for Missionary Relationships” that was drafted in 1994 states:

2.2. THE RECEIVING CHURCH’S RELATIONSHIP TO THE MISSIONARY

- 2.2.1. Recognize both North American and Latin American missionaries under the same conditions, regardless of the missionary’s origin there should be no economic expectations, rather missionaries should be received as God’s ministers not as “sources of material goods.”**
- 2.2.2. Communicate to the missionary and his family unique cultural values and church polities.
- 2.2.3. Receive the missionary and formally present him/her to the appropriate authorities.
- 2.2.4. Allow the missionary freedom to work in the agreed upon areas of service.
- 2.2.5. Provide the missionary with the needed documentation for immigration and residency.
- 2.2.6. Inform the missionary of any accusation which may require ministerial discipline.

Although this reference was written when there were still very few missionaries in the field (the majority were serving in Latin American countries), today this reality is experienced in many countries around the world.

Cognizant of this reality, the following affirmations are presented:

1. The Golden Rule of the National Churches: “Just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way.” Luke 6:31 How you expect your national church be treated, treat other national churches in the same way. The national churches that are today receiving churches should treat the missionary that they receive with respect because one day they also will be a sending church. (Let us not forget that this rule applies to the nations of Latin America as well. “Independent” missionaries who are not under the authority of the national church should not be sent, just as it is expected of missionaries who are sent to serve a national church in Latin America.)
2. Latin American missionaries must have patience with the receiving churches because what is occurring today is what happened in the past with missionaries who were received in Latin America (i.e. in the past in some Latin American countries foreign missionaries were accepted because of the resources they provided and not because of their ministries. Now the same thing is occurring with Latin American missionaries.

3. A missionary is a missionary, not due to access to economic resources, but because of a divine call and a ministry realized in the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Regardless of a missionary's origin, the gospel is the same, the Caller is the same, the Empowerer is the same, and the cost is the same – complete surrender (will, family, culture etc.)
4. National churches should introduce the missionaries in public contexts so that the members of the national church can get to know the missionary and his/her ministry. This makes the church aware that the missionary is a ministry and not just a source of resources.
5. The church that is planted on the mission field should be a missionary church from the beginning. It is much easier to shape a missionary church if missiological formation takes place from the moment of the church's inception. Starting with the very first member it must be emphasized that the Church of Jesus Christ is a church with missionary vision and commitment. A positive consequence of this focus is the avoidance of the poverty mentality and dependence. This will also assist in avoiding a historical problem that occurred in Latin America and elsewhere, the problem of churches without missionary vision and commitment.

The following conclusion that comes from the document “Guidelines for Missionary Relationships” is still the answer to the obstacle of the dependency mentality on the mission field:

In all these relationships one must respect the lines of authority and service, respecting each person and their abilities, gifts and call in order to have a united church, all under the authority and unity of the body of Christ and the divine love that unites the church.

APPENDIX E
**FULFILLING THE APOSTOLIC MANDATE IN APOSTOLIC POWER:
SEEKING A SPIRIT-DRIVEN MISSIOLOGY AND PRAXIS**

DeLonn L. Rance, Ph.D.

Assemblies of God Theological Seminary:
Director of Intercultural Doctoral Studies
Global Missions Department Chairperson
Associate Professor of Intercultural Studies

2008-2009 J. Philip Hogan Professor of World Missions
Hogan Chair Inaugural Address, October 15, 2008.

Today, I am honored to follow Alan Johnson and Mark Hausfeld as the J. Philip Hogan Professor of World Missions. I seek to call the Church, the apostolic/missionary people of God, to a Spirit-driven missiology that recognizes the need for dependence on the Spirit for direction, empowerment, and fruit in the missionary enterprise. This Spirit-driven missiology does not merely give lip service to the Spirit's activity but depends on the Spirit in missional praxis and seeks to fulfill the apostolic mandate in apostolic power.

Whenever in any period of the Church's history a little company has sprung up so surrendered to the Spirit and so filled with His presence as to furnish the pliant instruments of His will, then a new Pentecost has dawned in Christendom, and as a consequence the Great Commission has been republished; and following a fresh tarrying in Jerusalem for the endowment of power has been a fresh witnessing for Christ from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the earth.⁵⁴

Jesus declared, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18b).

In response to the call of God and the invitation of several small independent congregations that had experienced a new Pentecost, missionary Ralph Darby Williams and his young family entered the city of Santa Ana, El Salvador on Christmas Eve 1929. Immediately, he began visiting the various congregations and surveying the country in order to develop a strategy to reach the entire nation. He detailed his plan in a letter to his supervisor, Noel Perkin, requesting five additional missionary couples in order to complete the task. He writes in his memoirs:

⁵⁴A. J. Gordon, *The Holy Spirit in Missions* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893), 52-53.

Brother Perkin's reply to my carefully worded letter was a disappointing answer at first reading. Although written with Brother Perkin's accustomed grace, it declared, "We have no missionaries available for the field; furthermore, even if we had such men ready, we have no funds to support them. Beyond this we have no surety that we can keep *you* on the field and are trusting that we will not have to retrench."

Could anything have seemed more discouraging in light of our prayers? Yet, I do not remember more than a passing regret over the letter. There was too much moving over the field and the Lord's presence was working with us. Almost immediately, I found myself constantly saying, "Our missionaries are already on the field. They are here; I see them every day for they are many. The Lord will use them and the devil cannot stop them."

This was soon to be a great and visible miracle. The constant outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the fact that God was calling these untrained believers into his work and burdening them with the care of the rapidly growing groups was a blessing. It was a revival carried forward by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as the believers were more open to what the Bible said about their conduct.⁵⁵

This brief narrative communicates some of the core values of a Spirit-driven missiology: (1) the Lord fulfills mission through His Church by the direction and power of the Holy Spirit, (2) all members of the Church carry the responsibility for the apostolic mandate to reach all peoples with the good news of the kingdom, (3) leadership equips the Church by creating space for supernatural encounters that are held to the standard of the Word in contextually appropriate ways, (4) effective missional praxis requires the church to paradoxically exert great effort while relying fully on the power of the Spirit, and (5) reliance on the Spirit requires a commitment to prayer.

Although familiar with the writings of Roland Allen and others, the New Testament provided Williams with the model for missionary work. He identifies "Three Holy Spirit Principles. . . . The Lord carried this work forward by the Holy Spirit in perfect, practical harmony with the three principles of self-propagation, self-government, and self-support."⁵⁶ In the New Testament and the missiology of the indigenous church, Williams discovered God's model for missions. This model affirmed the need for contextualization in terms of forms and strategy yet simultaneously was Spirit-directed and dependent. Even in a context of extreme poverty with little or no outside resources,⁵⁷ the church could be planted and grow, members could be equipped for ministry, and the gospel could be communicated in word and deed to those who had never heard, thereby fulfilling the apostolic mandate.

Some might argue that these "Holy Spirit Principles" no longer apply or would be ineffective in another context. Along with his missionary colleague, Melvin Hodges, Williams heard these same arguments when advocating for a Spirit-driven missiology and praxis in the last century. What the Church knows today, evidenced by the spectacular growth of the Pentecostal

⁵⁵Lois Williams, *Hands That Dug the Well* (Springfield, MO: RDM, 1997), 41-42.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 61.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 176. The Assemblies of God in El Salvador was birthed during the Great Depression. Rather than the national church borrowing from the missionary, Williams observes, "Many times I borrowed from a national brother to meet unavoidable household needs."

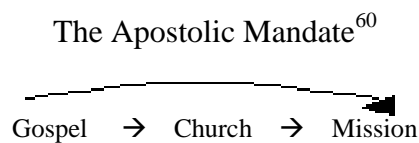
movement around the world, particularly in the Assemblies of God, is that an indigenous church can be planted. Paul and the apostles did it in the New Testament. Williams and Hodges did it in El Salvador and throughout Latin America. Other missionaries did it in Africa and areas of Asia. As Hodges, the missionary statesman and pioneer Assemblies of God missiologist, so clearly articulates, an indigenous church patterned after the New Testament church is “possible because the Gospel has not changed. We serve the same God and His Holy Spirit is with us as He was with the church in the New Testament times.”⁵⁸ Hodges contended that converts empowered by the Spirit could carry on the work of the Church. The key was that the missionary “must have faith in the power of the gospel to do for others what it has done for us.”⁵⁹

The question is, do we, the apostolic/missionary people of God, truly believe that what God has done for us, He can do in others—and even greater things? Will we seek and depend on Spirit direction and empowerment? Will we ask, not only “What is our task?” but also the theological question, “From where does the power for ministry and missions come?” Williams planted an indigenous church out of conviction but also out of necessity. Will missionaries today work out of that same conviction in the midst of abundant resources? Will believers resist and refuse the seductive powers of a donor-driven, market-driven, ministry-driven, personality-driven, program-driven, or missionary-driven missiology? Will the Church fulfill the apostolic mandate in apostolic power?

The Apostolic Mandate

Jesus gave His disciples the mandate to communicate the good news of the kingdom of God to every person of every nation. This good news was that through Jesus’ life, death and resurrection the will of the Father came present, revealing and creating—in spite of the impossibility of sin and alienation—the possibility of reconciliation of the universe in Christ (Eph. 1:10). Centered in Christ, this gospel calls men and women into relationship with God and a renewed relationship with each other, the formation of a new people, the apostolic/missionary people of God.

Ray Anderson describes the apostolic mandate with the following diagram:



The gospel is God’s agenda, God’s ministry of revelation and reconciliation. Only the gospel, thus defined, is ministry.⁶¹ This gospel thrusts the Church into the apostolic mandate as the purpose of ministry. The Church is a people called for His purposes. Mission, then, becomes the continued ministry of Christ in the world in the power of the Spirit. In continuing the *form* of Christ’s ministry, the Church’s mission must be defined in terms of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. In continuing the *role* of Christ’s ministry, its mission must be defined in terms of

⁵⁸Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), 14.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 14, 21.

⁶⁰Ray S. Anderson, *Minding God’s Business* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 6.

⁶¹Ray S. Anderson, “A Theology of Ministry” in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, ed. Ray S. Anderson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 6-21.

prophet, priest, and king. And in continuing the *function* of Christ's ministry, its mission must be defined in apostolic, prophetic, pastoral, didactic, and evangelistic terms.

The apostolic mandate involves planting the Church because the Church disciples the missionary people of God to go to the ends of the earth, baptizing new converts, and teaching them to obey all His instructions (Matt. 28:18-20). The apostolic mandate is the gospel of the Kingdom communicated in word and deed by the Church to the world. The Church is central to the plan of God in mission and to the goal of missional endeavor. In love, the community of God, the Church, gives witness to the world of its resurrected Lord and continues His ministry by the power of the Spirit (Acts 1:8).

A false dichotomy exists today between kingdom and Church, between incarnational ministry and representational ministry, between the missiology of Jesus and the missiology of Paul.⁶² As Scot McKnight asserts, based on his study of the Gospels,

There is no kingdom without faith and attachment to Jesus Christ, and there is no kingdom without attachment to Jesus' followers. In other words, Jesus' kingdom vision is not that far from Paul's church vision . . . According to the New Testament, the kingdom vision of Jesus is, it seems, only implemented through the church.⁶³

The apostolic community, birthed at Pentecost, is to be a signpost of the Kingdom of God. The Church is not the kingdom, but when believers yield to Spirit-direction and empowerment, both individually and corporately, the rule of the King is manifested on earth. The purpose of the apostolic people of God is expressed in community (*koinonia*: "love one another"), in proclamation (*kerygma*: "Jesus is Lord"), in service (*diakonia*: "the least of these my brethren"), and in testimony (*martyria*: "you shall be my witnesses; be reconciled to God").⁶⁴ Pentecostals resolve the tension between *missio Dei*, the mission of God, and *missiones ecclesiarum*, the missions of the Church, by recognizing and affirming that the activity of the Church in missions proceeds out of the mission of God as directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit communicates the good news of the kingdom of God through the agency of the Church.

Hodges framed it by stating, "The Goal of Missions—a New Testament Church."⁶⁵ This does not signify that the Church is mired in the first century; rather, the characteristics—the signs which identify the Church should be the same: revelation and reconciliation. The gospel remains unchanged, but is communicated uniquely according to context. The Church is one Church, the body of Christ, but each local congregation is unique. The seed remains the same, but the distinct soils produce diverse expressions within the community of faith. "The gospel has been designed by God himself, so it fills the need of the African, the Chinese, or the Indian. As a result, there is no place on earth where, if the gospel seed be properly planted, it will not produce an indigenous church."⁶⁶

⁶²David J. Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2005), 141-165, 315-356.

⁶³Scot McKnight, "McLaren Emerging," *Christianity Today*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/september/38.59.html> (accessed October 1, 2008).

⁶⁴Charles Van Engen, *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 87-99.

⁶⁵Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 9.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 14.

Hodges identifies the relationship between mission, missions and the Church:

Missions refers to the carrying out of the redemptive purpose of God for [humankind] through human instrumentality, wherever [women and men are] found. Obviously, missions does not begin with the missionary or evangelist. The missionary is only the instrument. Moreover, [he or she] does not stand alone— [he or she is] a member of the Church and its representative. Hence, the importance of the study of ecclesiology in the study of missions.

What is the Church? What is the *mission* of the Church? The Church is not in itself the source of missions. We must go farther back. The Church is the result of God's redemptive purpose and plan. The Church is the object of Christ's love. The Church is the body of Christ through which the eternal purpose is carried out. The Church is of Christ and Christ is God's (1 Cor. 3:23).

The study of missions then becomes the study of the Church. *A weak theology of the Church will produce a weak sense of mission.* However, the study cannot begin with the Church. We must go back to the source—the plan and purpose of God. Missions takes us back to the heart of God.⁶⁷

Every believer and every local congregation need to assume responsibility for the apostolic mandate. By definition, the Church serves as the apostolic people of God. Even as missional praxis is not optional to the Church, neither is it possible outside of the Church. The objective of all missionary activity focuses on planting and nurturing the Church. Local and national churches are essential in missions, for they serve as tangible expressions of God's community of the redeemed and His redeeming community.

The task of the missionary is not to produce seed or shape the church (birthed by the Spirit) to the trellis of the sending church, but rather to prepare the soil, remove the rocks, nurture the church, and foment the development of leadership.⁶⁸ The missionary's must competently discern divine direction and walk in obedience through the power of the Spirit.⁶⁹ The missionary's role focuses on pioneer ministries such as planting the church among an unreached people or initiating innovative ministries in response to the needs of the national church. This requires incarnational ministry where the missionary commits to a lifetime of service, while willingly following divine direction to another people at a moment's notice. "His [or her] work is to make Christ the permanent factor, and ... pass on to other pioneer tasks as quickly as he [or she] can. ... The true measure of success is not that which the missionary accomplishes while on the field, but the work that still stands after he has gone."⁷⁰

According to Hodges, the New Testament church planted in Acts characteristically proclaimed the gospel to the lost, gathered new believers for worship and instruction, and chose leadership from among them in order that they could equip the membership for ministry and witness (in culturally appropriate ways).⁷¹ Stated in the language of Anderson, Venn, Nevius,

⁶⁷Melvin L. Hodges, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1977), 10.

⁶⁸Leadership development serves as a key dynamic in both the writings of Allen and Hodges.

⁶⁹The second Hogan lecture will focus on developing leadership in a Spirit-driven missiology.

⁷⁰Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 18.

⁷¹Hodges added the critical element of contextualization to the principles of the indigenous church. Appendix B in the *The Indigenous Church* is the "Standard of Faith and Fellowship," a contextual catechism for converts in El Salvador that defined what it meant to be a member of the church in that "soil."

Allen, and Luce, the characteristics of the New Testament church are those of an indigenous church—a contextual self-propagating, self-governing, and self-supporting church.

The missiology of the indigenous church has been the standard for the Assemblies of God almost from the beginning. Alice Luce, Ralph William’s mentor, first outlined this philosophy in a series of articles in the *Pentecostal Evangel* in 1921.⁷² Donald Gee spelled it out for the Assemblies of God of Great Britain and Ireland in 1937 in a booklet entitled *The Indigenous Principle: An Explanation of a Great Missionary Policy*.⁷³ Official Assemblies of God documents and popular publications advance the principles of indigenous missiology, but what does it mean to pastors of local sending churches? How do the leaders of fraternal assemblies around the world and missionaries define and practice it? I hear missionaries, mostly young but some seasoned, say many of the same things directed at Allen and Hodges. “It’s too idealistic. It doesn’t work in the real world.” “It may be appropriate for the Latin American or African context, but it doesn’t apply to my context.” “It’s what we’re told we are supposed to do, but nobody really does it.” “It’s what we preach, but it’s not what we do.”

An indigenous church is a community of believers birthed in a specific context who are Spirit-driven (Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered) to accomplish God’s purposes for and through that community. Like the various churches described in the New Testament, particularly in Acts, these local and national communities of faith are to be Spirit-governed, Spirit-supported and Spirit-propagated. God, by His Spirit, calls and equips local leaders to disciple and mobilize believers in the faith and guides them in discerning and fulfilling the will of God for their community.⁷⁴ As a responsible community, the indigenous church turns to the unlimited resources of the Spirit for its sustenance so as not to depend on the missionary, institutions, ministries, or agencies. As a community of faith, indigenous church members are impassioned and empowered by the Spirit to reach their neighbors, their nation, and their world with the gospel.

The Three-Self formula, espoused by indigenous church proponents, was never intended to create a “self”ish church, as critics contend.⁷⁵ Rather, it marked the fact that churches, properly planted on the mission field, should be independent of the missions that planted them and the missions stations that sought to control and fashion them in the image of the mission culture. Allen and Hodges alike affirmed the central role of the Holy Spirit to empower the Church and never separated method from Spirit-direction and empowerment. Methods can inhibit the work of the Spirit, but they can never, of themselves, produce fruit. The missionary must seek methods through which the Spirit can flow and then trust the Spirit for the results.

⁷²Alice E. Luce, “Paul’s Missionary Methods,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, January 8, 1921, 6-7; January 22, 1921, 6-7; February 5, 1921, 6-7.

⁷³Donald Gee, *The Indigenous Principle: An Explanation of a Great Missionary Policy* (London, UK: Redemption Tidings, 1937).

⁷⁴Alan Tippett and others suggest that additional “self’s” are critical to an indigenous church including self-image, self-functioning, self-determining, self-giving, self-theologizing, and self-missionizing. While these additional terms may nuance aspects of Spirit dependency, I believe they are sub-categories of the three-self formula; for example, self-theologizing is an expression of being Spirit-governed. See Alan Tippett, *Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1973).

⁷⁵Robert Reese, “The Surprising Relevance of the Three-Self Formula,” *Mission Frontiers*, July-August 2007, 25-27. Reese provides a concise response to critics of the Three-Self formula.

Allen felt it was a grave error to create missionary dependence in place of Spirit dependence.⁷⁶ New believers in any land receive the Spirit of Jesus, which is the missionary Spirit which seeks the lost. When believers learn dependence on the Holy Spirit, the Church reveals its true character and self-propagates.⁷⁷ Allen expresses a passionate belief in the power of the Holy Spirit in missions:

The Holy Ghost is given to Christians that He may guide them, and that they may learn His power to guide them, not that they may be stupidly obedient to the voice of authority. ... The work of the missionary is education in this sense: it is the use of means to reveal to his converts a spiritual power which they actually possess and of which they are dimly conscious. As the converts exercise that power, as they yield themselves to the indwelling Spirit, they discover the greatness of the power and the grace of the Spirit, and in so doing they reveal it to their teacher. ... The moment they are baptized they are the Temple of the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost is power. They are not so incapable as we suppose. ... The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of initiative. If they had no initiative without Christ, with Christ they should not fail to have it. That power is in them by the gift of the Holy Ghost.⁷⁸

The problem was not the converts; it was the missionaries. Allen argued that many missionaries desire growth, but growth they could control.⁷⁹ “Such missionaries pray for the wind of the Spirit but not for a rushing mighty wind. I am writing because I believe in a rushing mighty wind, and desire its presence at all costs to our restrictions.”⁸⁰ The issue is power and control. When followers of Christ in any land or context are filled with the Spirit, they are empowered to give witness. Hodges observes,

On the mission field, the emphasis which Pentecostal people place on the necessity of each individual believer receiving a personal infilling of the Holy Spirit has produced believers and workers of unusual zeal and power. ... The faith which Pentecostal people have in the ability of the Holy Spirit to give spiritual gifts and supernatural abilities to the common people ... has raised up a host of lay preachers and leaders of unusual spiritual ability—not unlike the rugged fishermen who first followed the Lord.⁸¹

The New Testament church was a dependent church—dependent on the direction and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. The relationship between the churches in Antioch, Jerusalem, and Rome was not one of dependence on one another or independence, but one of mutual dependence on the Spirit—one body with many members mutually reliant on the Head, Jesus Christ. Likewise, the relationship between the missionary and the indigenous church is not characterized by dependence one on the other or even characterized by interdependence—but by mutual dependence on the Spirit. As the Spirit leads, the members of the body meet each other’s needs and fulfill the task of reaching the lost.

⁷⁶Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962), 81.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 93-94.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 145-146.

⁷⁹Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962), 5.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 12.

⁸¹Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 132.

Williams, Hodges, and a host of missionaries—both from the United States and the majority world—affirm that it can be done; an indigenous church can be planted, and the indigenous principles can be followed. Valerie and I personally adhere to these principles. In 1984, God called us to mobilize the Assemblies of God of El Salvador to missions.⁸² The country suffered the ravages of a civil war; the economy was devastated, yet I felt compelled to begin to preach and teach missions. Young people responded to the altar calls in numbers I never expected—so much so that there came a point in my preaching that I no longer wanted to make altar calls, because logistically the realization of that call seemed unlikely. A veteran missionary I deeply respected publicly challenged me, “Can you send missionaries to other countries on a budget of one dollar? That’s the only way we’ll be able to send missionaries from our countries.” His message was clear: “It is impossible. These people do not have the resources to send missionaries, so stop encouraging them.” In the natural, he was correct. Sending missionaries seemed impossible. All I could respond was: “I don’t know how God will do it, but the Word says that it is the responsibility of every disciple to communicate the good news to the entire world. He did not say “if you go” but “in your going make disciples.” I countered his challenge by saying, “I believe that if God calls a Salvadoran to be a missionary then He will make a way for that call to be fulfilled just like he did for this boy from North Dakota.”

I still adhere to that statement today, but I must admit that as I served as the Missions President for the Assemblies of God of El Salvador, my youthful exuberance was tempered. Many times, Salvadoran missionaries on extremely limited budgets in difficult places would call me and say, “Brother Rance, if you don’t send money soon, my children are going to starve.” It kept me up at night. It forced me to my knees. If I would have had money in my account, I might have been tempted, but I didn’t. I went to the churches, the pastors, the members, and the leadership of the churches in El Salvador. I challenged them, “These are your missionaries. God can and does provide for them miraculously, but He wants to do it through you.” It took time to develop disciplined sacrificial giving, but today the churches of the Assemblies of God of El Salvador support over eighty missionaries serving in twenty-two nations of the world.⁸³ These missionaries believe in the indigenous church because they have seen it in practice. They boldly go to the ends of the earth, because they know the resources needed to plant an indigenous church are made available by the Spirit. It can be done. The apostolic mandate can and will be fulfilled, but it can be done only in apostolic power. Jesus said, “I will build my Church.”

Hear again the words of Hodges, “The Holy Spirit can work in one country as well as in another. To proceed on the assumption that the infant church in any land must always be cared for and provided for by the mother mission is an unconscious insult to the people that we

⁸²I was called be a missionary at age 8 when missionary David Kensinger came and preached at the church my father was pastoring in Grafton, ND. That same year (1968), he prophetically challenged his fellow missionaries to redefine the indigenous church in order to develop national churches with world missions vision. He declared that “every Christian in every church throughout the world IS EQUALLY OBLIGATED to spread the gospel to the entire world either by going or by giving.” He asserted, “We are falling short in our concept of the indigenous church. That is on the point of emphasizing self-propagation instead of world wide propagation.” The demand of the world’s unreached required that the missionary help national Christians to catch a vision of their responsibility to reach out to the whole world. If this could be done, “it could mean a whole new dimension in missions.” David Kensinger, “Integrating National Missions into our World Evangelization Program,” Unpublished Address to Assemblies of God Missionaries (Springfield, MO: AGWM Archives, 1968).

⁸³According to the annual report provided by the Foreign Missions Department of the Assemblies of God of El Salvador, the Assemblies of God churches of El Salvador gave \$341,596 to missions in 2007. “Together in Missions,” the network of Assemblies of God missions agencies for the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America and Spain, report that a total of \$3,564,032 was given to support 832 missionaries serving in 72 countries.

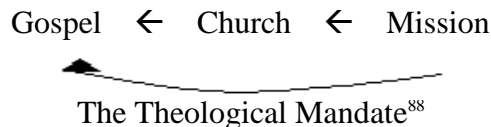
endeavor to serve, and is evidence of the lack of faith in God and in the power of His gospel.”⁸⁴ “Not only must the missionary have the right concept of his own ministry, but also he must have faith in the power of the gospel to do for others what it has done for us.”⁸⁵ This statement is at the core of a Spirit-driven missiology and praxis. As missionaries, we must trust the Spirit to empower others as He has empowered us and even to a greater degree.

An indigenous New Testament church does not just emerge. It is birthed by intentionally following the way of the cross in the power of the Spirit. The antidote to a donor-driven, market-driven, ministry-driven, or missionary-driven missiology⁸⁶ is to surrender personal rights to power and recognize that it is not “my” ministry, but rather God’s ministry. The Church must avoid being seduced by its own devices and fulfill His mandate in His power.

Apostolic Power

The fulfillment of the apostolic mandate requires apostolic power. Most often, Pentecostal references to apostolic power imply “signs and wonders.” The growth of the Church around the world has certainly been characterized by the miraculous, for “these signs shall follow...” The importance of spiritual warfare, power encounter, and supernatural intervention cannot be minimized. It is the standard operating procedure of a New Testament/indigenous church. However, the more significant issue is whether the entire missional enterprise is Spirit-driven. Is the apostolic mandate fulfilled in apostolic power?

As Anderson correctly argues, to maintain Christ’s ministry as His own, the apostolic mandate alone is inadequate.⁸⁷ Just knowing the purpose for ministry is insufficient because ultimately, we, the apostolic people, will begin to rely on our own possibilities—deviant ministries created by our own hand, in our own power. One must ask not only, “What is our purpose?” One must also ask, “Where does the power come from? Is Christ central? Is this Christ’s ministry? Is this missional action the creation of possibility out of impossibility by the Spirit?” These are the questions that correspond to the oft-neglected theological mandate. Anderson illustrates with the following diagram:



The theological mandate throws those involved in missional action back to total dependence on God. Gospel and mission, though often dichotomized, are separable in the mind of God. Revelation and reconciliation are one, as illustrated by the incarnation. Christ’s ministry of revelation and reconciliation serves as the only true ministry of the Church. The apostolic and theological mandates cycle as the Church, birthed in the gospel, goes into the world in missional praxis witnessing to the gospel and fulfilling mission in the power of the gospel.⁸⁹ Doing

⁸⁴Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 14.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 21.

⁸⁶Contemporary missiological issues, viewed through the lens of a Spirit-driven missiology, will be the topic of the third Hogan lecture.

⁸⁷Anderson, *Minding God’s Business*, 7-8.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*

⁸⁹Anderson, “A Theology of Ministry,” 6-21.

theology is a process of prayer which seeks to discern the will of God (the mind of Christ) for a given situation and acting in obedience to that will, as empowered by the Spirit.

Where does the power come from? The source of power authenticates the missional action because the enemy can counterfeit many of the “signs.” New Agers speak in tongues and fall under the “spirit,” witchdoctors perform “miracles,” stadiums serve as cathedrals of public worship.

Valerie and I recently returned from Goa, India where we participated in a retreat with Latin American workers serving in that great country. One afternoon, we toured Old Goa. We viewed the remains of St. Francis Xavier, noted the colonial imprint of the Portuguese, and visited a Hindu temple. I watched as a Hindu priest gave a woman holy water to drink and prayed blessings over other desperate seekers at the altar. He called me over for a blessing. I politely declined, so he waved me over to the side of temple. In Indian English, he gave me a history lesson on colonial oppression of Hinduism, and then, quite unexpectedly, he launched into what Pentecostals identify as a prophetic word. It certainly sounded like other prophetic words I have heard. “Your children will be blessed and have great success. After December, your wife will be fruitful.” My muddled mind was taken aback. I stammered something like, “You are kind. Thank you.” He nodded his head, and extended an open hand expecting compensation for such insight into my future. In that moment I realized he wasn’t trying to educate me or win me over to his faith, he was a capitalist! I walked back to the bus with a heavy heart, partially because of the deep spiritual darkness that surrounded me, but more because so much that is done and said in the name of Christ finds its power in the same source that this priest found his—in human ingenuity and effort or even in the powers of deceit and darkness.

Where does the power for authentic ministry find its source? According to Paul, the source is Christ’s resurrection power (Eph. 1:17-23). Paul prays that the church might be strengthened with power through His Spirit, rooted and established in love (Eph. 3:14-19). “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen” (Eph. 3:20-21).

God can and does use human ingenuity and effort if placed on the altar of surrender to His will. Our gifts, personalities, cultures, resources, and strategies are useful to Him in mission, but only as they are yielded to His rule. Historically, Assemblies of God missions leadership affirmed that planning and spirituality could work in harmony when directed by the Holy Spirit, but that one without the other could jeopardize missionary work.⁹⁰ In the conclusion to Hodges’ classic work, he states:

A great revival can die out or become ineffective if it is not channeled in a scriptural course toward New Testament goals. Furthermore, even the best methods will produce nothing unless accompanied by the work of the Holy Spirit. What gasoline and spark are to the mechanism of a well-tuned motor, spiritual power is to indigenous church methods, for two essential factors combine to make the church a going concern. The mechanics of a successful church on the mission field are the New Testament methods: the dynamics are the power and ministries of the Holy Spirit. Either factor alone is incomplete and inadequate.⁹¹

⁹⁰Gary B. McGee, *This Gospel Shall Be Preached: A History and Theology of the Assemblies of God Foreign Missions Since 1959*, vol. 2 (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), 106.

⁹¹Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 131.

Hogan's leadership and missiology clearly illustrated the synergy between supernatural power and human effort, strategy and Spirit. Wilson makes the following observations, quoting Hogan:

Hogan from experience rejected reliance solely or primarily on impersonal, mechanical, and short-term approaches. "The most important factor in missions is not money, but men [and women]." he argued. "Where God can find dedicated, yielded men [and women], there will be success . . . I am convinced more than ever before that there is no adequate substitute for persons whose hearts are on fire and who will put forth the effort to learn a language, identify themselves with a foreign culture, and live among the lost in order to establish a witness for Jesus Christ."⁹²

These missionaries were not impersonal soldiers who just carried out assignments but unique individuals differentiated by gifts and callings, and by their responsiveness to the Spirit's leading. They were human beings with strengths and weaknesses who, through surrender to divine empowerment, fulfilled Christ's purposes in building the Church.

Hogan, though strategic, rejected any reductionistic missiology that perceived church growth as mechanical. The local church, as an indigenous, self-renewing, organic entity made up of people, was a high priority and the ultimate goal of the missionary enterprise.⁹³ The missionaries' task was to empower the church, even as they were empowered by the Spirit. Hogan adhered to a strategy of the Spirit. "In these days we must be strategic in all we do. God is moving and pouring out His Spirit in many parts of the world. We must move in the direction God is working, meeting needs as they arise and as He supplies."⁹⁴ Hogan made the following significant missiological statements to the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA) in 1970, as president of that association:

Make no mistake, the missionary venture of the church, no matter how well planned, how finely administered and finely supported, would fail like every other vast human enterprise, were it not that where human instrumentality leaves off, a blessed ally takes over. It is the Holy Spirit that calls, it is the Holy Spirit that inspires, it is the Holy Spirit that reveals, and it is the Holy Spirit that administers . . .

I have long since ceased to be interested in meetings where mission leaders are called together to a room filled with charts, maps, graphs and statistics. All one needs to do to find plenteous harvest is simply to follow the leading of the Spirit. . . . The essential optimism of Christianity is that the Holy Spirit is a force capable of bursting into the hardest paganism, discomfiting the most rigid dogmatism, electrifying the most suffocating organization and bringing the glory of Pentecost.⁹⁵

⁹²Everett A. Wilson. *Strategy of the Spirit: J. Philip Hogan and the Growth of the Assemblies of God Worldwide 1960-1990*. Carlisle, U.K.: Regnum Books International, 1997), 56-57.

⁹³Ibid., 65.

⁹⁴McGee, 106.

⁹⁵Philip Hogan, "The Holy Spirit and the Great Commission," *United Evangelical Action* (October 1970): 4-5, quoted in Everett Wilson, *A Strategy of the Spirit: J. Philip Hogan and the Growth of the Assemblies of God Worldwide 1960-1990* (Carlisle, UK: Regnum Books International, 1997), 136-137. This article was later published in *World Pentecost*, 1st Quarter, 1972 and *The Essential J. Philip Hogan*, ed. Byron D. Klaus and Douglas P. Petersen (Springfield, MO: Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2006), 31-35.

Pentecostal optimism in fulfilling the apostolic mandate is based on His promise of apostolic power. Gee concludes,

And so, at the heart of it all, the success of our missionary endeavour to plant scriptural Assemblies of God in other lands by means of following the Indigenous Principle finally depends upon our whole Fellowship keeping filled with the Spirit and possessing the sacred Fire ever burning upon the altar of its heart. We welcome a missionary policy that constitutes such a sanctifying challenge. Let us be up, and doing.⁹⁶

The founders of the Pentecostal movement and the Assemblies of God relied on God to do the impossible through them by the power of His Holy Spirit. They were about “keeping filled” and being “up, and doing.” The following two paragraphs are my summary of Assemblies of God missiology as it emerges from its historical narrative:

Based on the conviction that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on all flesh as a prelude to the second coming of Christ in order to empower the church to give witness to all nations, the founding members of the Assemblies of God committed themselves to the evangelization of the entire world. They believed they were a part of God’s cosmic eschatological design. Though the realization of the plan seemed improbable by human standards, these believers were grounded in the biblical truth that God’s glory is revealed in weakness. They were humbled and empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Every member of the body of Christ was responsible for the task, for every member was a temple of the Spirit of the living God.

Strategic planning, accountability and missional structures were to be submitted to the Spirit’s guidance. Personal experience and biblical truth were integrated in the life of the believer, the life of the church, and the missionary endeavor. In the New Testament narrative patterns were sought and adhered to on the conviction that biblical patterns were Spirit empowered patterns, missiological truth was to be biblical truth and the New Testament narrative was to be a contemporary narrative. The individuals and peoples of the world, according to Scripture, were condemned without Christ. Pentecost was the empowering agent of the church to communicate God’s plan of salvation to all in preparation for the coming of Christ and the final judgment.⁹⁷

What will be the summary statement of the apostolic/missionary people of God of this generation? Could it be that missionally we are as anemic as the lame beggar at the Beautiful Gate in Acts 3? Like him, we work hard, put in long hours for a good cause. We are strategically placed, but our missiology is trapped by a limited expectation. We play it safe, relying on our own possibilities. We do good things, but good things can be done in disobedience. Good things may not be the best thing. The beggar sought money for a temporary respite to his problem. God, through His emissaries, gave him a new life. Because we follow Jesus’ loving example in revelation and reconciliation, the church must relieve temporary suffering. However, as Hodges

⁹⁶Gee, 16.

⁹⁷DeLonn L. Rance, *The Empowered Call: The Activity of the Holy Spirit in Salvadoran Assemblies of God Missionaries* (Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest Information and Learning Company, 2004), 81.

notes, “We should avoid fixing up the pigpen or the prodigal son may be comfortable in the far-off country. Our task is to arouse in the prodigal a desire to return to his father’s house.”⁹⁸

Today much “good” is done in the name of missions, in the name of ministry, but unless it leads to revelation and reconciliation, to new life in Christ, it is not ministry nor is it missions. Are we willing to step out in faith in obedience to the voice of the Master and serve in the midst of the wind and the waves at the edge of missional chaos and allow the Holy Spirit to bring order, to make the impossible possible? “Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.” (Ps. 127:1a). As my colleague Earl Creps noted, in Acts God by His Spirit did the unexplainable, and the task of the Church was to explain it by proclaiming the gospel.⁹⁹ The missionary people of God must create space for the actions of the God of the impossible. The greatest miracle of all is a sinner saved by God’s amazing grace. May this be the generation of the apostolic/missionary people of God that experiences the fulfillment of the apostolic mandate in apostolic power. It can happen. He promised it (Matt. 24:14; Acts 1:8).

Conclusion: The Homeless Church of San Francisco

I would like to conclude this lecture with another narrative that illustrates a Spirit-driven missiology. A little over a year ago on Mother’s Day, my wife received a call from our oldest daughter, LaDawn. She had just finished celebrating a missions service in a park in downtown San Francisco with Pastor Evan Prosser and the Homeless Church. Several weeks earlier, as a desperate Missionary in Training candidate, she was trying to book ten services a month in order to receive her salary. As she worked her way through the district directory of churches without much success, she came upon the number for the “Homeless Church.” Pastor Evan graciously spoke with her on the phone but pointed out that the church met in a park and that the members had no money. LaDawn pleaded for an opportunity. He consented, noting that it might be good for his membership to hear from a missionary. They settled on Mother’s Day since most other churches chose not to book missionaries on that holiday. LaDawn was well received; an offering of \$18 was collected, and Pastor Evan had prepared an honorarium of \$200. As LaDawn walked back to her parked car, the tears flowed as she recounted the events of the day to her mother on the phone. Pastor Evan’s wife had come up with the idea that if every member of the church brought four aluminum cans for recycling each week, the church could support LaDawn at ten dollars a week. The church accepted the challenge.¹⁰⁰

Pastor Evan Prosser responded to the call of the Spirit to do the impossible, plant a church among the homeless of San Francisco. He used his God-given leadership skills to disciple and empowered the indigenous church he serves. They participate in communion, for they are the community of the redeemed, but they are also the redeeming community living out kingdom principles, literally, in the streets of San Francisco. Their vision is not limited by their circumstances; like the church of the New Testament, Jesus has commissioned them to reach the world. Do the men and women interviewed understand the nuances of a theory of a Spirit-driven

⁹⁸Hodges, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission*, 103.

⁹⁹Earl Creps, “Message on the Day of Renewal” (Sermon, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, MO, January 24, 2008).

¹⁰⁰See video presentation: “Homeless Church: ‘Diamonds in the Rough,’” available from Assemblies of God World Missions Newsbreak video December 2007 at <http://www.wmm.ag.org/worldbeat.cfm> or to order call (417) 862-3420 or e-mail at worldbeat@ag.org. Also available in Spanish “La Iglesia Indigente: Diamantes en Bruto,” January 2008.

missiology? Probably not, but do they understand that their lives have been transformed by the power of the gospel? Do they understand that they have a responsibility to be obedient to the Word and the direction of God and their pastor? Do they believe that in Christ they, the dispossessed and disempowered by the standards of the world, can impact the nations by their actions? The answer is an emphatic yes! There is no limit to what God can do through willing people. By saying “yes” to Jesus in word and deed, they are empowering a young woman, who just happens to be my daughter, to take the love of Jesus to the marginalized of the Dominican Republic. That we are shocked and shamed by their example just illustrates how far the contemporary church has drifted from what it means to be the Church.

The indigenous church, the apostolic/missionary people of God who meet as the Homeless Church of San Francisco, are practicing a Spirit-driven missiology. In obedience, they are doing their part and allowing God to do His part in building the Church. God called pastor Prosser and his wife. God called LaDawn. God touched the lives of these men and women. In response, they collect cans for the Kingdom. They pass out prayer cards and pray.

A few months after the service in the park, LaDawn spoke at a church nearby. After the evening service, for security reasons, the pastor’s wife walked LaDawn to the train station. As they neared the station, a group of homeless people emerged from under the station. At first both LaDawn and the pastor’s wife were apprehensive, but as the group approached, they heard, “It’s our missionary! It’s our missionary! LaDawn, we need more prayer cards! We’ve passed them out to all of our homeless friends. We need more so we can pray for you!”

A Spirit-driven missiology begins by creating space for encounters with God in prayer. In prayer we discern His direction and are reminded that God can, we cannot. The power to fulfill mission must come from above. God’s answer to the challenge of the harvest is clear: Pray (Luke 10:2). When we pray, we yield to apostolic power. We become in reality what we are already by faith—the apostolic/missionary people of God, fulfilling the apostolic mandate in apostolic power.

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APPENDIX F

Fulfilling the Apostolic Mandate in Apostolic Power: Apostolic Praxis: Driven by the Spirit or by the Wind and the Waves?

Lecture Presented by

DeLonn Rance

J. Philip Hogan Professor of World Missions 2008-2009

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" (Mark 4:35-41)

I love this text. I guess because it seems to accurately reflect my life. Like the disciples I am trying to get to the other side, trying to be obedient to the Master's instructions, but so often in the middle of obedience, in the center of His will, storms come up. I work as hard as I can, use every gift, every experience, and every tool at my disposal to get the job done, but it doesn't seem like I am going to make it. And even though Jesus is with me in the boat, He's on a break, sound asleep. (He must have been exhausted from ministry and able to rest so well because He was totally trusting in the Father.) The disciples had made many trips across that lake. Most accomplished through hard work. They knew how to do it, —several were experienced fishermen—, but this time their illusion of control was broken by the wind and the waves. They were confronted by the reality that the only way to get to the other side and experience peace was through faith and trust in Jesus.

While the truth of this text can be applied to personal salvation and the need to have Jesus as the Master of one's life to be able to get to "the other side," (i.e. an eternity with Him), I believe it is also a word to the Church regarding the missiological task. Jesus calls the Church to an apostolic praxis—to be about the business of carrying the good news of the gospel to those who have never had the chance to hear it. I see Him in the boat calling out to the Church, "Come on Church. Let's go to those who have never heard, to the least reached, to the inconvenient lost."¹⁰¹ He does not force individuals or local churches into the boat of apostolic praxis against their will, but to be truly obedient, to be assured of his presence (Matt. 28:19), the Church must enter that boat.

When we are in the boat, we can not get to the other side without effort, but even with our greatest efforts, unless Jesus intervenes we will not get to the other side. Jesus brings order out of missiological chaos for He is the Master of the wind and the waves. Apostolic power enables apostolic praxis.

¹⁰¹I first heard the term "inconvenient lost" in a message presented by Dick Brogden at the Assemblies of God World Missions Summit 2 in Cincinnati, OH on December 31, 2008.

But what drives what, and how we do missions? What motivates the believer's praxis? How do we determine direction and action? How do we evaluate our missional praxis? Are we driven by the Spirit or by alternative sources of power, such as the wind and the waves?

This afternoon, I'm privileged to present my third and final lecture as the 2008-2009 J. Philip Hogan Professor of World Missions. This lecture on apostolic praxis is a work in progress; it may raise more questions than answers and possibly provoke heated debate as we move to address specific missional actions in a Spirit-driven missiology. I will begin with a brief overview of the previous lectures, followed by an affirmation for the need for missiological reflection to keep the missional enterprise driven by the Spirit. This is followed by an examination of some of the alternative sources of power that can seduce Pentecostal leaders as we engage in missional action in our contemporary world. I hope to conclude with a time of open discussion on the various topics introduced.

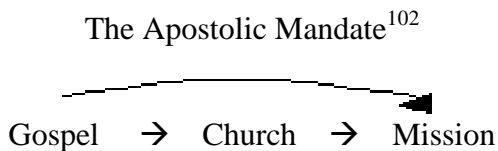
A Review of Previous Lectures

Through these lectures I seek to call the Church, the apostolic/missionary people of God, to a Spirit-driven missiology that recognizes the need for dependence on the Spirit for direction, empowerment, and fruit in the missionary enterprise. This Spirit-driven missiology does not merely give lip service to the Spirit's activity but depends on the Spirit in missional praxis. In short, it seeks to fulfill the apostolic mandate in apostolic power.

The core values of a Spirit-driven missiology include the following: (1) that the Lord fulfills mission through His Church by the direction and power of the Holy Spirit, (2) that all members of the Church carry the responsibility for the apostolic mandate to reach all peoples with the good news of the kingdom, (3) that leadership equips the Church by creating space for supernatural encounters that are held to the standard of the Word in contextually appropriate ways, (4) that effective missional praxis requires the Church to paradoxically exert great effort while relying fully on the power of the Spirit, and (5) that reliance on the Spirit requires a commitment to prayer.

Jesus gave His disciples the mandate to communicate the good news of the kingdom of God to every person of every nation. This good news was that through His life, death and resurrection the will of the Father came present, revealing and creating—in spite of the impossibility of sin and alienation—the possibility of reconciliation of the universe in Christ (Eph. 1:10). Centered in Christ, this gospel calls men and women into relationship with God and a renewed relationship with each other; it forms a new people—the apostolic/missionary people of God.

Ray Anderson describes the apostolic mandate with the following diagram:

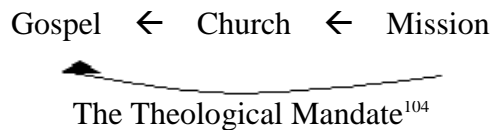


¹⁰²Ray S. Anderson, *Minding God's Business* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 6.

The apostolic mandate responds to the missiological questions: (1) What is our purpose as the Church? and (2) What is God’s agenda in the world?

However, as Anderson correctly argues, to maintain Christ’s ministry as His own, the apostolic mandate alone is inadequate.¹⁰³ Just knowing the purpose for ministry is insufficient because ultimately, we, the apostolic people, will begin to rely on our own possibilities—deviant ministries created by our own hand, in our own power. One must ask not only, “What is our purpose?” but also, “Where does the power come from? Is Christ central? Is this Christ’s ministry? Is this missional action the creation of possibility out of impossibility by the Spirit? Is the apostolic mandate fulfilled in apostolic power?” These are the questions that correspond to the oft-neglected theological mandate.

Anderson illustrates the theological mandate with the following diagram:



The theological mandate throws those involved in missional action back to total dependence on God. Gospel and mission—though often dichotomized—are not separated in the mind of God. Revelation and reconciliation are one, as illustrated by the incarnation. Christ’s ministry of revelation and reconciliation is the only true ministry of the Church. The apostolic and theological mandates cycle as the Church, the apostolic people of God, birthed in the gospel, goes out into the world in missional praxis giving witness to the gospel by fulfilling mission in the power of the gospel.¹⁰⁵ Doing theology is a process of prayer that seeks to discern the will of God (the mind of Christ) for a given situation and in obedience acts according to that will as empowered by the Spirit.

Today much “good” is done in the name of missions, and in the name of ministry, but unless it leads to revelation and reconciliation, to new life in Christ, it is neither ministry; nor missions. Are we willing to step out in faith in obedience to the voice of the Master and serve in the midst of the wind and the waves at the edge of missional chaos and allow the Holy Spirit to bring order—to make the impossible possible? The missionary people of God must create space for the actions of the God of the impossible. The greatest miracle of all is a sinner saved by God’s amazing grace.

An indigenous church is a community of sinners saved by grace and birthed in a specific context. It is those who are Spirit-driven (Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered) to accomplish God’s purposes for and through that community. Like the various churches described in the New Testament, particularly in Acts, these local and national communities of faith are to be Spirit-governed, Spirit-supported and Spirit-propagated. God, by His Spirit, calls and equips local leaders to disciple and mobilize believers in the faith and guides them in discerning and fulfilling the will of God for their community. As a responsible community, the indigenous church turns to the unlimited resources of the Spirit for its sustenance so as not to depend on the missionary, institutions, ministries, or agencies. As a community of faith, indigenous church members are

¹⁰³Ibid., 7-8.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ray S. Anderson, “A Theology of Ministry” in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, ed. Ray S. Anderson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 6-21.

impassioned and empowered by the Spirit to reach their neighbors, their nation, and their world with the gospel.

The apostolic mandate cannot be accomplished without apostolic leadership who operate in apostolic power, because God has chosen to communicate through people. Leadership in a Spirit-driven missiology and praxis can be defined as: a person (team) with the God-given call (responsibility) and the God-given Spirit empowerment (capacity)—both natural and supernatural to create—“space” for the Spirit to influence a specific group of God's apostolic/missionary people towards God's missional purpose for that group.¹⁰⁶

The most important competency for apostolic leadership is the ability to discern the voice of the Spirit and to yield to Spirit empowerment (both natural and supernatural) in order to live in obedience. Apostolic leadership enables the people of God to live as people of promise—moving from future to present by the power of the Spirit by prioritizing the integration of the Spirit's missionary call and His gifts of natural and supernatural empowerment in missional theory, leadership development and apostolic praxis.

Apostolic Praxis: Driven by the Spirit

Before addressing specific missional actions, I want to reaffirm the urgency of missiological reflection noted above. I believe that the greatest contemporary crisis in missions is not AIDS, malaria, poverty, illiteracy, globalization, urbanization, the global economy, the least reached, or the inconvenient lost, but rather the lack of missiological reflection by those engaged in apostolic praxis. For apostolic praxis to be driven by the Spirit, the apostolic people of God must continually engage in the process of missiological reflection where those active in missions cycle between the apostolic mandate and the theological mandate, between purpose and power, between right thinking and right doing, between New Testament methods and New Testament power, and between “the map” and “the fuel.”

Before I explain the map and the fuel, I need to define what I mean by apostolic praxis. In a generic sense, praxis is simply the practical application of a theory, for theologians it includes both right thinking (*orthodoxy*) and right doing (*orthopraxis*).¹⁰⁷ Truth is known as it is practiced. Paulo Freire affirms that true reflection lead to authentic praxis¹⁰⁸ and to be truly human one must engage in a cycle of experimental learning.¹⁰⁹ Cheryl Bridges Johns notes, “Knowledge of God, therefore, is measured not by the information one possesses but by how one is living in response to God. A person is ignorant or foolish not because of the lack of awareness of facts about God but rather because of a failure to do the will of God.”¹¹⁰

Apostolic praxis is how the Church lives out the communication of the gospel in the world. Apostolic praxis is more than just action; it is a cyclical process of action/reflection where the Church's action in response to the apostolic mandate to make disciples of all nations by going, baptizing and teaching is defined, directed, and empowered by the Spirit. It is a process of contextualized action and reflection by which the Church engages the Word and the world. Every member of the missionary people of God is called to apostolic praxis.

¹⁰⁶This definition is based on that given by J. Robert Clinton in *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988), 197.

¹⁰⁷Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 10.

¹⁰⁸Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), 52-53.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 58.

¹¹⁰Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed* (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 35.

In the following story C.S. Lewis illustrates the importance of theology in order “to get to the other side.”

Everyone has warned me not to tell you what I am going to tell you. . . They all say “the ordinary readers does not want Theology; give him plain practical religion.” I have rejected their advice. I do not think the ordinary reader is such a fool. Theology means “the science of God,” and I think any man who wants to think about God at all would like to have the clearest and most accurate ideas about him which are available. You are not children: why should you be treated like children?

In a way I quite understand why some people are put off by Theology. I remember once when I had been giving a talk to the R. A. F., an old, hard-bitten officer got up and said, “I’ve no use for all that stuff. But, mind you, I’m a religious man too. I *know* there’s a God. I have *felt* him: out alone in the desert at night: the tremendous mystery. And that’s just why I don’t believe all your neat little dogmas and formulas about him. To anyone who’s met the real thing they all seem so petty and pedantic and unreal!”

Now in a sense I quite agree with that man. I think he had probably a real experience of God in the desert. And when he turned from that experience to the Christian creeds, I think he really was turning from something real, to something less real. In the same way, if a man has once looked at the Atlantic from the beach, and then goes and looks at a map of the Atlantic, he also will be turning from the real waves to a bit of colored paper. But here comes the point. The map is admittedly only colored paper, but there are two things you have to remember about it. In the first place, it is based on what hundreds and thousands of people have found out by sailing the real Atlantic. In that way it has behind it masses of experience just as real as the one you could have from the beach; only, while yours would be a single isolated glimpse, the map fits all those different experiences together. In the second place, if you want to go anywhere, the map is absolutely necessary. As long as you are content with walks on the beach, your own glimpses are far more fun than looking at a map. But the map is going to be more use than walks on the beach if you want to get to America.

Now Theology is like the map. Merely learning and thinking about the Christian doctrines, if you stop there, is less real and less exciting than the sort of thing my friend got in the desert. Doctrines are not God: they are only a kind of map. But the map is based on the experience of hundreds of people who really were in touch with God – experiences compared with which any thrills or pious feelings you or I are likely to get on our own way are very elementary and very confused. And secondly, if you want to get any further, you must use the map. You see, what happened to that man in the desert may have been real, and was certainly exciting, but nothing comes of it. It leads nowhere. There is nothing to do about it. In fact, that is just why vague religion – all about feeling God in nature, and so on – is so attractive. It is all thrills and no work; like watching the waves from the beach. But you will not get to Newfoundland by studying the Atlantic that way, and you will not get eternal life by simply feeling the presence

of God in flowers or music. Neither will you get anywhere by looking at maps without going to sea. Nor will you be very safe if you go to sea without a map.¹¹¹

As a missiologist I resonate with the need for missiology to provide the map for missional action. Right thinking on biblical missiology must form our praxis, but the map alone does not get us to our destination. We need a vehicle —the community of faith, and the fuel — the power of the Spirit, to get there. We have a lot of “vague” missiology being practiced today. As Lewis notes, “It is all thrills and no work.” It’s hands-on but going nowhere. The Great Commission will not be accomplished by short-term missions work or social action in the name of mission that does not proclaim the truth of the gospel. Nor will a clearly-defined missiology get the job done.

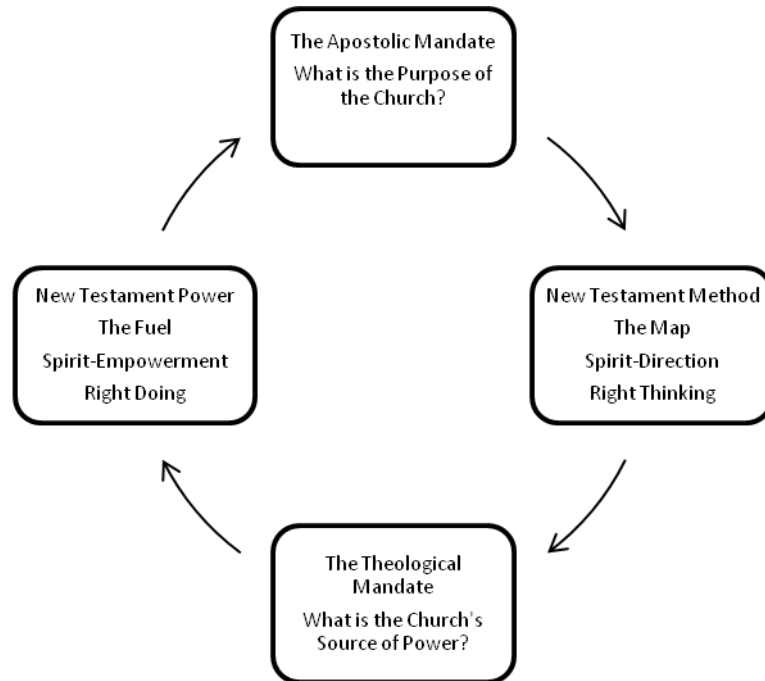
The need for a map, fuel, and a vehicle was brought home to me on a return trip from La Moskitia in Honduras. At 7:00 a.m. Valerie and I with a short-term missions team boarded Missionair's DC-3 on the gravel runway in Puerto Lempira, Honduras. Our take-off in this 1941 antiquity was uneventful, but for the steady stream of oil pouring out of the starboard engine. As we neared San Pedro Sula, I noticed that our flight attendant, wife of one of the pilots, was beginning to look a little nervous. Finally she leaned over and said, “We need to pray!”

When it was all over, we were informed that there had been a tropical storm over San Pedro Sula, and the pilots had been unable to fly by instrumentation alone. Being unable to fly over the weather, they tried to fly under it. Because of the weather and because we did not have a detailed map of the mountain altitudes, we were flying blind and very low. At one point, as I looked out the window, we cleared the trees on a ridge by what appeared to be no more than ten feet. Finally, we were forced to turn out to sea and head for La Ceiba, another airport on the Honduran north coast. When we communicated with the tower, they denied permission to land because of the storm. Our emergency ration of fuel was quickly being consumed. Praying that the weather would clear, we requested an emergency landing on the island of Roatan. We almost missed it, but the clouds cleared; after what seemed to be a vertical drop, we landed safely.

Upon disembarking we discovered that there was no fuel available. In an old hangar we found some empty fifty-five gallon oil drums. We put five of them in the back of an old pickup truck, whose owner drove me into town to a local gas station where I bought 260 gallons of “super” gasoline. When we returned, members of the airport personnel helped us fuel the plane. After opening the tank, one of the men asked us, “Were you on this plane?” We said, “Yes, why do you ask?” He said, “Because there is no fuel in this tank.” Apostolic praxis requires that the Church exercise right thinking, the apostolic mandate (the map- theology/missiology) (Spirit-direction) (New Testament method) and right doing, the theological/missiological mandate (Fuel/ Fire- Spirit-empowerment) (New Testament power) as illustrated in the following diagram:

¹¹¹C. S. Lewis, *The Joyful Christian* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. 1977), 32-34.

The Church in Apostolic Praxis



Apostolic Praxis: Driven by the Wind and the Waves?

The remainder of this lecture, utilizing the metaphor of the boat, the ability to row, and the wind and the waves, addresses various contemporary missiological issues through the lens of a Spirit-driven missiology, the missiology of the indigenous church. Will the Church fulfill the apostolic mandate in apostolic power? Or will it be seduced by the wind and the waves, the seductive powers of a donor-driven, market-driven, ministry-driven, personality-driven, program-driven, or missionary-driven missiology?

What follows is a non-comprehensive list of potential “drivers” of missions that may not be Spirit-dependent with initial non-binding recommendations. I offer it in the same spirit of Melvin Hodges who stated in the preface of the first edition of the *Indigenous Church*, “The pattern presented in this volume is suggestive rather than mandatory, and its purpose is to aid the missionary to proceed along right lines and avoid crippling errors.”¹¹² As mentioned earlier, this is a work in progress with some issues developed more fully than others, but I invite your input and dialog. Please make notations on your copies to be raised at the conclusion of this lecture.

The Boat: A Reliance on Material Resources

On occasion missionaries act as if all that is needed to get to the other side is a really good boat. Boat items include material resources, money, organizational structures, strategies, programs, ministries and donors. If you can just raise enough money, buy that new satellite or building, promote the project, write the book, develop the curriculum, grow the largest

¹¹²Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), 5-6.

organization or ministry, devise the most effective strategy, then the job of global evangelization will be accomplished. The related but non-verbalized assumption is that if I have the money or the resources, I have the power; but if not, then apostolic praxis is impossible. In order to gain access to the resources, missionary action is driven by the wants and vision of the donor (the photograph of the newly built church, the feeding of the starving, the schooling of the child), the ego of the missionary or the forces of the ecclesial market (i.e. that which can be financed by the church).

The missionary must be willing to say “no” to boats not under the authority of Jesus and be accountable to the national church and to fellow missionaries in the use of resources. Getting the approval of an immediate superior or meeting the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service is insufficient. Accountability demands submission one to another and requires effort and time, but it is a long-term investment in Spirit-driven apostolic praxis. A practical recommendation that I give to new missionaries for accountability is, “Send your newsletters to your missionary colleagues and to national leadership.”

As an example of a “boat” issue, examined through the lens of a Spirit-driven missiology, I would like to address the construction of buildings. The missionary needs to ask: Are buildings really a part of apostolic praxis? Are they important and necessary to the local and national church to give witness to the glory of God and His Church? Or is it about my legacy, my need to see tangible evidence of my ministry or pleasing my supporters and generating personal and ministerial income? Are buildings a *means* or a *barrier* to the communication of Christ? What should they look like? In response to these questions, I offer a few practical recommendations:

- Assist in building only what the national church desires, needs and can maintain.
- Avoid building local churches. Invest in building projects that can serve the entire national church.
- Avoid multiple teams on a single project.
- Avoid creating individual “missionary” empires. Buildings should be the result of corporate agreement by missionaries and national leaders.
- If building local churches is absolutely necessary, be culturally sensitive; do not sabotage local initiative or create dependence. Include local leadership in the decision making process and allow local participation. (e.g., providing foundation, walls and roof).
- Build simply and functionally, but aesthetically pleasing to local congregation and culture. What is built in the name of Christ should reflect positively on Him in the perspective of locales without violating biblical principles of stewardship and modesty.

The Ability to Row: Reliance on Human Effort

Missionaries like me are easily seduced by this alternative power source. We act as if the fulfillment of the Great Commission is “up to me.” If I just work hard enough, pulling on missional oars both night and day, by the sweat of my brow I will get the job done. It produces a

missional praxis that is missionary-driven, personality-driven, and results-driven—one riddled with competition, division, burnout, and broken relationships.

Scripture affirms the need for individual effort. Everyone is responsible before God for their actions. In Assemblies of God World Missions parlance “Every tub sits on its own bottom.” This means all are responsible to work hard, raise their own support, discern God’s will for their life and ministry, and provide for their own spiritual life and “member care.” Each individual is released to exercise his or her function as a member of the body of Christ.

The negative side of an emphasis on individual effort is that there is an unbiblical focus on the missionary rather than a biblical focus on Jesus. In such case, actions do not point to Jesus and end up creating competition between missionaries. “My ministry is the only important ministry,” claims the missionary. “If you were a really good missionary, you would be doing what I’m doing.” As with extreme ecumenism this missionary-centered praxis violates the body metaphor, binding finger to finger and hindering flexibility and effectiveness. This perspective makes the toe try to be a finger or feel guilty or inferior because it is not the finger. Missionaries get so wrapped up in their “ministry” that they ignore missions history and miss the kingdom perspective. As a result they constantly “reinvent the wheel,” committing the same mistakes, ending with an ineffective missional praxis that is not Spirit-driven.

The Wind and the Waves: Reliance on Alternate Sources of Direction and Power

The wind and the waves can drive apostolic praxis in directions and powers contrary to the Spirit. A partial list would include praxis driven by: culture, fear, security/comfort, technology, globalization, political power, and need. Due to the constraints of time, I would like to briefly examine cultural relevance, need, security and short-term missions.

The claims of culture conflict frequently with the demands of the gospel. The demands and assertions of Scripture are not “politically correct.” When truth is subjugated by relevance to culture: sinners are not really lost, hell does not exist and Jesus is not the only way. Tolerance becomes the ultimate virtue, “If we will just learn to get along, communicate better and help each other, there will be global peace.” Love makes no demands.

Relevance is important. We cannot communicate the gospel unless relevant, understandable cultural forms are used, but the *forms* do not save. The good news of Jesus saves and to be good news, it must be communicated in word and deed. Communication experts claim that verbal communication is the least effective and that preaching should be eliminated as irrelevant. Or more subtly this generation seems to identify with the words associated with Francis of Assisi, “Preach the gospel always, and when necessary use words.” It was our chapel theme for the year we served at Bethany University as missionaries-in-residence. On the positive side it is a call for integrity in the Church and the Christian walk and an indictment of a duplicitous church. Yet, words are *always* necessary for salvation.

Could political correctness or the fear of being perceived as intolerant radicals be the wind keeping the church from apostolic praxis? As Brogden noted, Francis of Assisi endangered his own life to speak to a Muslim sultan in Egypt.¹¹³ Yes, word and deed must match, but the reality is that no one can fully live out Jesus in this age; it is the gospel that transforms not my life. My life is simply a tool to communicate His truth. We are ambassadors not kings. We do not

¹¹³ Dick Brogden at the Assemblies of God World Missions Summit 2 in Cincinnati, OH on December 31, 2008.

rule, He does. Through the foolishness of the preaching of the gospel people are saved (1 Cor. 1:21). It may not make sense to the world or this generation, but preach the Word.

Apostolic praxis responds to human need but is not need-driven. The ultimate need is for reconciliation with God; all other needs are temporary. Jesus fed the five thousand but rebuked those who sought Him only for temporary gain. I want to be clear: responding to temporary needs creates space for encountering Christ, but apostolic praxis demands we keep our focus on Jesus. Not every need constitutes a call. Divine direction leads to reconciliation with God. We must ask, are we motivated by the compassionate love of God or guilt at our abundance? Is it possible that we give to be justified in our comfort? Is it good praxis or God praxis?

Experiencing fear in the midst of the storm is a natural response, but to refuse to obey His instruction out of fear is unacceptable for any disciple. It parallels the response of the rich young ruler to Jesus' charge (Matt. 19:16-22). Craig Keener makes the following astute and powerful commentary on this passage: "The kingdom is not meant to be an extra blessing tagged onto a comfortable life; it must be all-consuming, or it is no longer the kingdom."¹¹⁴ Why do we seek God's will? Is it His will we desire or is it access to His power to guarantee a comfortable life? Do we think that if we are in His "perfect" will, we will be insured against difficulty, turmoil, struggles, and pain? We in the West truly have no notion of the suffering of the global Church and the thousands of followers of Christ who die for their faith each year. We are so comfortable that biblical eschatology and the urgency of proclaiming His death until He comes are undermined. One of the greatest threats to apostolic praxis is the sense of entitlement to a comfortable life which is why the largest number of missionaries of this generation will come from the majority world.

One of the byproducts of globalization is the increase of short-term missions as missional praxis. It lends itself to Western cultural values. The hands on, "get it done" mentality appeals to our individualism, our pragmatism, and our time and task orientation. Short term missions participants in a very limited amount of time get to experience an exotic, romantic environment, erect a building with their own hands, experience the gratitude of a "destitute" people and return to their comfortable home believing that they have done their part to save the world and fulfill the Great Commission. Some return again and again to get their missionary "fix." Missional praxis in such cases is defined by what can be done by missionary tourists in two weeks.

Short-term efforts are especially vulnerable to the missiological storm and the wind and the waves. However, short-term missions is not going disappear in our global environment and can make a positive contribution to missional praxis if tied to long-term effective apostolic praxis. These contributions include:

- the mobilization and formation of "world Christians" as God's missionary people.
- the creation of space where potential missionaries can hear, confirm, or inform their missionary call.
- an introduction into the process of raising support, travel, cross-cultural communication, missiology, and apostolic praxis.
- encouragement to national believers and provision of field needs.

¹¹⁴Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 98.

- direct participation in spiritual warfare.
- intense communal discipleship.
- a connection to the broader body of Christ.

The concerns that must be addressed include:

- No Map! No missiological formation or reflection, resulting in flawed praxis.
- a de-emphasis on career missionaries and the need for incarnational ministry.
- a de-emphasis on the Church and proclamation in word and deed (Church planting and discipleship take more than two weeks, two months or two years.)
- a disproportionate percentage of missions budgets are designated to short-term praxis.
- faulty missiology—many short-term participants come to believe that missions can be accomplished with short-term missions alone.
- lack of contextualization and cultural sensitivity.
- not connecting to nor submitting to national leadership.
- the experience of a lifetime does not convert to a lifetime of commitment.

Recommendations to maximize the effectiveness of short-term efforts:

- prioritize long-term missions.
- balance financial investment.
- provide orientation for long-term effect, include missiology and spiritual discernment.
- affirm the potential positive impact of short-term missions.
- create space to hear the voice of the Spirit and experience Spirit-empowerment
- provide concrete venues of praxis to express deeper commitment post-experience.
- eliminate multiple trips.
- increased connectedness to career missionaries.

Ultimately short-term efforts will be only as effective as they are linked to missionaries and national churches in long-term apostolic praxis.

Practical Recommendations for a Spirit-driven Apostolic Praxis

Hodges' description of the missionary's ministry provides solid advice for contemporary missionaries:

- Remember the missionary's primary function is as a church planter/pioneer (Two phases: a. evangelism, b. teaching converts including the training of national workers and leaders.)
- A missionary is temporary in any local area; the church must be the center of the work.
- Avoid maintenance ministries; move to new fields.
- Avoid measures that would stifle indigenous efforts.
- Refuse to occupy a position that a national can fill.
- Do not be jealous of his or her authority or position, but be willing for others to take the lead. The missionary's spiritual ministry will always provide his or her proper place in the Body of Christ whether he or she holds an office or not.
- Withdraw at the proper time. Assume new roles.
- Influence through spiritual leadership. Above all else, let the missionary maintain his or her standing as a "man or woman of God." With this relationship maintained, all other relationships will be made easy.¹¹⁵

To this I would add that to be involved in a Spirit-driven apostolic praxis, you must:

- Think and act missiologically. Continually affirm the need as a missionary people for the map, the fuel, and the vehicle of the Spirit in order to get to the other side and fulfill the Great Commission.
- Keep your eyes on Jesus. Peter began to sink because he was distracted by the wind and the waves. The full gospel is a Christocentric gospel. Nurture the spiritual life; tend your own spiritual power base. Be accountable. Individually and corporately create space to discern Spirit direction and experience Spirit-empowerment and renewal.
- Make disciples: Plant and nurture the Church. Christocentric means ecclesial-centric because the Church is the Body of Christ. The vehicle for apostolic praxis is the Church.
- Preach/Proclaim the good news; only the gospel saves.

¹¹⁵Hodges, 126-129.

- Focus on people not programs. The battle of this age is for souls; the proclamation of the kingdom not its realization.
- Emphasize the importance of the career missionary, incarnational ministry, and the long-term. The missionary should strategically invest for a life-time of service in any given context, but be willing and able to change at a moment's notice when directed by the Spirit.
- Tell the Story. Narratives create space for divine encounter. Testimonies empower, build our faith and provide an environment where we can trust Jesus for the impossible.

Conclusion

Jesus is already in the boat with the willing on His way to those who have never heard. He calls out to the rest of the Church, "Let's go over to the other side." Those in the boat are assured of getting to the other side because He is in the boat, His presence will go with us as we fulfill the Great Commission. An indigenous New Testament church does not just emerge. It is birthed by intentionally following the way of the cross in the power of the Spirit. The antidote to a donor-driven, market-driven, ministry-driven, or missionary-driven missiology is to surrender our rights to power, recognizing that it is not "my" ministry; it is God's ministry.

Most of the time being in the missionary boat with Jesus is just hard work— a constant battle to trust Him in the face of the wind and the waves. But I am so glad that sometimes He stands and speaks peace, bringing order to chaos. Apostolic praxis is possible, because the Master of the wind and waves promised it.

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