

Chapter Eleven

Canada for the Nations

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Introduction

At the dawn of the 21st century, the responsibility of bringing the Christian message of hope and salvation to people around the world through missions faces many new and daunting challenges. The new millennium sees a radically changing world of economical upheavals, political uncertainties, overwhelming technological innovations, and fundamental changes to centuries-old social, ethical, and religious values.

In Canada, the USA, and other Western nations, many churches and mission organizations find themselves so consumed by the challenge of surviving in the present that envisioning a bold missionary future is not something they feel they can even dare dream about. Others ask whether there will even be an effective role for missions in the 21st century.

Despite the challenges facing those committed to bringing the Gospel to the world, Canadian evangelicals continue to express their strong support for spreading God's message through missions by investing more than \$350 million annually in missionary activities. This generous giving supports approximately 3000 long-term and 15,000 short-term missionaries.

Canada's many mission organizations are justifiably proud of their history and uniqueness. Their devotion to their work is strong and admirable. Some organizations are on solid financial ground while others are uncertain about their future. However, most Canadian mission leaders agree that mission organizations need to find new ways to share resources, ideas, and strategies as well as to foster better communications and support if they are to continue to be successful in bringing God's Word to unreached peoples.

Understanding the Times

Men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do--200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command; men of Zebulun, experienced soldiers prepared for battle with every type of weapon, to help David with undivided loyalty--50,000; Two tribal groupings, one of 200 and the other of 50,000, both groups gifted, equipped and committed to act. One group small, but the leaders of Issachar understood (had discernment into) the times, knew what God's people should do, and led their kinsmen into battle. (I Chronicles 12:32-33).

In the Old Testament, we read the story of King David's effort to unite the kingdom of Israel. To help King David win the battles ahead of him, God sends to David a long list of "mighty men of valor." These men were seasoned soldiers who knew battle tactics and weaponry and who were men of great courage.

But right in the middle of this long list of mighty soldiers, God sends the men of Issachar, and the only thing on their resume is that they were men *"who understood the times, to know what Israel ought to do."* While they could fight, their main contribution was to give King David sound advice. Their value to David was that they not only understood *what* was happening, but *why* it was happening.

What does it mean to be a daughter or son of Issachar today who knows how to read the times?

In his book, *Choosing the Future: The Power of Strategic Thinking*, Stuart Wells writes:

The future continually demands reorganizing our thinking. Strategic thinking can be summed up quite simply: What seems to be happening? What possibilities do we face? And what are we going to do about it? It is not about some cumbersome planning process to emerge with a big document. It is about maintaining an acute sensitivity to changing conditions, a willingness to think in a variety of ways, and an avoidance of traps formed by what we already know and an ability to decide.

It is essential that Christian leaders think about the times in which we live and how they impact the spread and influence of the gospel.

As we prepare to enter the 21st century, we can discern a number of trends that are shaping the context for our strategies and decisions. God alone knows the future. But as wise stewards we desire to anticipate opportunities as well as pitfalls related to these changes. Each of these trends raises issues and suggests implications for the work of Christian missions.

The Context of Ministry

In seeking to understand how the Canadian Church should engage in God's global mission enterprise, we need to consider the ministry context both globally and nationally. In other words, we need to review the major trends that are impacting and influencing our world and our culture.

The Current Global Mission Scene

While not exhaustive, the following are major global trends making an impact on mission ministry:

1. Globalization

The same factors and events influence people worldwide, and this is affecting the way that the world's people, cultures, and religions interrelate, and ultimately should impact how Christians respond.

In Thomas Friedman's bestseller on globalization, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, he describes a label on a computer part that reads, "This part was made in Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, China, Mexico, Germany, the U.S., Thailand, Canada, and Japan. It was made in so many different places that we cannot specify a country of origin." ¹ It is readily evident that the rapid expansion of the World Wide Web is fueling this sense of global interconnectedness.

While globalization has seemed to bring benefit to some of the world's population, a significant number of people have seen a negative impact in their lives. Miriam Adeney quotes an article by Yong-Hun Jo of Korea, "Globalization as a Challenge to the Churches in Asia Today," ² published in the October 2000 issue of the *Asian Journal of Theology*, which says poverty levels in Asian countries have worsened as globalization has bloomed.

In evaluating this article Adeney writes, "Although the article's tone is moderate, and recognizes the benefits of a vigorous economy, it also speaks of bankruptcies, destruction of jobs, massive unemployment, a sharp rise in prices and decline in wages, capital flight into tax-free zones, the reduction of public services, environmental degradation, and a growing distance between the rich and the poor."³

2. Clash of Civilizations

In 1996 Samuel P. Huntington, of Harvard, wrote a book called, *The Clash of Civilizations*. In this critically acclaimed book Huntington describes the post-1990 world has being made up of eight major civilizations or cultures where religion is the dominant factor. These eight include:

- Western
- Orthodox
- Latin American
- Sinic, or related to China
- Islamic
- Hindu
- Japanese
- African⁴

In reviewing this book, British missiologist Tom Houston writes, "Huntington uses language borrowed from earthquake studies. He says that the fault lines between the civilizations that will lead to upheavals in the world are the sometimes invisible boundaries between the civilizations."⁵

Houston concludes that Huntington "demonstrates this convincingly by analyzing the 59 conflicts in the world in 1993 and shows that more occurred between the civilizations than occurred within single civilizations. Even then we need to add that almost one-third of

these conflicts within civilizations were between tribes in Africa like the Tutsis and the Hutu in Rwanda and Burundi. The majority of the conflicts both within civilizations and between them involved Muslims. Bosnia, Chechnya, the Middle East, Iraq, Azerbaijan, and the Sudan all come to mind. The news on any given day is likely to mention three or four of these conflicts, if we have ears to hear them.”⁶ As we review the short history since Huntington wrote his insightful work, the patterns of conflict among civilizations seem to continue unabated.

3. Persecution

More and more believers are in countries where Christians suffer discrimination or worse. More countries are restricting access to missionaries.

People are persecuted for religious beliefs and practices around the world, whether they are Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, or other. In today's world the largest group of people being persecuted for their faith is Christians. More than 200 million people in over 60 nations are being denied their basic human rights because of their Christian faith. The main reason for this persecution is the rapid growth of Christianity in countries where human rights are being violated or do not exist.⁷

4. Secularism

In a report for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Bruce Clemenger writes about the memorial service in Ottawa held just after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.

I attended the ceremony on the Hill, and was moved by the thousands who gathered, and was encouraged by the words of the Prime Minister, the Ambassador of the United States, and the Governor General. Toward the end I anticipated prayers and words of comfort from some of the representatives of the many faith communities who were seated among other dignitaries. But none spoke.⁸

Clemenger provides helpful analysis of this national event, which seems to demonstrate the growing secularization of our culture. He concludes:

Not welcoming the public expression of faith at such events does not foster tolerance and understanding of the religious traditions to which Canadians adhere and which shape and guide their lives. Rather, it engenders a perspective that the expression of religious traditions is not necessary or even appropriate at public events. This secularist approach, which seeks to accommodate religious traditions by affording public expression to none, is the expression of an understanding of what religion ought to be and is a form of religious intolerance--religion in its public expression is not welcome.⁹

Canada, while perhaps on the leading edge of secularization, is really representative of a growing number of countries that are increasingly secularized.

5. Post-Modernism

Post-modernism, according to Stanley Grenz, is a reaction to the modern mindset in which knowledge is not objective. Truth is entirely dependent upon the community in which it resides and human reason is not the sole faculty for determining it. Thus, we have a celebration of the local at the expense of the universal, which leads to a great sense of

diversity and pluralism. As a result, "Post-moderns denounce the pretence of those who claim to view the world from a transcendent vantage point from which they are able to speak imperiously to and on behalf of all humankind"¹⁰

Pastor and author Brian McLaren believes that post-modernism is not a life stage or a generational issue but primarily a shift in epistemology--the way people process information and view the world. And this worldview will soon become the dominant epistemology!¹¹ McLaren, who has become a leading spokesperson for an emerging group of new evangelicals, concludes, "We must think like missionaries—learning a new language, in a new culture, with new ways of thinking and understanding. For a while ministry may be bi-lingual but it will soon require a mastery of the language, culture, and thinking."¹² Once thought to be unique to western culture, post-modernism is impacting most major cultures of the world.

6. Increasing Gap between Poor and Rich

- This gap forces Christians to consider what biblical justice, stewardship, and partnership mean in a world of great disparity.
- Today, across the world, 1.3 billion people live on less than one dollar a day; 3 billion live on less than two dollars a day; 1.3 billion have no access to clean water; 3 billion have no access to sanitation; 2 billion have no access to electricity.¹³
- The gross domestic product (GDP) of the poorest 48 nations (i.e., a quarter of the world's countries) is less than the wealth of the world's three richest people combined.¹⁴
- The poorer the country, the more likely it is that debt repayments are extracted from people who neither contracted the loans nor received any of the money.¹⁵
- 20 percent of the population in the developed nations consumes 86 percent of the world's goods.¹⁶
- The top fifth of the world's people in the richest countries enjoy 82 percent of the expanding export trade and 68 percent of foreign direct investment--the bottom fifth, barely more than 1 percent.¹⁷
- In 1960, 20 percent of the world's people in the richest countries had 30 times the income of the poorest 20 percent--in 1997, 74 times as much.¹⁸
- The developing world now spends \$13 on debt repayment for every \$1 it receives in grants.¹⁹
- The 48 poorest countries account for less than 0.4 percent of global exports.²⁰
- The combined wealth of the world's 200 richest people hit \$1 trillion in 1999; the combined income of the 582 million people living in the 43 least-developed countries is \$146 billion.²¹
- A mere 12 percent of the world's population uses 85 percent of its water, and none of these 12 percent live in the Third World.²²
- Nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their name.²³

- Less than one percent of what the world spent every year on weapons was needed to put every child into school by the year 2000, and yet it didn't happen.²⁴
- The lives of 1.7 million children were needlessly lost in the year 2000 because world governments failed to reduce poverty levels.²⁵

7. Unreached Peoples

In our world today:²⁶

- There are over 1.6 billion people with little or no chance to hear of Jesus Christ.
- The Church is sending only 2.5 percent of its total missionary force to these unreached people (10,500 out of 420,000 missionaries).
- Christians are spending only .02 percent of total church expenditure for this purpose (\$54 million out of \$270 billion).
- There are over 3000 ethnic peoples still less than 5 percent Christian.
- Eighty-five percent of the poorest nations are in the unevangelized world. "The lost are the poor and the poor are the lost."

A part of Canada's contribution to the Great Commission must be to increase our involvement among the least reached of world. However, the reality revealed through our research indicates that a very small percentage of our churches are involved in this ministry. This will mean intentionally evaluating our existing programs and then determining how we can release more resources toward those who have not heard the gospel.

8. Impact of HIV/AIDS

A comprehensive new report on the global HIV/AIDS epidemic compiled by UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS)²⁷ was unveiled at a special international conference on the issue in Barcelona, July 2002. The report estimated that by the end of 2001:

- Forty million people were living with HIV/AIDS worldwide.
- Five million people were newly affected with HIV/AIDS in 2001 (including 800,000 children less than 15 years old).
- More than 20 million people have died since the first incidence of HIV/AIDS was reported.
- Three million people (including 580,000 children) died of HIV/AIDS during 2001 alone.
- Fourteen million children (age 0-14 years) are living without one or both of their parents as a result of HIV/AIDS. Millions more are being adversely affected.

In the words of the report: "The scale of the crisis now outstrips even the worst-case scenarios of a decade ago."

9. Children at Risk

There are tens of millions of street children worldwide. UNICEF²⁸ has distinguished between children *on* the streets and children *of* the streets. Children *on* the streets have a

weakened family support base and help the family survive by working and begging on city streets and marketplaces.

Children *of the streets* are fewer in number, struggling alone without family support. They may have been forced onto the street by being orphaned or abandoned, by domestic violence, or simply by dysfunctional families. The street then becomes a home, where the allure of crime and drugs and the emotional support of street friends make the return to a normal lifestyle difficult. All these children lack the care and security of a normal childhood, and many adults regard them as just a social nuisance.

Over 120 million children worldwide, the majority of them girls, never go to school. One fourth of all those who do attend school drop out by grade five.²⁹

Mass population movements are one of the consequences of war. According to Tear Fund,³⁰ children make up a high percentage of the millions of refugees and internally displaced people worldwide and are especially vulnerable to disease, lack of water, and malnutrition. Six million children have been wounded in armed conflicts over the last 10 years, physically and psychologically. Many have been orphaned or separated from their parents. Millions of land mines have been laid and most of those killed or injured by them are children. Children have fought in wars for centuries, but recent decades have seen a rise in the use of young children as soldiers (currently estimated at 300,000 worldwide). The proliferation of light weapons has aided this trend--in the past a child could wield a sword or machete but was no match for an adult. Now a child with a Soviet-made AK-47 or an American M-16 can be a fearsome enemy.

10. Refugees and Internally Displaced People

At the beginning of 2002, there were 37.4 million refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people and others living in refugee-like conditions in the world.³¹ In addition, there are millions of others who have been forced to abandon their homes, but are not officially registered with government or United Nation agencies. It is a staggering and incomprehensible reality that persecution, war, famine, or a deep sense of hopelessness has displaced tens of millions of people in our world today. Displaced people find themselves either running from oppression and despair or running to the hope of a new life.

When people make the desperate decision to flee from their homeland, they need to consider the obstacles and route to a new life. There have been observed some well-worn paths around the world that refugees travel: air, water, and land routes leading to safety and the simple hope for a normal life. These are the refugee highways.³² Like any highway, there are entry ramps, crossroads, roundabouts and exits ramps. Every continent—ninety-six countries on the globe—is connected to this winding network of roads.

Thousands of refugees escaping oppression or seeking a new life end up living for years in limbo in nearby countries that serve as human transit centers; e.g., Iran and Jordan. Should refugees be fortunate enough to reach a western nation and apply for asylum, they quickly discover that their struggle is far from over. The "unwelcome" mat is out in plain view. The UNHCR reports that in the year 2000, European Union countries denied asylum to approximately 72 percent of those seeking it.³³ The odds are against the refugees. Most are ultimately forced to get back onto the highway, while their desperation grows.

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, that year's scheduled 70,000 U.S. refugee admissions were slowed to a trickle, leaving thousands of war-traumatized,

persecuted men, women, and children stranded overseas in crowded camps and miserable conditions.³⁴ Approximately 22,000 refugees previously cleared by the U.S. government to come to America were placed on hold indefinitely, putting them in danger of further persecution. These refugee families, who have already endured mind-numbing horrors, are also innocent victims of the September 11th atrocities.

Many refugees, not having the necessary legal documents, end up being helplessly caught up in bureaucratic systems that make them feel they are on a highway roundabout, traveling in circles and unable to get off. The refugee highway is a place that robs people of their identity and denies them a voice. Upon setting foot on the highway, refugees are stripped of their social standing, their personal and professional achievements, and often the use of their language.

These things are not understood or valued by the nations through which they pass. The vast majority of countries perceive refugees to be both a burden to society and an economic threat. In most countries the only work they can find is on the black market, where they are offered the least desirable tasks and are paid far below market value, if at all. They are left without a voice, as they do not know the language, laws, or their rights in the country in which they find themselves. They are unwanted and unknown.

The refugee highway is a scar that wraps itself around the globe, betraying the deep wounds in the world today. It is another blatant sign that humanity needs a Saviour. It is an opportunity for Christian believers to model the ministry of Jesus, as it is written:

...The LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to prisoners...to comfort all who mourn... (Isaiah 61:1-2)

11. The Increasing Number of Christians in Non-Western Countries

Each week approximately one thousand new churches are planted in Asia and Africa alone.³⁵ Christianity is now a genuinely international faith. Once Christianity was predominantly white; today, 65 percent of the global Church is from predominantly non-white nations. Peter Berger reports, “*The rapid spread of evangelical Protestantism, notably in Latin America, is one of the most extraordinary developments in the world today.*” This significant growth reminds us that we in Canada engage in missions through partnership within a globalized and diverse Church.

Chad Hall helps us understand that we in the west can learn important lessons from our brothers and sisters in the developing world. He writes,

Churches in the developing world help us to reconsider our ministry success in terms of social impact and personal spiritual transformation by bringing a balanced approach to these two important factors. American churches often find themselves out of kilter by exaggerating the importance of one of these factors over the other. Pentecostal and evangelical congregations tend to stress personal transformation to the neglect of social impact, while mainline and liberal churches go to the opposite extreme.³⁶

Hall concludes,

As we witness congregations in the developing world find a balance of these Gospel expressions, we can better define success in our own contexts according to both/and categories rather than either/or dichotomies.³⁷

12. The Increasing Number of Missionaries from Younger Sending Countries

Former mission fields are now becoming mission forces. Bill Taylor, executive director of the World Evangelical Alliance Missions Commission, writes,

Some mission scholars estimate that the global, long-term mission force is now about 50/50 from the west and the rest of the world Church. This is an astonishing development. In the west the longer-term mission force is shrinking. It is generally growing in the rest of the world, although in India there has been a tapering off of the growth.³⁸

However, not everything in world missions is positive news. Taylor reports:³⁹

- Uneven strength
- Insufficient pre-field missionary training
- Inadequate sending bases and field-based support systems
- Non-existent (or just developing) member care concerns
- Limited mission literature in target languages
- A disturbing attrition rate in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

The Canadian Context

Canada faces a number of issues that impact the mobilization of the Church to missions.

1. There is a growing sense that “something is wrong” with many of the churches in the west. We must ask if an unhealthy church can produce a healthy mission movement.
2. Some believe that Christianity has failed to impact Canadian societal flaws, such as poverty, racism, and crime. Therefore, they conclude that we should not be exporting something that has not worked in our own context. Is this time to ask what a zero-based missiology would look like for Canada? In other words, how would the gospel be communicated and what would the Church look like if Christianity were just arriving in Canada’s culture?
3. The world has arrived in Canada. Our nation is one of the most culturally diverse in the world. Much of the growth of the Church in Canada has been among the visible ethnic minority groups. While it is thrilling to see the global mission vision of these churches, many are also struggling with the exodus of the younger generation from their churches.
4. While there has been significant growth of the multi-cultural in our nation, one of the significant challenges for the Canadian Church is to engage in effective ministry to Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs.
5. Many denominational and independent mission-sending agencies are facing the reality of the following:
 - A plateauing or declining missionary force

- An aging donor base
 - A lack of organizational or denominational loyalty by those who are 50 years old and younger
 - Donor fatigue due to the proliferation of ministry opportunities
 - Leadership transition challenges to the younger leaders
 - Local churches asking for greater accountability and partnership
 - How to motivate the emerging post-modern generation.
6. Based upon his experience in the corporate world, Jack Welch, Chairman of GE, has learned, “When the rate of change inside the company is exceeded by the rate of change outside the company, the end is near” Is the same true among the community of mission agencies?
 7. There is a lack of new creative mission structures. In the last 25 years Canada has seen relatively few new mission agencies. Is it time for the younger generation to launch some new structures or communities that will engage in missions?

Current Patterns in Canadian Global Mission Movement⁴⁰

Further analysis of the Canadian mission movement shows the following patterns:

1. An Increase in Giving

While, for the first part of the 1990s, giving to international missions remained flat, in the last three years of the decade income increased by almost 40 percent, for a total of \$350 million.

2. An Increase in Short-Term Missionaries

Short-term mission endeavours have seen a huge increase in the last decade. People of all ages are finding ways to serve on a short-term mission. The growing emphasis of short-term mission is on church-based teams serving for less than a one-month duration.

3. An Increase in the Support of Nationals

From 1996 to 1999 Canadian giving to national Christians increased 140 percent. It appears that the indigenous mission movement has grown at the expense of the traditional missions movement.

4. An Increase in Early Retirees

It is estimated that about 200,000 evangelicals in Canada will take an early retirement before 2010. In order to engage this incredible resource, agencies must find new ways of mobilizing, training, and ministry deployment.

5. A Decline in Long-Term Missionaries

The 1990s saw a steady decline in those missionaries from Canada serving for four years or more. From 1992 to 1995 long-term missionaries declined by almost 4 percent and from 1996 to 1999 the decline was almost 12 percent. This means that in a seven-year period the long-term Canadian missionary force declined by more than 15 percent.

6. A Decline in Donations to Evangelism

In analyzing the increase in income it was discovered that over 80 percent of the new giving wasn't going to relief and development organizations. In fact, over 70 percent of all giving to Christian international ministries goes to humanitarian projects.

7. A Decline in Understanding the Great Commission

A recent study among adults in evangelical churches in North America revealed that only 20 percent could define the Great Commission.

8. A Decline in Accepting the Uniqueness of Christ

Recent research at "conservative" Christian Bible colleges indicates that over 50 percent of incoming students question the uniqueness of Christ for salvation.

While each of these trends needs to be commented on in depth, space does not allow for this kind of analysis. However, even a cursory evaluation recognizes that these trends are having a profound impact on the global mission of the Church.

The Canadian Local Church for Missions

Given these global and national trends we must ask how we mobilize and equip the local Canadian church for missions? What are the keys to developing a growing global mission focus in the local church?

Missions consultant Bruce Camp believes local churches must understand their "DNA". According to Camp, DNA refers to the mission, vision, and values of a church.⁴¹

- *Mission* tells us what the church exists to do
- *Vision* shows how it will accomplish the mission
- *Values* describe the boundaries within which people can freely live out their spiritual gifts without asking for permission.

Bruce Camp writes, "In an out-of-control, fast-blurring world like today where all of the rules are changing and major pieces of history are disappearing, churches must take a good long look at themselves and rediscover why God put them here."

Today, leaders are looking for helpful resources that will assist them in developing an effective local church global mission strategy based upon proven principles. To determine principles that have proven effective, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, through the Global Mission Roundtable and funding through the Charis Foundation, conducted an extensive study among almost 900 churches of various sizes, location, styles of ministry, and denominational affiliations.

From late 1999 to 2001 we received completed extensive surveys from more than 700 evangelical churches and also conducted more intensive research into 150 churches that had been nominated as having best practices in global mission activity.

From this research data we have been able to identify the key elements of the differences between churches that have seen growth in their mission program in the last five years and the ones that have not. These key factors, or best practices, can help leaders understand how they can develop a healthy, mission-minded, active local church. They have

been grouped into three main sections: foundational practices, the development of people, and the building of vision.

Strong Foundations

- **Clear and Compelling Vision.** Members clearly understand and embrace a vision. Most churches, however, have not articulated this kind of vision.
- **Integration of the Great Commission and Great Commandment.** For too long in the western world we have divided the world into "spiritual" and "material" or "evangelism" and "humanitarian assistance." Growing churches seek to constantly integrate these ministries into a holistic gospel that cares for the spirit, soul, and body.
- **Systematic Teaching.** The ministry includes regular teaching on the biblical foundations of mission and on God's heart for the world. This counteracts the impact of changing belief systems.
- **Prayer Focused.** The churches find creative ways to include prayer for their mission strategy, such as in small groups, at mission breakfasts, or on prayer lines.
- **Functioning Administrative and Leadership Structure.** The churches have good organization structures, with the most effective being an intergenerational team or committee with a hard-working leader and members who stay together over several years to guide the program.
- **Understanding Culture Shifts.** They understand that the changes in our culture are not simply the result of generational influences, but rather are major shifts in worldview.

Healthy Churches

- **Empowering Leadership.** Elders, deacons, and other leaders play a significant role in equipping, enabling, and releasing members to mission endeavours.
- **Gift-Oriented Ministry.** Because people no longer want to serve in just any way they can, churches find ways of encouraging individuals to know and use their gifts and skills for ministry purposes.
- **Engaging All Ages.** Churches have found many ways to include members in short-term mission endeavours. Intergenerational teams, family teams, youth teams, professional teams, and work teams that assist in local projects or minister in another country have a profound impact on the health of the local church.

Effective Focus

- **Integrated Focus.** Missions-minded church members do not divide the world into "here" and "there." They see global missions simply as an extension of local missions.
- **Growing Their Own Missionaries.** The churches develop their own missionaries using training programs, internships, short-term mission, and

discipling programs to discover and encourage the right people to consider long-term missionary involvement.

- **Relationally Connected to Ministry Partners.** The churches limit the number of in-depth relationships it has with various mission agencies and other ministry partners because they recognize that connecting members closely with the people and projects that they support increases members' commitment to mission.
- **Balanced Ministry Focus.** These churches have a diversified portfolio of local and global ministry projects. They support missionaries from their own country as well as those from churches in other countries.
- **Thinking Outside the Box.** They try new programs and are not bound by traditions or attitudes that say, "That's the way we have always done it."
- **Partnership Orientation.** Collaboration is crucial, so these churches constantly ask, "What can we do together that we can't do alone?" Partnerships between churches and agencies are having profound and positive impacts.

Rating Our Churches

Using the above criterion for developing a growing and healthy missions-minded church, how are we doing? What changes do we need to make? We must not be overwhelmed by the task. We must begin small with some doable, bite-size pieces that will begin to make an impact. We must connect with other church and agency leaders and learn from each other. Remember, a world in great spiritual need is waiting for our response.

Making Sense of the Many Opportunities

Local church mail boxes are filled with all sorts of opportunities presented by local and international agencies. Needs are enormous and resources are limited. How does a church decide how to invest its resources?

Mission specialist David Mays has developed a list of questions to help guide a church in this process:⁴²

Questions about the World:

- Where is the church extremely weak or non-existent?
- Where is the church at risk for lack of effective leadership?
- Where is God clearly at work?
- Where can we work in partnership with people we know and trust?
- What is being neglected by others?
- What strategies is God clearly using?
- Where are there "hinge-of-history" opportunities?

Questions about Individual Ministry Opportunities:

- How strategic is this ministry?

- How does it contribute to bringing people to Christ who now have little opportunity?
- How will this ultimately help build local congregations?
- Is this important work that is not being done now?
- What levels of Christian resources are already being applied?
- Will this have an impact--will it make a real difference that counts?
- What kind of leverage or multiplication can be expected?
- What about the quality--call, competence, character--of those involved?
- Does this Work Fit Our Congregation?
- Has God prepared us for this?
- Will our people understand, accept, support, and participate in this work?
- How do we fit into it?
- What is our part?
- Are we prepared to stay for the long haul if that's what it takes?
- Do we clearly have God's leading in this matter?

Better Partnerships are Needed between the Local Church and Mission Agencies

A clear theme has emerged from deliberations over the future of mission: old ways of relating between churches and mission agencies often do not work. The result is confusion, inefficiency, and even suspicion and hard feelings. Yet how will new, improved partnerships develop?

What Mission Agencies Can Do

- Help local churches use short-term missions to become their most highly leveraged discipleship opportunity.
- Play a key role in helping develop church planting strategies in our multicultural urban centres.
- Help local churches develop their own mission strategy and not force them to accept a pre-packaged vision of their agency.
- Make local churches much more involved in the application and screening process of missionary candidates.
- Communicate more effectively with sending churches about personnel changes.
- Demonstrate how they are working together with other agencies.
- Improve the quality of management in their home offices.
- Address the growing perception that support figures are unjustifiably high.

What Local Churches Can Do

- Pastoral leaders need to be committed to mission.

- Develop a “draft” by identifying and developing missionary candidates.
- Work at developing open and trusting relationships with agency leaders.
- Expect church leaders to take responsibility for world evangelism.
- Develop a short-term and long-term strategic policy and plan for missions.
- Meet with individual missionaries to discuss his or her ministry, goals and personal problems.
- Have a well-educated missions champion.
- Develop a systematic teaching program on mission for the whole congregation.
- Pray regularly for missions.
- Get people personally involved with the missionaries they support.

What Everybody Must Do

- Mutually affirm one another’s unique role.
- Develop a policy of concentration—limit the number of key relationships.
- Affirm the initiating role for both the local church and the mission agency.

Strategic Opportunities for the Canadian Church

Given the changing world picture and the characteristics of our Canadian context, we must ask what unique contribution the Canadian Church can make to the global mission enterprise.

1. Tentmaking

“Tentmakers” are believers who use their professional and working skills in response to God’s call to proclaim Christ cross-culturally. Their work is a vital contribution to unreached people and their societies. As an intentional strategy for penetrating difficult-to-reach cultures, it has a rich biblical and historical pedigree.

Approximately 80 percent of the world’s non-Christian population, in thousands of unreached people groups, live in geo-political areas that restrict access to formal Christian religious workers. To respond to this need hundreds of tentmakers can and must be identified, recruited, trained, deployed, and nurtured in order to allow these unreached a fair chance of access to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Given the growing number of Canadian businesspeople and professionals and their wide acceptance around the world, this avenue of ministry provides a wonderful opportunity for the Canadian church to engage in cutting-edge mission opportunities.

However, in order for this movement to grow significantly, according to Craig Shugart, director of Interserve and other Canadian tentmaking specialists, we must deal with the following four issues:⁴³

- Affirmation of tentmaking as a valid strategy, which merits the widespread endorsement by the evangelical church in Canada;

- Definition of concepts, so as to assist the Church in understanding the issues involved, and facilitating its participation in mobilizing labourers of this kind;
- Standards that need to be set in order to strengthen the integrity of tentmaking as a movement;
- Implementation of strategies to influence the church as widely as possible.

2. Partnership Facilitation

According to Interdev, partnerships provide an active, working forum in which ministries can coordinate their plans and resources and develop a common strategy. Usually partnerships start with limited but highly strategic projects in the beginning which will allow the relevant ministries to actually work together while all other ministries benefit from that cooperation. As the partnership grows in maturity, task forces or working groups of ministries typically begin to form around issues critical to holistic evangelism and church planting. Often these include Scripture translation/distribution, prayer network development, radio/television/film production and distribution, literature development/distribution, health and educational ministries, local church-planting strategies, etc.⁴⁴

Experience has shown that a partnership requires a facilitator. This person provides leadership to a partnership:

- by being a champion for the cause,
- by calling, organizing, and presiding over the meetings,
- by recognizing and encouraging members' resources, gifts, and concerns,
- with the end result of making it as easy as possible for a diverse group to work together harmoniously.

Canadians are becoming known around the world as effective partnership facilitators. Unfortunately, there are many partnerships that are stalled and other ones that have not yet been launched because of lack of facilitation. churches and agencies need to recruit, train, support, and deploy people in this critical role.

3. Strategic Church Planting

One million new churches were started in 148 countries from 1990 to 2000.⁴⁵ DAWN Ministries staff person Danie Vermeulen writes about the importance of engaging in strategic church planting.

Show me a denomination in decline and I will show you a denomination without a church planting vision. Show me a country where the Christian population is stagnant or in decline and I will show you the denominations within it, with no church planting vision. It stands to reason. Yet, there are now numerous countries that show major evangelical growth since the denominations and church groups settled on a specific national church planting goal. Examples of these are the Philippines, China, Brazil (in fact most of Latin America), Ghana, and Zimbabwe. In every continent of the world there are church planting movements breaking through the barriers of evil resistance, bringing the glory of the Lord, the incarnate presence of Christ, into their communities.⁴⁶

The Canadian Church can contribute to this strategic church planting movement by investing its financial resources in national ministries that are involved in strategic church planting efforts. In addition, we can send missionaries to support these existing church planting movements and send cross-cultural church planters to serve on teams to plant churches among people groups where the church has not yet been established.

4. Leadership Development

One of the crying needs that we hear from around the world is that more must be done to train and develop leaders. Why is this such a need? Think for a moment on these realities: it is estimated that an average of 100,000 churches are planted each year, and 176,000 new believers are added to the global Church each day. Yet only 10 percent will be trained through formal programs; 80 to 90 percent will be trained through “non-formal” methods. About 95 percent of today’s pastoral leaders lack basic formation and tools to effectively equip their congregations, and approximately 2 million pastoral leaders lack essential training!⁴⁷

One of the most important investments the Canadian church can make is in the development and training of national leaders. Helping fund seminaries, training institutions, and non-formal leadership programs can be leveraged into influencing entire nations. Also there are a growing number of short-term opportunities where Canadian pastors, educators, and ministry leaders can be involved in teaching assignments and mentoring opportunities.

5. Partnering with the National Church

There are tremendous changes taking place in world missions today. In many places western missionaries are unable to preach the gospel openly and in other places, using western missionaries in front-line evangelism is not the best option. International Needs is convinced the emergence today of outstanding national leadership--especially in terms of front-line evangelism and the development of ministries that indigenise the gospel--is one of the exciting moves of the Spirit of God in the developing world and Eastern Europe. They believe a priority for churches and Christians in the developed world in the 21st century is linkage with these nationals. In discussing the validity of supporting indigenous missionaries and ministries, two concerns are often raised—accountability and dependency.

Accountability

Many mission organizations feel that the only way to assure accountability of a ministry is to have control over it. However, fifty years of experience has taught Partners International that it is definitely possible to ensure accountability of an indigenous partner ministry without having to control it. Partners International has learned that the following six basic characteristics of a ministry can give us confidence that it will fulfill its commitments in a partnership.⁴⁸

- An accountability structure, such as a board of directors or equivalent.
- Goals and objectives that are clear, measurable and achievable.
- Written policies and procedures to guide its staff.
- Adequate personnel.
- Local credibility.

- Meeting previous commitments.

Without mutual accountability a healthy relationship is not possible, so Partners International takes care to establish and nurture relationships with these principles in mind.

Dependence

Interdependence is a fact of life. The actions of any one person will ultimately affect others in some way. Families and organizations cease to function without simple dependence on others. Some dependencies create harm; alcoholism and dysfunctional families standing near the head of the list.

In order to prevent the growth of unhealthy dependence among our partners ministries, Daniel Rickert of Eastern College has helped develop the following principles.⁴⁹

They work with organizations who agree to pursue mutual accountability with us.

- They don't send money directly to individuals
- They don't finance pastors or local churches
- They don't give resources based only on need
- They don't underwrite 100 percent of a ministry's need

With these principles helping frame our partnerships with the national church we can begin to explore strategic collaborative opportunities.

6. Encourage emerging mission leaders

At the Emerging Leaders Forum, held at GodsMission Conference in 2001, Hasnah Burdge and Matthew Gibbons led a group of younger leaders in an honest discussion of leadership concerns for their generation.

This group of leaders identified what they believe emerging leaders look like and what influence their ministry decisions.⁵⁰

What do Emerging Leaders look like?

- While acknowledging all generations see themselves as unique, there is deep, unique change happening in world at this time:
- Emerging leaders don't look the same as in past (Where are the Billy Graham's of tomorrow?" may be the wrong question)
- Mission being birthed out of community-orientation, technology. . .
- Assumption of a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural context, need to do holistic mission. . .
- Emerging leaders are not just "young" in age and experience but cultural diverse.
- Emerging leaders are global thinkers.
- Emerging leaders with pioneering spirit.
- Emerging leaders are more peer-mentor orientated.

- Emerging leaders are more team-oriented vs. authoritarian oriented.

At the end of the conference these younger leaders wanted to communicate the following to the rest of the delegates at this largest gathering of North American mission leaders held in over 40 years.

- We affirm Godsmission.com seeking unity, collaboration, sharing ideas and resources.
- Share your failures with us. Explain to us how you ended up “here” organizationally and as leaders. Undoubtedly, you probably have a different vision as to what “there” looked like when you started as young leaders. We desire to hear how you learned from your mistakes so we too can do likewise.
- Trust us; give us a “parents blessing”, then let us go but don’t abandon us—we don’t want to do this alone.
- We realize we need humility, trust and flexibility to listen too.
- Authority, responsibility—give it, but be there when we fall, because we will!! [Lon’s comment—“form a ‘heat shield”]
- You inspire us by your walk, perseverance and vision (even though we may not necessarily walk down your road or follow your vision.) THANK-YOU!
- We realize it’s easier to criticize if we don’t have a track record. Be patient with us.
- Resources that are “held in trust” by the church, organizations, need to be released.
- Intuitively missiological—Cultural pluralists (not religious pluralists). Laity living, serving in global context, asking missiological questions of faith, vocation, lifestyle, justice, reconciliation, etc.
- Mentoring can be a two-way street—despite age, inexperience, we can share, have positive things to give back and enhance you.
- It helps if mentor/teacher as also mentor/learner.
- We affirm unique place, vision, history, gift to the Kingdom of the organization from different era’s/generations. (There is room/space/need for all of them)

Can we in the Canadian church embrace these recommendations? If we are willing to do so it will create a whole new atmosphere in our global mission enterprise.

Integral Mission

The Micah Network is a coalition of evangelical churches and agencies from around the world committed to integral mission. In September 2001 they convened a gathering of 140 leaders of Christian organizations involved with the poor from 50 countries to listen to God and each other for mutual learning, encouragement and strengthening as we serve the cause of the kingdom of God among the poor.

Out of this gathering came the Micah Declaration 51 which is a powerful challenge for the Church to engage in Integral Mission.

In part the declaration reads,

Integral mission or holistic transformation is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world we betray the word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the word of God we have nothing to bring to the world. Justice and justification by faith, worship and political action, the spiritual and the material, personal change and structural change belong together. As in the life of Jesus, being, doing and saying are at the heart of our integral task.

We call one another back to the centrality of Jesus Christ. His life of sacrificial service is the pattern for Christian discipleship. In his life and through his death Jesus modeled identification with the poor and inclusion of the other. On the cross God shows us how seriously he takes justice, reconciling both rich and poor to himself as he meets the demands of his justice. We serve by the power of the risen Lord through the Spirit as we journey with the poor, finding our hope in the subjection of all things under Christ and the final defeat of evil. We confess that all too often we have failed to live a life worthy of this gospel.

The declaration ends with “Our prayer is that in our day and in our different contexts we may be able to do what the Lord requires of us: to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God.”

This should be the prayer of Christian in Canada.

Conclusion:

As we in Canada reflect about our role in global mission, I am reminded of the insightful words of Scottish missiologist, Rose Dowsett. She reminds us what it means think globally and strategically, “having the whole people of God, from wherever, joining hands to respond to the Great Commission as a whole-family calling.”⁵²

Dowsett rightly asserts “We need once again to remember that God calls us to engage in world mission not out of human confidence, but out of weakness and vulnerability, dependent not on what we design but on what God mercifully does.”

I conclude with a thought from Tim Dearborn, “Christian mission is not our arrogant pursuit of other people to make them like us. Rather, it is our participation in God's pursuit of all people to make them like him, and their lives like his.”⁵³

May we in the Canadian church pursue such a vision!

(Editors note: Due to the breadth of Geoff Tunnicliffe’s contribution, the remaining section of the chapter has been published on www.outreach.ca/don. Please review additional insights and suggestions there.)

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Chapter Notes

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