

# Kingdom Mission: DNA of the Missionary Task

## PROLOGUE

### A. Revolutionary Change in World History

Europe was a dark continent until the 15th century. Jacques Barzun, Professor of Cultural History at Columbia University, New York, in his book *From Dawn to Decadence*, said, “The Modern Era begins, characteristically, with a revolution.” He again said that the West was torn apart from the time of Martin Luther’s Ninety-Five Theses, which is commonly called the Protestant Reformation, but the train of events starting early in the 16th century and ending—if indeed it has ended—more than a century later, has all the features of a revolution. Since that revolution of religion in Western Christendom, the division of Europe through endless revolutions in the West has continued. It was also extended, as colonialism, to the African continent and huge Asian territories.

Stormy contrary winds blew from Asia. Since the end of the 19th century, a little island kingdom in North Eastern Asia, Japan grew rapidly as a super dominating power of Asia. The Ching Dynasty of great China was defeated by Japan, in 1895. Russia, a giant country of Eurasia, was also defeated by Japan in 1905, which began dominating the Yi Dynasty of the Korean peninsula, becoming a supreme power in Asia Pacific. A little island kingdom, Japan, emerged victorious from decisive struggle with Western powers.

### B. Great Awakening in America, D. L. Moody and John R. Mott

A great historian, Kenneth Scott LaTourette, said that the 20th century is the great century of the expansion of Christianity and of Western culture. However, the expansion of Protestant Christianity began in the 18th century, as a result of William Carey’s *ENQUIRY* in England and of the Great Awakening in America.

According to Jacques Barzun, a great cultural historian, “From the start, religion had been an intellectual force; in the 18th C, it exerted a renewed influence on the broadest class. America, like England, witnessed a resurgence of religious passion, which put forward old ideas: consciousness of sin and recognition of God’s mercy; self-reform imperative to ensure grace and salvation. The movement was known in England as Methodism, in America as the Great Awakening.”

- World history in the 18th century shifted significantly, as the English colony in America chose independence as the United States of America in 1776. The French revolution ran from 1789 to 1793.
- While these changes of world history were taking place, John and Charles Wesley in England, and Whitefield in America, were leading great evangelism and mass revival movements.
- In 1792, William Carey in England wrote *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*.
- In America, D. L. Moody’s Summer Bible School for university students was held at Mount Hermon, Massachusetts in July 1886. That was the cradle of the Student Volunteer Movement which placed the greatest emphasis on world mission. Among over two hundred students, John R. Mott was seated at the feet of Dwight Moody.
- Moody’s greatest impact upon John R. Mott: John R. Mott inherited the best of Moody’s outlook. The warm-hearted spirit and enthusiasm of evangelical Christianity and world missions shaped his deepest personal predictions. John R. Mott became an advocate of world mission and made a world voyage from 1901 to 1909, three times around the globe from North America to Great Britain, France, Italy, South Africa, India, China, Korea, Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, Scandinavia, Russia and Eastern Europe.

Three years earlier than Edinburgh 1910, the International Conference of World Christian Students Movement was held in Tokyo in 1907. John R. Mott, who was preparing the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference, launched the most dramatic international conference in Tokyo in 1907. It was the first Christian international conference in Asia.

The Conference was held from April 1 to 6 with 627 delegates from 25 countries. The greeting message was delivered by the Mayor of Tokyo. Messages were also sent by President Theodore Roosevelt of the United States and the Japanese Minister of Education and Foreign Affairs. Speakers were Professor Alexander Macalister of Cambridge University and Dr. Uemura of Tokyo Theological Seminary, and others from Germany, Holland, the United States, China, India and Africa. John R. Mott delivered the closing message. The Interpreter for John R. Mott was the Honorable Dr. Tchi Ho Yun, a Korean delegate and former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Yi Dynasty of Korea, who was fluent also in English and Chinese, as well as Japanese.

John R. Mott wrote that the distinctive features of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference were recommended by the model of the Tokyo 1907 Conference.

## **I. Genes of Christianity and the Historical Regeneration of the DNA of Mission**

Today, we as global leaders of mission structures are here to celebrate the centennial of Edinburgh 1910. The theme given to me is “KINGDOM MISSION: DNA of the Missionary Task.”

Let me first discuss what is DNA and then move to the historical regeneration of the DNA of mission.

What is DNA? DNA is Deoxyribonucleic Acid which contains the genetic instructions used in the development and functioning of all known living organisms and some viruses. The main role of DNA molecules is the long-term storage of information. How did Christianity produce DNA in the history of mission? DNA of fig trees produces figs. DNA of olive trees produces olives. Those who have the DNA of the apostolic ways of mission will conceive apostolic mission and reproduce apostolic churches. Let us examine how the genes and DNA of Apostolic mission have shifted throughout the two thousand years of the history of mission.

### **A. AD 30–313, DNA of Apostolic and Patriarchal Mission**

- (1) Genes of the Apostolic Mission were carried by the homeless, stateless and poorest of scattered refugees.
- (2) Apostolic Mission was passed from oppressed powerless nations to wealthy powerful nations and a ruling superpower empire.
- (3) Apostolic Mission was Itinerating Mission, crossing in all the directions of every culture.
- (4) The center of Apostolic DNA Mission was the eschatological mission which proclaims the Second Coming of Jesus.
- (5) The DNA of Apostolic Mission survived martyrdom.

### **B. AD 313–550, DNA of the Roman Emperor’s Mission**

- (1) AD 313, through the Milan edict of Constantine, Christian mission became the compulsory mission of Roman Emperors.
- (2) The Emperor’s Mission was a conqueror’s mission, using ruling power and armed force.
- (3) The Emperor’s Mission tended to make Christianity a syncretistic religion, often mixing it with heathen religions.
- (4) The Emperor’s Mission created many heterodoxies.
- (5) At the center of the Emperor’s Mission were endless theological disputes.

### **C. AD 550–1600, the DNA of Papal Mission in the Medieval Roman Catholic Church**

- (1) This was compulsive mission for the expansion of Papal Roman power into the heathen world.
- (2) It was a crusade mission for conquest of the Islamic world by the combined powers of Pope and Emperor.

- (3) It was the Holy Roman Empire which oriented controlled power toward secular mission.
- (4) Monasteries were the center of Medieval Roman Catholic mission.
- (5) Central to the Medieval Catholic mission was Glory for Roe; Gold and God were mingled together.

#### **D. AD 1600–1750, the DNA of Mission in the Reformation Era**

- (1) The central idea of mission in the reformation era was the authority of the Bible.
- (2) The mission began translation of the Bible from Latin to the other European languages such as German and English.
- (3) It was a mission for the liberation of the church from Latin culture, making it understandable to every culture of the nations.
- (4) The mission was Gospel centered, emphasizing salvation by faith

#### **E. AD 1750–1945, the DNA of Mission in a Colonial Age**

- (1) It was Mission from Western Christendom to their colonies in Africa, with colonization of Asian nations.
- (2) The Colonial mission included Conquest, Ruling, and Exploiting, and these were mingled together with mission.
- (3) Mission was subverted by substituting Westernization for Christianization.
- (4) Mission was the denominational expansion of Western Christendom instead of the planting of a national church.
- (5) The peculiarity of Colonial mission was this mixture of Colony, Commerce and Christianity together.

#### **F. AD 1945 – 2000 Shifting DNA of Mission After the End of the Second World War**

- (1) Western missionary Moratorium from de-colonized Asia and Africa.
- (2) Formation of World Council of Churches, 1948.
- (3) Restriction of missionary entrance into newly independent decolonized countries.
- (4) Dissolution of International Missionary Council, 1960.
- (5) Regeneration of the Evangelical Mission Forces, 1966.
- (6) Arising of new mission forces from the non-Western world, 1960.
- (7) Centrality of mission character was transformation of power and shifting the paradigm of mission.

#### **G. AD 2000 – Current DNA of New Mission Forces from Non-Western Christendom**

- (1) From the age of Western Christendom shifting to the age of a global religion.

In 1960, among the total Christian population of the world, only 30% were in the non-Western world; 70% were in the Western world. However, by the year 2000, 78% of the world Christian population was in the non-Western world and only 22% of the Christian population was in the Western world. According to Bryant L. Myers, in “The New Context of World Mission,” an article in the Mission Handbook, 1998~2000, the Christian population of the non-Western world has increased to five hundred million, which is five times the size of the Western Christian population, which is a little over one hundred million.

- (2) Shifting the Center of Mission from the Western World to the Non-Western World.

In the 1970s, the number of non-Western missionaries was less than 1,000, while Western missionaries numbered nearly 60,000. But by the end of the 20th century, the number of missionaries from the non-Western world had far exceeded the number of missionaries from the Western world. While the growth rate in the number of Western missionaries had only doubled, now 120,000, up from 60,000, the growth rate of non-Western missionaries was over 180 times, which means 180,000 missionaries, up from 1000.

(3) Shifting the ecclesiastical view from the institutional church to a non-institutional, churchless Christianity and the cell church.

According to The World Christian Encyclopedia, there were over two hundred million believers existing outside of institutional churches across the world in AD 2000.

- In India, over twenty four million, with hundreds of thousands Bible believers among Hindi peoples.
- In Africa, over fifty two million indigeneous Christian communities outside of institutional churches.
- In mainland China, more than seventy million Christians in the house churches, which are outside of the official Three-Self churches of China. Ralph Winter began to refer to this as “the coming era of churchless Christianity.” These new trends of non-traditional believers’ fellowships are the beginning signs of a regeneration of the Apostolic DNA of New Testament churches.

### III. DNA of the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference

A. The worldview of the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference was dualistic, dividing our one world into a Christian world, in contrast to the Non-Christian world. Because of this dualistic worldview, the main theme of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference was “carrying the Gospel to the Non-Christian world.” Not to the whole world. At the end, the conference adopted two different official messages. One was to the church in the Christian world. The other was to the Christian church in the Non-Christian world. That was very much apart from a Biblical worldview and from the Great Commission which was given to the apostles: “you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judah and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

As we see both from the theme and the messages of the conference, Edinburgh 1910 was lacking in a one-globe worldview. Since Edinburgh 1910, Western Christendom has always considered itself as the sending church and the non-Western world was considered to have the receiving church. This exclusive view of the non-Christian world was passed on until the end of the Second World War. That was why the Berlin Congress of World Evangelism in 1966 needed to proclaim the theme of “One Race, One Gospel, One Task” to shift away from the dualistic worldview of Edinburgh 1910, thus restoring a Biblical worldview.

Carl F. Henry, Chairman of World Congress on Evangelism, said “all men are one in humanity created by God Himself – we recognized the failure of many of us -- to speak with sufficient clarity and force upon the unity of the human race.” He also said that we need to surmount the ugly barriers that separate Christians as believers. “We pray for signs of victory. And wait and watch for man-made walls to tumble – walls segregating races, walls dividing nations, walls embittering social classes. We who honor the God of the Bible are expected above all else to expose the wall of hostility that parts modern man from his Eternal Maker; we are expected to disclose how Jesus Christ can level this most distressing of all barriers.”

B. The Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference formed a Continuation Committee to prepare the way for the International Missionary Council charged with actualizing the spirit of Edinburgh. However, the Continuation Committee was paralyzed by the First World War which broke out in 1914.

After the war, John R. Mott, as the Chairman of the Continuation Committee, expected to launch the International Missionary Council in 1920. Finally in 1921, the International Missionary Council (IMC) was organized at Lake Mohonk, New York. Seven years after that, the first IMC Conference was held at Jerusalem in 1928. The next one was at Madras, India in 1938. Finally IMC was dissolved and merged with WCC at New Delhi, India at 1961.

The first regeneration of the DNA of Edinburgh was the IMC, and the IMC was dissolved in 1961. Another stream of DNA from Edinburgh 1910 was the “Faith and Order Conference,” which was organized at Lausanne in 1927. Another inherited cell of DNA of Edinburgh 1910 was the “Life and Work Conference” which was organized at Stockholm in 1925.

These three regenerations of the DNA of Edinburgh 1910 were finally merged to form the World

Council of Churches. And the evangelical stem cell of DNA from Edinburgh 1910 was transmitted to evangelical mission forces through a regeneration process since 1966, in conferences at Wheaton, Berlin and Lausanne.

The dualistic worldview of Edinburgh 1910 had continuously manipulated the division of Christianity. Finally in 1974, at the Lausanne Congress (and its successor conferences), a new voice arose from newly emerging mission leaders in the non-western world.

In 1974, I was appointed as a plenary speaker on mission strategy at the Lausanne Congress. My paper at Lausanne, entitled “Innovation of Mission Structure for the New World,” I stressed the need to move away from the one-way mission of the Western world to a two-way approach to missions. I also emphasized that both East and West have needs and resources, and input and output must therefore come from both sides. The East and the West should join hands in order to research and analyze the availability of resources and the areas of need, and in this way to produce new forces for mission from both worlds.

### **The Concept of Innovation of World Mission Structure**

C. In 1980, the cells of DNA from Edinburgh 1910 were simultaneously on display in three different attempts at analysis of the mission challenge: at the Mission and Evangelism Conference of WCC, Melbourne, Australia; the Consultation on World Evangelization, Pattaya, Thailand; and the World Consultation on Frontier Missions, Edinburgh, Scotland.

## **IV. How to Regenerate Apostolic DNA of Mission in the Future**

I recently shared some of this thinking with a publisher of a leading pastors’ magazine. He said that many evangelicals talk about the Apostolic Christianity, but they are not sure what Apostolic Christianity is really like.

Most theologians and preachers know well the stories of Apostolic Christianity and the early churches, and also their ways of mission better than we think. If we have any virtue it is this – that in a world that has lost apostolic faith, we cling firmly to the faith of the Apostles. In this Tokyo conference, so help us God, let’s regenerate the DNA of Apostolic mission for our future.

The DNA of Apostolic mission was given to them by the Great Commission of Jesus.

- (1) The DNA of Apostolic mission made them to be witnesses of Jesus who will come again as King of the Kingdom of God.
- (2) The Apostles were not commissioned as social reformers, nor as rehabilitators of the nation of Israel.
- (3) The charge in the Commission was not only to the lost sheep of one’s own home country, but also to the whole world, to the whole creation, and into the uttermost part of the world (Act 1:8).
- (4) Jesus ordered the Apostles to wait for the Spirit’s Coming. The Great Commission of Jesus Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit and promised that they would be clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49).

The Apostolic DNA of mission was inherited, therefore, from the Holy Ghost. We can affirm that all human efforts in mission, whether in the general operation of mission or in special ministries and projects of witness, are bound to be ineffective without the work of the Holy Spirit.

In modern missiology, there is too much stress on man-made theories, or strategies which depend on the intellectual discovery of methodologies. The mandate of the Apostolic DNA of the missionary task can be learned from the Great Commission. The calling of the Apostles was to proclaim the forgiveness of sins, on the basis of Christ’s saving Name, on the condition of repentance, to all the nations, and to wait for the final judgment and Coming Kingdom of God. We must readily confess that modern mission has been guilty of many failures and it has distorted the message of witness to the fact that Jesus is coming again very soon.

## V. Kingdom Mission and New Christianity

A healthy distrust of world power and success is all the more necessary given the remarkable reversals of Christian futures over the ages. Numerous times in history, the faith has seemed to be on the verge of extinction.

As I have analyzed the historical regeneration of the DNA of mission in the first section of this presentation, from AD 324 to 1000, Christianity shifted to become the religion of emperors and the domination of Papacy. In the period from AD 1000 to 1800, there was a stubborn faith of exploited subject peoples, or barbarians of the irrelevant fringes of the great civilizations. In AD 1900, the power of Euro-American Christendom ruled the world.

In a post-Christendom era, beginning in the 21st century and to year 2500, what attitude should we take? Some prophetic scholars are saying that the future world will be an era beyond Christianity. Ralph D. Winter, in his article “The Future of Evangelicals in Mission” expressed his view of the “Kingdom Mission” as follows: “Note also that this perspective is no longer a tension between God and Man, as our Reformation heritage tends to portray, but is a much larger war between the Kingdom of God-plus His-people against the Kingdom of darkness. However, seeking to destroy the ‘dominion’ of Satan must not be confused with the tendency to seek the ‘dominion’ of society by the saints through worldly power, which is sometimes called ‘Dominion’ philosophy.” And “By contrast in Heaven’s war against Satan our priority is to recruit soldiers, freeing people from ‘the dominion of Satan,’ (Acts 26:18), by winning their allegiance to a supreme deity whose attributes are portrayed definitively in Jesus Christ. But even that is a priority which is merely ‘prior’ if we are going to accumulate active, effective soldiers. Obviously, recruitment before battle is a priority, but merely a priority. As these new soldiers, with their transformed lives, then seek along with Christ and by the empowering grace of God to ‘destroy the works of the Devil’ (1 Jn. 3:8), their good deeds will, as in Matt. 5:16 ‘glorify their father in heaven.’ These ‘communicating’ deeds will then validate and empower further evangelism that will be able to gain still more recruits for the battle of the kingdom. But note: merely recruiting and not battling does not win wars.”

Ralph D. Winter also emphasized his view of Kingdom Mission as below: “I believe that the mission movement – more so than the church movement and considerably more so than the secular world – holds the key to a great new burst of credibility which could win new millions. An unexpected trend of current philanthropy clearly indicates the potential assistance of people in high places who grow in a highly Christianized society, even if they haven’t regularly gone to church. But what is crucially true is that they need to understand that their efforts will ultimately be dismayingly ineffective without a certain minimum of transformed individuals whose character is essential to their major efforts. They need to realize that missions have a virtual monopoly on transformed individuals who can be trusted.” And he concluded that “the works of Christ in the gospel, Christ’s references to the coming of the kingdom of heaven, and the present outworking in this world of the ‘Thy will be done’ phrase of the Lord’s Prayer are actually echoed by the Great Commission itself. Looking closely at Matt. 28:20, it isn’t just the teachings that Jesus commissions His disciples to pass on. It is the actual enforcing, so to speak, of obedience to those teachings, ‘teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.’ This implies the conquest of evil when the Lord’s Prayer is read in this light: ‘Thy will be done on earth.’”

“We must not forget that God is the one who asked us to pray, ‘Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’” Thus Ralph Winter emphasized the Kingdom Mission as both social and personal transformation.

### A. Jesus Christ Knocking on the Door from Outside of the church

According to the witness of the Apostle John, the church in the last days of the world will be “neither cold nor hot and Jesus is standing outside of the door and knocking.” That means no room for Christ, no place for the word of God in the church at the end of the world. The Apostle John saw an open door in heaven and heard the voice saying, “come up here and I will show you what must happen after this.”

## **B. The Decline of Old Christianity and the Ascension of a New Christianity**

According to Philip Jenkins, “one central fact in the changing religious picture is massive relative decline in the proportion of the world’s people who live in the rationally advanced nations (in Europe and America).

Philip Jenkins again said that when the Western Christian leaders look at the non-Western world, they see what they want to see. He also said, “Who knows, [as the] Non-Western world changes, perhaps some of their churches too will someday favor ordaining women, and even blessing the marriages of homosexuals. If a single lesson emerges from all the recent scholarship on the rising churches, it is they define themselves according to their own standards despite all the eager efforts to shape them in the mold of the Old Christendom.”

The new streams of Kingdom mission of the future will not be from the old Christendom but from the new Christendom. And the center of that mission will be eschatological mission until He comes on earth for the final judgment of the world. The missionary task in the final age of mission is not to do project enterprise mission but to proclaim clearly that He is Coming Soon! And to prepare to do battle with the work of Satan, to defeat Satan.

We are in a tumultuous time. Much of the world is becoming increasingly dark as we move toward the future. Most of the peoples are living and moving without clear direction. The only light in this hopeless dark world is the Word of God which was given to us to proclaim to every people, every language and every culture of the world.

Many prophetic writers have called our time the end of the world. This is very much true. At the brink of the last age of an old world, we should not attempt earthly, humanitarian ways of mission which we were accustomed to historically. The Kingdom mission is shifting back to the Biblical and Apostolic way of mission.

The Apostle John saw a new heaven and a new earth; we too must proclaim the coming of a new heaven and a new earth. The old heaven and the old earth will disappear. The Apostle John saw “a great multitude that no one could count, peoples and languages, standing before the throne and in the front of the lamb.”

What will be the DNA of the missionary task in the future? What should be our voice of proclamation in the future? We must proclaim that the old things will pass away very soon. There will be no more works of Satan. A new heaven and a new earth, a paradise, will be coming soon. His angel said that this “must happen soon.” Jesus Himself says “I am coming soon. Happy are those who obey the prophetic words in this book.”

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