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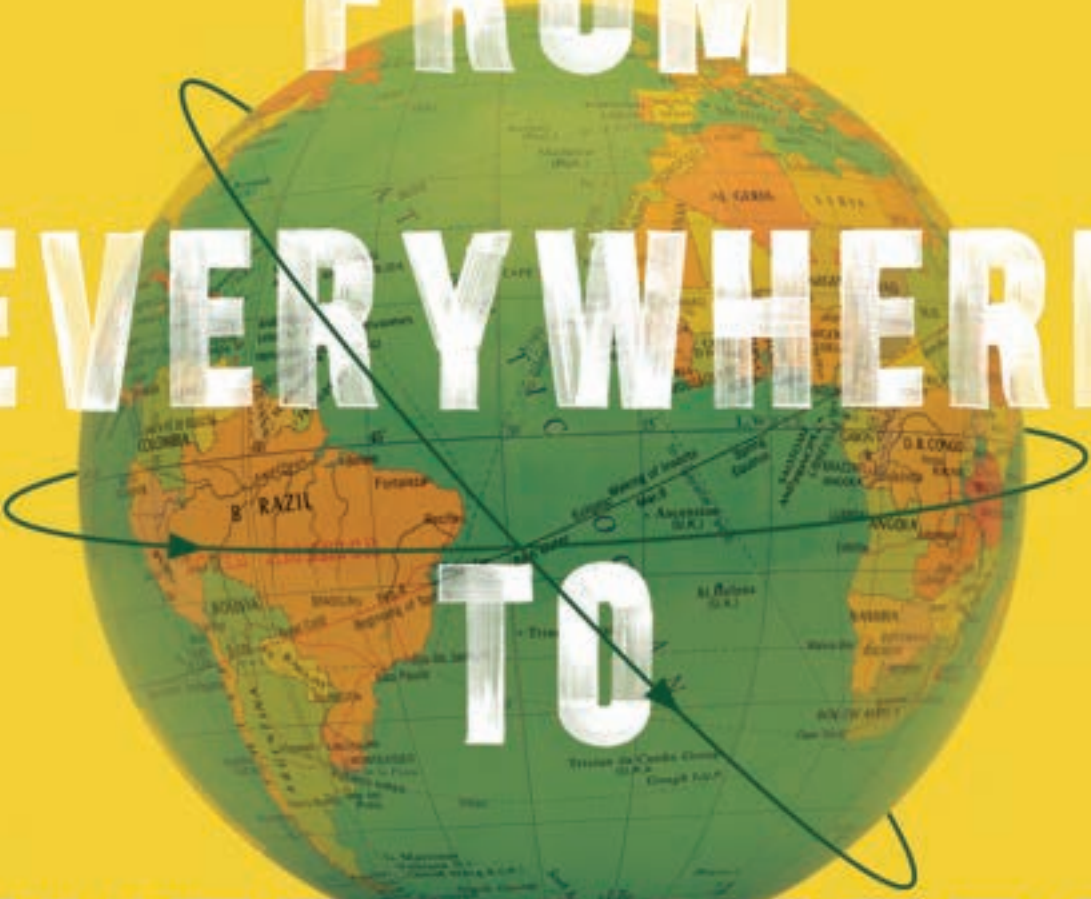
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**FROM
EVERYWHERE
TO
EVERYWHERE**

How the Global Church Refines Our Vision of the Gospel

JOSEPH D'SOUZA

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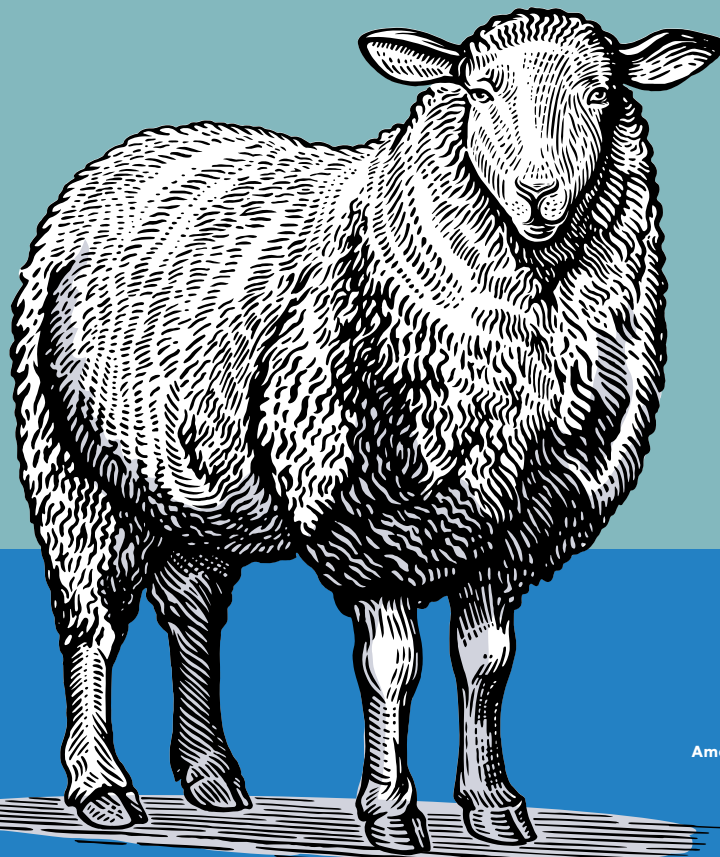
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CHA20667 _1124 © 2024 World Vision, Inc.

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. Motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ, we work alongside the poor and oppressed as a demonstration of God's unconditional love for all people.



Evangelicals

The Magazine of the National Association of Evangelicals



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Evangelicals magazine comes to you as one of many NAE resources to help leaders and their communities navigate complexity with biblical clarity. NAE member institutions can receive bulk subscriptions for their ministries at no charge. Learn more at [NAE.org/membership](https://www.nae.org/membership). To receive a personal subscription, we invite you to partner with us at [NAE.org/give](https://www.nae.org/give).

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With Support From **Care Net**



“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...” (Revelation 7:9). For good reason, this often-repeated passage brings great hope and elicits deep longing for followers of Christ. This magnificent worship service is a moment that we all look forward to experiencing ... someday.

But in profound ways, we can experience foretastes of that day — here and now. For starters, the nations have come to us. There’s no denying the impact of globalization on the United States, and in other countries around the world. Immigrant believers are transforming our communities, adding vitality to our churches, and being a visible reminder of our God who is Lord of all. They are a gift to us from the global church.

In addition, we can witness what God is doing around the world. We can partake in the global Body of Christ in ways that our forebears in the faith could have only dreamed of. Listening and learning from members of the global church is one click away on Zoom or through WhatsApp. More and more voices from the Majority World are being lifted up.

Let’s hear them. We can also pray for — and stand with — brothers and sisters around the world. This is a great honor that we too often neglect.

This magazine edition brings global church conversations to the American church. Of course, many in the United States are connected with Christians around the world. We pray that whether minimally or profoundly engaged with the global church, this edition will encourage you to take another step to explore the depth of resources and encouragement that can be found with our brothers and sisters around the world. We have much to gain. **E**

Rest As a Weapon

“ Rest is often what we do when worn out, spent or have nothing left to give. But rest as a weapon? Rest as a strategic priority at the top of your game? No way.

This concept is powerful, and based on my own experience of God and living from a healthy soul... I fully agree. Rest is essential to maintaining the right mind/body/spirit posture as we move out into our work.

Rest is key to how we combat the worry, anxiety and fear which accompany attempts at great things.

Once you know how to rest and are properly rested, Graham [Cooke] explains, when faced with a threat, you gain the ability to internally retreat — while remaining present to the challenge. From that quiet place in your soul, a place of belonging and belovedness, God empowers you to respond rather than react out of fear to the challenges you face.”

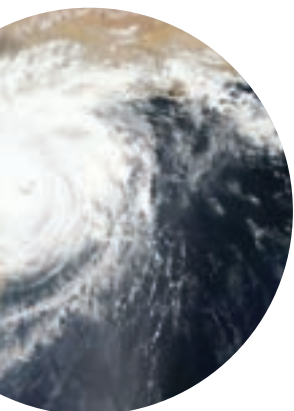
Mindy Caliguire, president of Soul Care, at SoulCare.com



The Church's Response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton

“ What we want to do is empower the local church, which is why we're in a church parking lot. We want to draw the attention to the local church because that's the hope of the world, and it should be the beacon of light in its community. When we land some place, we call on the church volunteers who show up and put on a Convoy of Hope T-shirt, and they're the ones putting a case of water into a car 500 times over eight or nine hours in an afternoon. They're the ones doing the work, and that breaks down the barriers between the community and the church ... and it really allows the local church to serve the community in a way that Jesus intended us to.”

Ethan Forhertz, vice president of public engagement at Convoy of Hope, sharing an update from Sarasota, Florida



Global Connection

“ I was particularly moved by the testimonies of brothers and sisters from the Middle East, who are faithfully following Jesus in the face of tremendous opposition. Their witness is a sobering reminder that the gospel often flourishes most vibrantly in places of suffering.... As the global church, learning from one another, encouraging one another, and partnering together in the mission of God is of great benefit. This is not a time for isolationism but for collaboration. The mission of God is too big for any one nation or denomination to tackle alone. The Lausanne Movement has always been about bringing together diverse voices to work towards the fulfillment of the Great Commission, and that is more critical now than ever before.”

Derwin Gray, lead pastor of Transformation Church, near Charlotte, NC, in Church Leaders

“ The election of Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency evokes mixed reactions. While Trump’s administration generally had a strong stance in favor of religious freedom, his foreign policies toward countries like Bangladesh were often pragmatic rather than overtly focused on the concerns of specific religious minorities. His ‘America First’ approach and his support for religious liberty could signal both positive and challenging implications for Bangladeshi evangelicals.

However, U.S. foreign aid, which sometimes comes with human rights conditions, might not dramatically shift in response to Trump’s priorities, especially if his administration prioritizes national interests over international human rights. Practically, the impact of Trump’s presidency could include increased opportunities for religious NGOs in the form of aid. However, the rise of nationalist and anti-immigrant rhetoric in some Western countries during his tenure could embolden local opposition to evangelical efforts, potentially increasing societal pressure or persecution.”

Philip Adhikary, chairman of Bangladesh Evangelical Alliance, in “What Another Trump Presidency Means to Evangelicals Around the World,” an article by Christianity Today

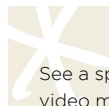


The Church is not to be found at the “center” of a left/right political world. The Church is to be a species of its own kind, confounding left, right and center, finding its identity from the “center” of God’s life in Christ.

Rich Villodas @richvillodas

The National Association of Evangelicals shares what leaders are praying for this election season, including “gospel renewal, discernment for voters, wisdom for leaders, and healing and unity” @NAEvangelicals

Kate Shellnutt @kateshellnutt



See a special post-election video message from NAE President Walter Kim.



The Road to Joy

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EVANGELICAL CALENDAR

Please join the evangelical community at these events hosted by the NAE and its members. **Your prayers are welcome, too.**

Many of these events include downloadable resources for promotion and participation.

JANUARY 27-31, 2025

Christian Student Leadership Conference

Washington, DC

National Association of Evangelicals
NAE.org/csclc

The Christian Student Leadership Conference is for college students who care deeply about today's pressing issues to come learn how to faithfully and effectively offer a Christian witness in public policy.



FEBRUARY 19-21, 2025

ABHE Annual Gathering

Orlando, FL

Association for Biblical Higher Education
ABHE.org/annual-meeting

This annual meeting serves as the rallying point for 200 institutions of biblical higher education in North America. Leaders in biblical higher education gather to confer and sharpen their gifts and abilities.



FEBRUARY 27, 2025

Collegiate Day of Prayer

Across the Country

CollegiateDayOfPrayer.org

There are many ways to join us for this united, multi-generational day of prayer for revival and awakening on college campuses in America.

APRIL 29-MAY 1, 2025

Orange Conference

Atlanta, GA

Orange
TheOrangeConference.com

This three-day event will bring together kids, youth and next-gen ministry leaders for inspiration and practical ideas to maximize impact and sustain ministry.

JANUARY 28-31, 2025

Presidents Conference

Washington, DC

Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
CCCU.org

The Presidents Conference presents the unique opportunity for Christian college and university presidents from around the world to share perspectives, collaborate on solutions, and build relationships.



FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 1, 2025

Gather25

Virtual

Gather25.com

Gather25 is an opportunity for the 2.5 billion believers across the world to gather in prayer, worship and repentance, so that we can go out powerfully and collaboratively to reach the world. It will be a 25-hour global broadcast event telling the story and mission of the global church, by the global church.

FEBRUARY 7-14, 2025

National Marriage Week

Across the Country

NationalMarriageWeekUSA.org

Join with others across the country to organize a marriage event or online programming during the week leading up to Valentine's Day. Focus on practical ways to strengthen marriages in your church and community.

APRIL 29-MAY 1, 2025

The Outcomes Conference

Dallas, TX

Christian Leadership Alliance
OutcomesConference.org

The Outcomes Conference is an experience for nonprofit Christian professionals who want to build mission-critical competencies through expanded leadership training.

MAY 4-6, 2025

EPA Christian Media Convention

Branson, MO

Evangelical Press Association
EPAconvention.com

The annual Evangelical Press Association convention presents an opportunity for Christian communicators to explore new ideas through powerful seminars, workshops, discussion and presentations.

WORTH NOTING


✓ Podcast Series Encourages Christians to Be Peacemakers

This fall, the National Association of Evangelicals released a documentary-style podcast series, *Difficult Conversations*, that shares stories of renowned leaders and everyday changemakers who crossed into enemy territories for the sake of building bridges.


As the country has become increasingly polarized, meaningful conversations between people who disagree may seem like a thing of the past. Is it possible to have difficult conversations with people who see the world differently without sacrificing deep convictions and beliefs? What is the role of Christians in this moment? How can Christians be peacemakers within their churches, and among the larger society?

Hosted by NAE President Walter Kim, *Difficult Conversations* is an exploration of how we ended up so polarized, and how Christians can become the peacemakers that Jesus called blessed. The series features Jonathan Haidt, Dr. Francis Collins, Derwin Gray, Sheila Heen, Amanda Ripley, Kaitlyn Schiess,

Sean McDowell and many others, who share why difficult conversations are so hard, how to have them, and why they matter for the kingdom of God.



EPISODE 1
WHY ARE WE SO POLARIZED?
Difficult Conversations



Listen on your favorite podcast app or on the NAE website.

✓ Meeting Needs in the Name of Jesus

In late September and early October, Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton tore through areas of the southeast. Evangelical denominations, churches and nonprofits rallied to support relief and recovery efforts. In a video update, Walter Kim, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, talked with representatives of two NAE member organizations for an on-the-ground report.

Ethan Forhertz, vice president of public engagement at Convoy of Hope, shared an update from Sarasota, Florida, an area that was hit by both hurricanes. He talked about the ongoing recovery efforts and how local churches have partnered with Convoy of Hope to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Captain Maxie DeBlanc, an emotional and spiritual care officer with The Salvation Army, shared her experience visiting Salvation Army feeding sites and ministry with disaster survivors. Both shared specific ways that Christians

can be praying for the physical and emotional needs and the ongoing recovery efforts in the southeast.



Watch the video update and subscribe to the NAE's YouTube channel, so you don't miss other updates.

✓ Faith Leaders From All 50 States Affirm Evangelical Views on Immigration

In the middle of the 2024 presidential election season, evangelical leaders from across the country sent a letter to President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris, affirming core evangelical views on immigration. The letter initiative was organized by World Relief, the humanitarian arm of the National Association of Evangelicals. The letter appeared in newspapers in North Carolina, Minnesota, Ohio, Oklahoma and Wisconsin, as well as on social media.

“Politicians and journalists are sometimes surprised to hear the thoughtful, nuanced evangelical perspectives on immigration policy,” said NAE President Walter Kim. “Most evangelicals support neither open borders nor mass deportation.”

Based on recent Lifeway Research polling, the letter outlined three key convictions that shape evangelical positions on immigration policy:

- Immigrants, like all human beings, are made in God’s image and have innate dignity.
- Borders should be orderly and secure.
- Immigration policies should prioritize family unity.

The letter urged candidates to use these biblically informed principles to inform the rhetoric they use in discussions around immigration and to guide the policy solutions they craft. The NAE has long believed that Scripture teaches us that anyone in need is our neighbor (Luke 10:29-37) and that we are to welcome the stranger in our midst (Matthew 25:31-40).



Read the letter at [NAE.org/updates](https://www.nae.org/updates).

✓ Prayer for President-Elect Trump and All Elected Leaders

The National Association of Evangelicals calls on Americans to join in prayer for the country’s newly-elected leaders, including President-elect Donald Trump, Vice President-elect J.D. Vance, and all those chosen by voters to serve in Congress, state and local offices.

“Elections inevitably produce winners and losers,” said NAE President Walter Kim. “We pray for God’s guidance and blessing on those who have won, that they will be good stewards of the responsibilities entrusted to them, and that they will listen and speak to all Americans, including those who feel left out or unheard. We pray for consolation for those who lost their races, as they seek new ways to constructively bless the nation with their time and talents.”



Watch a special message from NAE President Walter Kim on the election results.



Terri Miller is global church representative for the National Association of Evangelicals.

The Vibrancy of the Global Church



If 100 Christians represented all of global Christianity, 67 would live in Asia, Africa, Latin America or Oceania, while 33 would live in Europe or Northern America. Most would be found in urban areas (65) as opposed to rural (35). Linguistically, 16 would speak Spanish as their mother tongue, 10 English, 8 Portuguese, 5 Russian and 3 Mandarin Chinese. Most (64) would be between the ages of 15–64, while 26 would be under 15. Eleven Christians would be illiterate, and 35 would have little to no access to secondary education.... Fourteen would have no access to safe water, and five would have malaria. Most Christians (79) would live in countries with moderate to high corruption; 35 would live in countries with low development. **A typical Christian today is a non-white woman living in the Global South, with lower-than-average levels of societal safety and proper health care.** This represents a vastly different typical Christian than that of 100 years ago, who was likely a white, affluent European.

Dr. Gina A. Zurlo, co-director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, in 2000 report, "The World as 100 Christians"

What a time to be alive! While my thoughts may selfishly drift to a world where I experience the modern conveniences of everything from free and almost instant global communication to Lasik surgery that made my (almost) blind eyes see, I am also amazed and encouraged by the beautiful diversity and complexity of the global church. Reminders of this come monthly as I connect with regional leaders of the different evangelical alliances from around the world and were on full display at the recent Lausanne Congress in Seoul participants as members from 202 countries and five generations conversed, fellowshipped, reasoned and worshipped together.

As I think about the global church, so many things come to mind: research and data, beauty and mystery, conflicts and

hardship, names and faces. All this because the global church is:

- **Young — and old.** God continues to build his Church! New people have access to Scripture, and missionaries pioneer to reach those who have never heard the name of Jesus. At the same time, the Church continues and even flourishes in families and communities for decades and centuries. It is incredible to think that for more than 2,000 years, God's people have met together and worshipped him.
- **Joyful.** The people of God have much to celebrate. They've been forgiven, and they are being transformed. Socioeconomic status is not a determinant of God's grace and its expression. His praises are being spoken



Listen to our conversation with Michael Oh, CEO of the Lausanne Movement at NAE.org/ohpodcast.



and sung in the lowliest and loftiest of situations and circumstances.

- **Complex.** One of my main takeaways from years of travel and living cross-culturally is that the kingdom of God is bigger, grander and far more diverse than we can fathom. The global church is messy — just as our local churches are, filled with sinners working out their salvation with fear and trembling. It is a cacophony of different denominations and branches, who may not see face to face on earth, but will spend eternity together worshipping the God we love and serve.
- **Suffering.** At my Lausanne Conference discussion table were participants for whom choosing to follow Jesus means risking their lives. Millions of Christ-followers live in contexts that are hostile to their beliefs and many must sacrifice goals, opportunities, relationships and freedoms for their faith.
- **Generous.** Globally, Christians are known for their acts of service, for their sacrifice, and for their love. They step into crisis, suffering and pain. They care for body, mind and spirit. They freely give because they have freely received.
- **Christ's!** How wonderful and freeing it is to know that the Church belongs to Jesus Christ — it is his bride that he will never abandon or forsake. He loves the global church, despite its imperfections and weaknesses, and

is actively preparing her for the wedding of the Lamb. What a gathering it will be — every nation, tribe, people and language. 🌐

The NAE supports and participates in various global movements and organizations (such as The Lausanne Movement) to amplify a holistic gospel witness around the world, including:

World Evangelical Alliance

The NAE is one of 130+ affiliates of the World Evangelical Alliance, which supports and promotes the full expression of evangelical faith around the world. The NAE participates by serving on the global leadership team as representative of the North America region.

World Relief

Founded in 1944 as the NAE's humanitarian relief and development arm, World Relief seeks to boldly engage the world's greatest crises in partnership with the Church, and has worked in 100 countries and in partnership with 4,000 local churches.

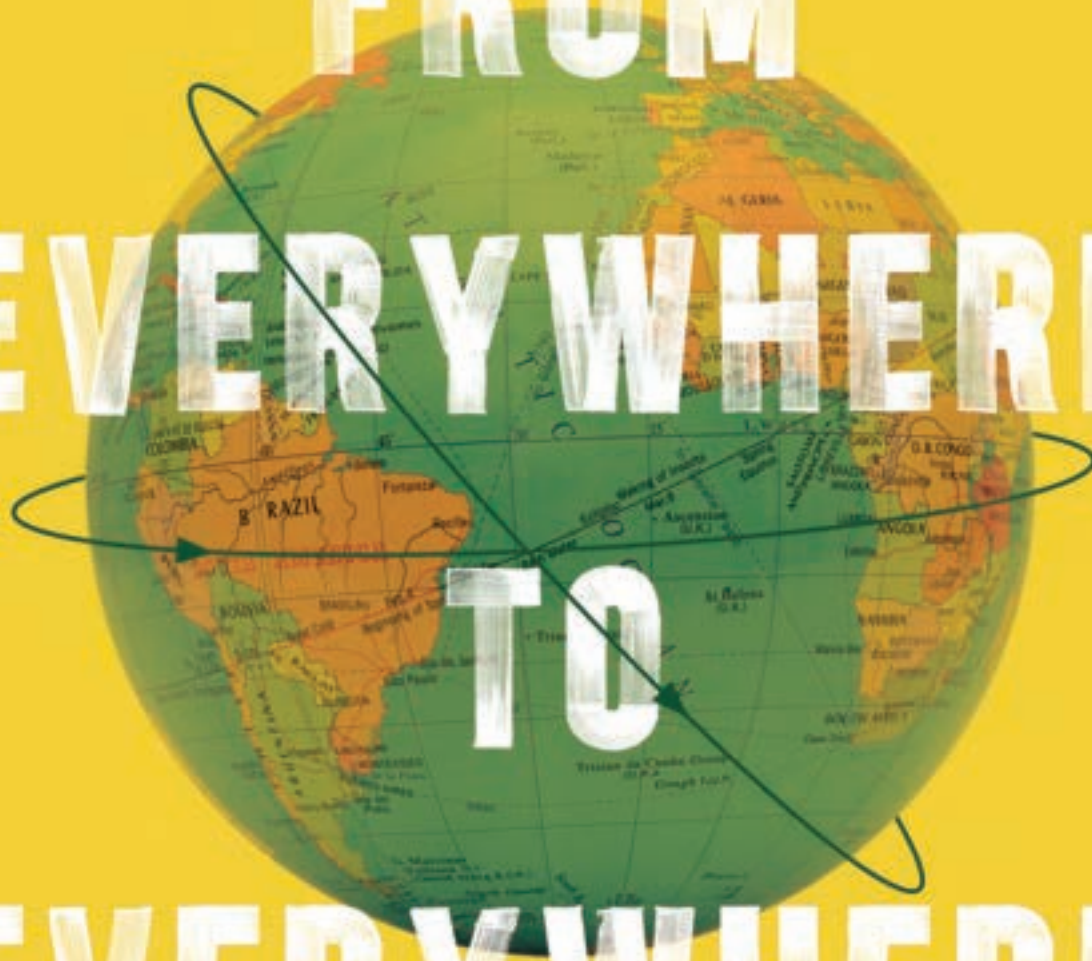
Missio Nexus

The NAE created the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association in 1945. In 2010 it merged with the Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association to form Missio Nexus, which continues as a network for 460 missions engaged in the Great Commission.

Accord Network

Accord Network, an NAE member, was founded in 1978 to bring together Christ-centered relief and development organizations to engage the Church in holistic ministry among the poor and needy. It currently serves more than 130 member ministries.





**FROM
EVERYWHERE
TO
EVERYWHERE**

How the Global Church Refines Our Vision of the Gospel

JOSEPH D'SOUZA



Whenever I'm asked to write an article or provide commentary on the rise of the Global South, I feel a sense of discomfort. As a person born and raised in the Global South, and who has dedicated my life to advancing God's kingdom in this region, I believe it's clear that the Global South in the 21st century is not in the process of rising — rather, it has already risen.

Not recognizing the Global South as a risen and mature part of God's kingdom today ignores the fact that the Church in the Global South has been present and active for quite some time. For example, Christianity has been present in China since the early medieval period and became a significant presence in the country during the early modern era. Christian faith in India started in A.D. 52 with the Apostle Thomas, and has also had 200 years of history after William Carey's mission. Christianity in Africa has had an equally long history; the same can be said about Latin and South America.

Instead of discussing the ascent of the Global South, the international community needs to acknowledge the significant, continual presence of the Church in the Global South. This presence has been inadequately documented. The Global South holds a substantial position not only within the global church but also in international forums. Regardless of their colonial history, countries in the Global South have developed and affirmed a distinct identity that merits their inclusion in the global conversation.

It is worth noting that, along with missiologists from around the globe, I have developed a preference for the term Majority World in lieu of Global South. This preference arises not only from concerns regarding derogatory implications but also from the presence of nations within the Majority World, such as Singapore and certain countries in Central Asia, that do not identify as part of the Global South. I anticipate that Majority World will increasingly be embraced in discourse.

Hope Expressed in the Majority World

Within the nations classified as part of the Majority World, there is tremendous hope displayed by Christians who engage despite significant opposition to their faith. In China, India and Indonesia or other regions of the of the Islamic World, the Christian faith encounters formidable challenges. Faith that faces such trials seeks a deeper connection with Christ and innovative solutions for its preservation. In this context, believers are compelled to organically develop contextual theologies to ensure their survival amid the prevailing conditions, thereby fostering suitable missions to address their circumstances.

The Church also prospers and expands in the Majority World in regions characterized by significant human poverty, suffering and systemic injustice. In these environments, governmental assistance is often minimal; medical care and essential goods are scarce. Individuals must not only ensure their survival but also navigate their challenges through the teachings of the Bible. The Bible is interpreted literally in these contexts.

Furthermore, fewer unnecessary dichotomies present themselves in church controversies prevalent in wealthy, industrialized nations. Disputes regarding the significance and necessity of proclamation, demonstration and social justice are notably reduced. Rather, churches in these complex, impoverished settings wholeheartedly embrace the gospel as a means to address their needs and transcend the dire conditions of their existence.

The gospel of God's kingdom offers solutions to the exploitation faced by women, children and families. These Christians possess a steadfast faith that God will safeguard them, and the manifestation of God's presence is evidenced by the signs and wonders occurring among them. For most of the Majority World, relying on adherence to a code of moral purity for eventual salvation is insufficient.

The Gospel of the Kingdom

The gradual evolution of the paradigm concerning the gospel of the kingdom, as articulated and initiated by Jesus Christ, is redefining the way the gospel is perceived and communicated globally. Jesus' plan for his kingdom was never centered on humanity's departure from this world. From its inception, the gospel of the kingdom has

emphasized the notion of heaven manifesting on earth.

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus implored, "Thy will be done; thy kingdom come." This petition was not an appeal for God the Father to orchestrate a magnificent future event. Rather, Jesus articulated a present reality wherein the kingdom of God can provide effective solutions to the pressing challenges faced by our world, while alleviating involuntary suffering and pain encountered by a multitude of individuals.

The Book of Revelation serves as a prominent example in this context. Contrary to popular belief, Revelation does not depict a vision of the earth ascending to heaven. Instead, the eschatology in this book is fundamentally centered around the concept of heaven descending to earth. Examining Revelation, along with the overarching narrative of the Bible, through this lens reveals that the salvation offered by Jesus through his death, resurrection and ascension extends beyond the mere redemption of souls, which represent the spiritual dimension of the individual destined to reside for eternity in the presence of God.

Rather, a kingdom perspective affirms the essential truth that Jesus, through his death, resurrection and ascension, is presently the active king of this world, amidst the persistence of evil and the damaging influences of the devil.

Jesus proclaimed the establishment of a new sovereign in the world, to whom humanity may turn for fulfillment and purpose. The authority and power bestowed upon the disciples and all believers prior to his ascension provide hope in the face of poverty, persecution and natural disasters.

The kingdom of God, as understood by many in the Majority World, deals with all spiritual and physical issues simultaneously. Our bodies, our minds, our spirits — and all of creation and all of our neighbors no matter their faith or heritage — fall under the authority of the kingdom. And the promise of creation restored means a resurrection of our bodies through the Holy Spirit.

Great Commandment Realignment

When reading the phrase "power and authority" in Matthew 28:18–20, one might wonder, "Are these verses primarily about missionary work? Isn't this the Great

Commission?” I belong to a growing number of Christian thinkers and theologians who believe that while the term Great Commission is valuable and has positively impacted global missions by spreading the gospel, it may have overshadowed an even more significant concept: the Great Commandment.

In God’s perspective, the Church is to be salt and light, often outside places of power, wealth or privilege.

In many parts of the Christian world, it appears that the Great Commission has taken precedence over the Great Commandment. Believers in the Majority World are eager to spread the message of God’s kingdom and share the good news. However, these believers do not wish to replace the essential call to love God and love their neighbors. If the Great Commission is not understood as stemming from the Great Commandment, we risk repeating the imperialistic tendencies that have marked global missions in certain regions. Even with good intentions and many positive outcomes for God’s kingdom, missionary efforts have sometimes failed to adequately contextualize the gospel message.

Shifts in Global Missions

Are we truly in a post-missionary era? Not necessarily. History is constantly evolving. Amid significant polarization surrounding religion and identity in recent years, as well as the rise of the Majority World, I argue that the era of modern missions — which I refer to as the William Carey Era — is fading and will continue to change. With the rise of local Christians in the Majority World, their churches have become effective witnesses. There is of course still a need for partnership in missions to unreached people groups who have no local Christian witness. This partnership should involve those Christians who are culturally closest to the unreached groups.

This evolution does not exclude believers from other regions who wish to participate in God’s modern mission in the Majority World. However, it is clear that

the roles are changing. Leadership for global missions now primarily lies with the Majority World, working in partnership with churches and leaders of other countries. The goals for the Church’s work, along with the innovative technologies and approaches needed to fulfill that work, will originate from the Majority World.

It is essential for all members of the Global Church to recapture, re-emphasize, and gain a deeper understanding that love and grace are the foundational elements of the kingdom of God and reflect God’s nature. Everything of significance within the kingdom stems from this love and grace. The act of creation itself — of the universe and humanity — was inspired by love. Through Christ’s work, God provided a remedy for humanity’s rebellion against him. And that remedy? Selfless love.

The Church in the countries that are wealthy and industrialized should reject any triumphalist vision or agenda regarding its role. In God’s perspective, the Church is to be salt and light, often outside places of power, wealth or privilege. It inherently attracts those who are suffering, poor, oppressed and marginalized. The key message is that every church, regardless of their location, should assess their societal positioning and determine how they can manifest the kingdom of God within their community or nation. This effort requires collaboration and love among all Christians, avoiding secondary divisions and disputes.

Finally, it’s essential for the entire global church to recognize the role of every Christian believer in the Church as a witness for Christ, irrespective of their profession. We cannot rely solely on professional ministers or missionaries working independently to evangelize. Over the past century, the Church has seen significant transformation due to the rise of the Majority World, which itself has made this transformation both possible and vital. **E**



Enhancing Theological Education Around the World

The Urgent Need for Gospel Contextualization

How is theological education relevant to the mission of the Church? The Church in all of its dimensions is missional, and therefore theology, in all of its dimensions, is also missional.

We need to make a shift from traditional missionary theology to mission-centered theological education. This integration of mission into theology and then into theological education is not just a pragmatic matter but is deeply rooted in the mission of God and the mission of the Church.

Theological education is the formal academic study and training of individuals in the field of theology and the principles and practices of faith. Its primary purpose is to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills and spiritual formation to serve in ministry.

In practical terms, all theological subjects should have a missional dimension and should be constantly challenged by the discipline of missiology. Mission-centered theological education shouldn't be confined only to curriculum but

should encompass what theological students are doing outside the classroom and in their communities.

Rethinking Traditional Seminary

The traditional seminary model present in industrialized, wealthy nations is not viable for the majority of churchgoers around the world. This is partly due to its emphasis on academic achievement over practical ministry. While these frameworks may have worked — and may continue to work — for a particular time and place, they fail to meet the unique challenges and opportunities facing the Church in many parts of the world today.

Traditional models of seminary often require significant time and funding resources for full-time training. In countries with tremendous church growth, this model may not be able





to sustain the church's growth, and in areas where the church's growth is lagging, seminaries are suffering, because they're not enrolling an adequate number of students for institutional viability.

This does not mean abandoning theological education, but rather rethinking it. How can seminaries evolve to meet the needs of the Church around the world? The answer lies in shifting our understanding of theological education from a rigid, one-size-fits-all model to one that is more flexible, culturally relevant and contextualized. Seminaries must move away from the model of education that is focused exclusively on academic rigor and move toward one that emphasizes practical ministry, community engagement and leadership development.

As Linda Cannell writes in her book, "Theological Education Matters: Leadership Education for the Church":

A structure formalized in the medieval period, modified to suit the theological shifts of the Reformation, influenced by the scientific methodology of the Enlightenment, shaped by the German research university, deeply affected by modernity, and assumed to define true theological education today is likely not adequate for the challenges of contemporary culture and the education of Christians who have been shaped by that culture.

What's Next?

Practically speaking, how can we enhance theological education in its missional task around the world? First, we must share success stories of theological education in mission, and the stories of failure.

How can we avoid repeating mistakes from the past in missions work? We need to share perspectives from all around the world — what has worked well in equipping leaders to teach and live out the gospel in their communities and what hasn't worked well.

One of the greatest needs around the world is contextualized curriculum and publications to aid the Church in living out its mission. For example, in preaching, teaching and evangelizing, Christian theological education

should address issues of violence, persecution, justice and just peace, especially in conflict areas. Theological education needs to include resources written for and by Majority World pastors that can deeply encourage Christians who face unique challenges.

Moreover, a particularly significant aspect of this trend is the emergence of Majority World scholars who are engaging with theological issues through the lenses of their own cultural and historical experiences. For instance, African theologians are exploring ethical questions rooted in African traditions and societal structures, bringing a fresh perspective to global conversations on morality and justice. Similarly, Asian scholars are interpreting Old Testament narratives through distinctly Asian lenses, drawing on the rich tapestry of their cultural heritage to uncover new dimensions of biblical understanding.

It is immensely encouraging to witness the growing trend among Majority World seminaries to embrace contextualized curricula. This shift marks a pivotal step in the journey of theological education, as it seeks to bridge the gap between the timeless truths of Scripture and the diverse cultural realities of today's world.

As we celebrate these advancements, it is essential to continue supporting and investing in initiatives that nurture contextualized theological education. This includes encouraging cross-cultural partnerships, providing resources for indigenous scholars, and advocating for the creation of locally relevant theological materials. To achieve these initiatives, we need a genuine partnership between the wealthy, industrialized nations and the Majority World. By doing so, we ensure that the gospel remains alive and impactful in every corner of the world, bearing witness to its power to transcend cultural boundaries and transform lives.

The Church today faces new challenges that require a new kind of theological education — one that builds on the traditions of the past but is responsive to current needs. By embracing a more contextualized, practical and socially engaged approach to theological training, seminaries can equip leaders who are capable of making a significant impact on the Church and the world. **■**



Mark DeYmaz is founding pastor of Mosaic Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, and co-founder of the Mosaix Global Network.

How Immigrant Churches Advance the Mission of God

And a Call for Mutuality Through Healthy Multiethnic Churches

In 1997, I began advocating for the establishment of healthy multiethnic and economically diverse churches. Having planted a multiethnic church in 2001 and co-founded the Mosaix Global Network in 2004, my reflections on the critical need for immigrant churches in the United States and beyond may, for some, seem odd. Nevertheless, it's not at all hard for me to recognize the contributions of immigrant churches as essential to the advancement of *Missio Dei*.

Diaspora Values

Indeed, I have learned much through the years from observing the values that drive and sustain immigrant communities. For example, immigrant churches are filled with people whose relationship with Christ transcends intellectual commitment. Personal stories of courage and sacrifice reveal an experiential knowledge of God shaped by significant emotional and mental costs. These diaspora communities are built on mutual understanding, shared struggle and a commitment to reach, serve and bless others who have navigated immigration or similar challenges of cultural adaptation.

Additionally, immigrant churches cultivate a strong devotion to family, both immediate and extended. For many, this loyalty is expressed in selfless dedication to one another, grounded in fervent and daily prayer.

Evangelistic Impact

Beyond observing, respecting and learning from these and other contributions, we need to understand that immigrant

churches today are essential to the task of evangelism and discipleship. People come to Christ more readily when linguistic and cultural barriers are removed.

While God can and does use believers of varying backgrounds to win others to himself, human trust is more naturally extended to those with whom we identify. People are often more receptive to the witness of those who share a common history, language and country of origin.

Future Sustainability

Nevertheless, immigrant churches today face challenges that will increasingly affect the prospects of their sustainability, especially if there is not a continuing flow of new arrivals. For instance, in many immigrant congregations, the first generation is “two feet in,” fully committed to the church and its community. The second generation, however, often feels divided, with “one foot in and one foot out,” balancing cultural heritage with life in a multicultural society. By the third generation, involvement can wane further, as many are



“two feet out,” identifying more with the broader culture than with their parents’ or grandparents’ ethnic community.

This shift is not necessarily about assimilation. Many younger people from immigrant backgrounds who feel called to ministry see the need and want to leverage opportunities to influence a broader audience. Having grown up in diverse neighborhoods, schools and communities, these young leaders feel called to extend themselves beyond a single ethnic group. This trend can also be seen among white and African American ministry leaders from homogeneous congregations who desire to impact people of every nation, tribe and tongue for Christ via the local church.

Many younger people from immigrant backgrounds who feel called to ministry see the need and want to leverage opportunities to influence a broader audience.

Another challenge is the reluctance of some older immigrant church leaders to share or transition leadership to younger generations. To be fair, this is often a problem in other churches, too. The reluctance often stems from traditional views of authority and succession, which may clash with Millennial and Gen Z leaders who value collaboration and innovation. This generational disconnect can limit the development of adaptable, sustainable leadership in immigrant or otherwise homogeneous churches, restricting their ability to evolve with a changing congregation.

Beyond Divisions

With these concerns in mind, I believe it’s long past time for us to move beyond the binary view of “immigrant” versus “non-immigrant” churches. While honoring the contributions of immigrant congregations, we should also seek together to build healthy multiethnic churches that empower immigrant voices, hold space for first, second and third generation seekers and believers, and more fully represent God’s love for all people in a single body, patterned, for example, after the New Testament churches at Antioch, Ephesus and Rome (see Acts 11:19–26, 13:1; Ephesians 2:10–4:6).

Such churches will honor, celebrate and empower cultural diversity while remaining committed to shared mission and promoting reconciliation beyond rhetoric to results for the glory of God.

Yes, by elevating immigrant voices within the broader American church and empowering diverse leadership teams at the local level, we can and should create congregations of Christ-centered faith in which men and women of diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds will themselves to walk, work and worship God together as one.

Through such unity of mind, spirit, body and purpose, we can better reflect the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven (Revelation 7:9) in an increasingly diverse society, all while providing a compelling witness to the power of the gospel — one that reconciles us, individually, to God through faith in Jesus and, collectively, to one another, beyond the distinctions of this world that otherwise divide. **E**

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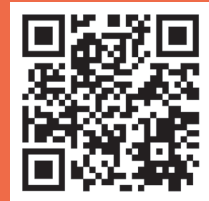
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A Faithful Witness in Congo

They seemed like ordinary days, but for me, they were anything but.... I had lost close relatives in Congo due to sickness and insecurity from a civil war that raged from 1996-2002, claiming more than 5 million lives. I experienced increasing restlessness and inner turmoil.

At the time, I was serving as vice-chancellor of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, now known as Africa International University, in Kenya. The institution was experiencing unprecedented growth, launching Ph.D. programs to address questions African churches and academia were asking. Yet, suddenly, it all lost meaning for me. God was stirring my heart in a new direction.

One evening I came home to my wife, uttering a simple but profound prayer, “Lord, if this is from you, let Kassie be on board.”

“Let’s go home,” I said calmly but nervously.

“Home? Where?” she asked.

“Home to Congo,” I replied.

“But there’s war there!” she exclaimed.

“Yes, and there are people there too, our people, dying for us.”

“What will we do in Congo?” she asked.

“I do not know, but God will show us.”

“You’re a man of many dreams. Have you finished your dreams for this institution?”

“No, I will never finish my dreams for this place that I love dearly. I may need two lifetimes to complete them. But God calls us not to finish our dreams, but to be faithful in the time he gives us. For the past eight years, I have been faithful to this institution. Now is the time to go.”

“And what about our children? They need a good education; they need to go to university.”


“I don’t know. God will show us.”

Kassie calmly said, “I’m not doubting you. I’m ready to go with you wherever the Lord sends us.”

This marked the beginning of a dream, a vision and a long journey of faith. This is how Congo Initiative - Christian Bilingual University of Congo (CI-UCBC) was born. Like-minded men and women joined us from Congo and the West in daring to dream and make a transformational impact together.

Located in central Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo has a gorgeous natural beauty, an immense supply of minerals and the second largest rainforest in the world. However, from the time of Belgian colonization until today, people have known nothing but suffering and violence.

At CI-UCBC, our vision is to claim our country back from the enemy by producing Christian change-makers. Our motto is “Being Transformed to Transform.” Every academic program goes side-by-side with community engagement initiatives, which include evangelism and reconciliation programs, a trauma counseling center, economic empowerment for vulnerable women and two primary schools.

In October 2024, UCBC celebrated an important milestone with the graduation of its 1,000th student since the school began in 2007. These graduates are making a lasting impact for the kingdom of God in both church and society throughout Congo. 



Q&A

Being a World Evangelical

Peirong Lin is a theologian and a human development professional. She has been the deputy secretary general of the World Evangelical Alliance since March 2021, after serving as human resource director and research coordinator for WEA's Theological Concerns Department. Peirong has studied in university institutions in three continents, and she holds a Ph.D. in theology and religious studies. Native to Singapore, Peirong grew up in a multicultural and religious context. She currently lives with her husband and sons in Niederkassel, Germany.

ACCORDING TO A RECENT PEW RESEARCH CENTER REPORT, CHRISTIANS ARE THE LARGEST MIGRANT GROUP GLOBALLY, REPRESENTING 47 PERCENT OF MIGRANTS. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?

Christianity has the most adherents. Therefore, it should not be a surprise that Christians are the largest migrant group globally. However, the fact that it is proportionately more can be attributed to both networks Christians have outside their home country and the increasing unrest in the world. Networks are useful for finding jobs, furthering one's

education. At the same time, with the increased volatility in the world, people move to escape religious persecution and/or to live among people who hold similar religious beliefs.

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF BEING A CHRISTIAN MIGRANT IN EUROPE, PERSONALLY AND COLLECTIVELY?

People travel to Europe in search for a better life. Generally speaking, they look for jobs, get an education, join family members or seek protection from persecution. Statistics

show that since 2015 migration in Europe has increased by 15 percent, with 87 million international migrants living in Europe.

At the same time, being out of the country also presents itself with challenges. As migrants, the feeling of “othering” can be acute. Moreover, recent world events have spotlighted underlying tensions of racism and decolonization, especially when migrants come from countries that were ex-colonies. The loss of structure and cultural norms that one is used to can also result in an identity crisis.

HOW DO MIGRANTS RESPOND TO THE GOD WHO SENT JESUS AS A MIGRANT?

The perspective of Jesus as a migrant can be particularly useful. Jesus had no place to lay his head (Matthew 8:20; Luke 9:58). Sent by God the Father, Jesus came to earth and made his dwelling among us (John 1:14). From his birth to his itinerant ministry, his life journey reflected the challenges of being a migrant.

Following in God’s example, we are sent with the Holy Spirit to live in this foreign land. We are strangers and sojourners in the present world. Our response to the world involves first accepting where we are and recognizing that our actions should first and foremost reflect our identity as a follower of Christ. This involves obeying him and growing in his grace and knowledge (Hebrews 12:1–2; Colossians 3:1–3), from which love and service flow naturally (2 Peter 3:18; 1 John 4:7).

The imagery of a pilgrim can also be useful. While a pilgrim moves from one place to the other, this movement is first and foremost a result of following Jesus, responding to “the necessity of their destiny in God.” The pilgrim’s focus on God transcends locations and becomes the driving force to influence society for good.

HOW DO WORLD CHRISTIANS PRIORITIZE RELATIONALITY?

Relationality is prioritized through the practice of hospitality. Hospitality is inclusive and makes space for the stranger. This happens both ways. Even a migrant can be hospitable to one’s European hosts. One way that this can happen is through

taking each person seriously, refusing negative stereotypes of the other. This involves keeping an open mind and making space for new encounters.

HOW CAN WE BE INTENTIONAL IN BUILDING UNITY IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND GLOBALLY?

This kingdom of God invites an active response from all. First, intentionality involves prioritizing God’s mission individually and collectively wherever we are called to work together and not parallel of each other. One way people can work together is through participating in broader networks. This includes making oneself available for different opportunities, even if they might be less than ideal.

Responding to God’s mission also involves intentionality in the way we relate to each other. As Jesus sums up the law to loving him and loving neighbor, our relationship with the other needs to be done through sincere engagement. This is as important as the activity itself. Our posture should be characterized by the self-giving love modelled by Christ. Instead of relying on one’s ability to fully influence the situation, it trusts in the power of the Holy Spirit in the surprising ways in which God calls God’s people to encounter himself and other.

AS A SENIOR LEADER IN THE WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE, HOW HAVE YOU SEEN EVANGELICALS ACROSS THE WORLD WORK TOGETHER TO HAVE COLLECTIVE IMPACT?

As evangelicals, our collective impact is rooted in the good news of Jesus Christ and the understanding of the kingdom of God. In my role, I have seen evangelicals working together for missions, evangelism, Bible translation, advocacy for religious freedom, crisis and relief situations. It is amazing to see what can be accomplished when individuals work together for a common purpose. ●



Polycentric Mission

Where are you from? That’s a hard question for me to answer. My parents were from Korea. I was born in New York City but spent a significant portion of childhood in small-town, western Pennsylvania. Adulthood brought many more transitions from the West to the Midwest and then the East Coast. Where I am from is shaped by assorted people and sundry places.

Where is Christianity from? While the cradle of Christianity is the Middle East, the Church rapidly expanded from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria and towards the ends of the earth, as commanded by Jesus (Acts 1:8). And the explosive growth of the Church wasn’t linear or centralized.

Mission receiving cities quickly became mission sending churches. Persecuted Christians from Jerusalem and believers from Cyprus and Cyrene proclaimed the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 11:1–2). God’s Spirit soon called that fledgling multiethnic church to send Paul and Barnabas as missionaries throughout the Roman Empire (Acts 13:1–3). The geographic distribution of Paul’s epistles in a few decades reveals a diverse network of faith centers throughout the Roman Empire. And this doesn’t include missions to Africa and India by the earliest Christians.

As noted by Allen Yeh (see “Polycentric Missiology: 21st Century Mission from Everyone to Everywhere”) and other missiologists, Christianity now has many centers of influence. The Church in wealthy, industrialized countries continues to have enduring import for fulfilling the Great Commission.

Yet, by God’s Spirit, many areas of the world have moved from being a mission field to a mission force.

In 1910, about 80 percent of Christians were in Europe and North America, but now the inverse is true with nearly 80 percent of all Christians distributed between Africa, Asia and Latin America, according to a recent Lausanne Movement report. Korea, the host country of the recent Lausanne Congress, is home to many of the world’s largest churches; Africa has more Christians than Europe; Pentecostalism in Latin America testifies to the blossoming of God’s kingdom.

The Church is now polycentric with many thriving nodes of influence radiating in multiple directions. Missions is from everywhere to everywhere. As our Lord Jesus proclaimed and we dramatically see, “people will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God” (Luke 13:29). **E**



**“And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly
with your God.”**

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