

MISSIONS STRATEGY

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Strategy is defined as "the art of conducting a military campaign." While determining a strategy for the achievement of a goal will depend upon logistics and tactics, we must not confuse the choice of a strategy with the choice of methods to be employed. Speaking of the victories of the Chinese Red Army, Mao Tse-tung said, "This army, which entered the arena of civil war as a small and weak force, has since repeatedly defeated its powerful antagonist and won victories that have astonished the world; and it has done so by relying largely on the employment of concentrated strength.... Our strategy is 'pit one against ten,' and our tactics are 'pit ten against one': these contrary and yet complementary propositions constitute one of our principles for gaining mastery over the enemy."

Our Lord's Commission was given initially to a very small minority. The band of faithful men around him was commanded to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always to the close of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20). Never was such a "small weak force" given such a mighty task. So effectively did they carry out their commission that the numbers of disciples grew daily, and when the persecution over Stephen flared up, these disciples went all over Judea and Samaria preaching the Word. The strategy to be employed was of personal witness to Christ, a strategy to continue right through to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The manner of their witness was dynamic and persuasive, disturbing the Jews and the pagans as probably nothing had done for centuries. "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also" (Acts 17:6). The campaign of personal witness to Christ and of discipling the nations was being successful and continued to be so. Eusebius of Caesarea (266-340 A.D.) said, "Many successors of the apostles reared the edifice on the foundation which they laid, continuing the work of preaching the Gospel and scattering abundantly over the whole earth the wholesome seed of the heavenly kingdom."

The continuing strategy of the church of Jesus Christ today must be that of the minority incessantly launching and sustaining its mission of making disciples of all nations. The church must see the world as a world to win for Christ, through witness to Christ. To quote the Frankfurt Declaration, "The surrender of the Bible as our primary frame of reference leads to the shapelessness of mission and a confusion of the task of mission with a general idea of responsibility for the world." Wrong strategy must lead to "the shapelessness of mission," to isolated groups fighting their own little battles and running their own campaigns

for objectives completely unrelated to the great strategy of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

We must confess that, with few exceptions, the general rate of church growth, i.e., the discipling of the people of the world, is either static or slow in the face of world population growth. If we accept that the growth of the church is in direct ratio to the degree of total involvement of the church in evangelism, then a strategy must be planned to facilitate that total involvement. Latourette rightly said, "Increasingly the determining question of all mission programs must be, 'What will most contribute to an ongoing Christian community?' " Ongoing in the sense of witnessing and expanding in number and influence.

I. The divine strategy

Let us be clear that the creation and sustaining of the motivation for such a strategy remains the prerogative of the Holy Spirit. Lesslie Newbigin writes, "The secret of the recovery of missionary advance lies in taking more seriously the New Testament understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit." A mission begun with the declaration, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8), and continuing with such assurances as "being sent out by the Holy Spirit...they proclaimed the Word of God" (Acts 13:4-5) can only be sustained by the divine strategy of the Holy Spirit.

It is the Spirit of God who alone is able to make the witness fruitful. Methods and means must be justified by their availability to the Spirit to fulfill the divine purpose.

We set up a large hospital in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, a country long resistant to the entrance of Christian witness. The establishment of the hospital and its maintenance is a very costly business. True, at all times it seeks to demonstrate the love and compassion of Christ, but that alone cannot be the purpose. One day I sat at the bedside of a brilliant Nepali scholar dying from cancer, and through the Word of God led him to put his trust in Christ. The Spirit of God led him to call, "Lord," so that when his relatives took his frail body down to the banks of the sacred river to await death, almost with his last breath he proclaimed to those around him his faith in Jesus Christ.

We have just returned from a visit to the mountains of Irian Jaya. Missionary Aviation Fellowship planes, at great expense and at much danger to its pilots, carried us as they have carried the missionaries over the past fifteen years, into communities of Christian believers who less than twenty years ago were cannibals. We sat down amongst these people, now learning to be disciples of Jesus Christ, and many of them now in turn discipling neighboring and adjacent tribes.

The methods of institutional work and of modern transportation are justified, because they have been available to the Holy Spirit to carry on this strategy of discipling men and women for Jesus Christ. In his book *Missionary Principles*, Roland Allen wrote, "Refusal to study the best methods, refusal to regard organization as of any importance, is really not the denial of matter, but the denial of the Spirit. It is sloth, not faith."

The Eternal Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit of today, fully aware of and more than equal to the contemporary issues affecting the lives of men

in any given country; aware of the needs of the intellectual in Nepal, of the cannibal communities in Irian Jaya. If the Holy Spirit is recognized as the motivator and the sustainer of the mission of the church, then he will give the wisdom for planning the methods and means to meet those needs in a way that witnesses to the power of Christ.

2. *The current strategy*

The strategy remains basically the same, to witness and make disciples in a world that is estranged from God. This is God's continuing ministry to his world, this is his strategy to bring home his elect from every nation. It is not a strategy that the Christian Church, as a minority in the world, has devised in order to win converts to itself, but it is a strategy that the Church worldwide must sustain in fulfilling the purpose of the Head of the Church.

Bishop Stephen Neill described the existence of the Church throughout the world as "the greatest significant fact of our era." Its significance really lies in relation to the mission of the church throughout the world. Mission is no longer an issue for which an isolated Christian like William Carey instigated an inquiry into "the obligation of Christians to use means for the conversion of the heathen" of 1792, when it was assumed that "the heathen" lived in countries of Asia and Africa. There is certainly some justification for an inquiry into the racist assumptions of the missionary movement from Western countries in the nineteenth century, but there can be no doubt that it was "the great century" for the expansion of the Church. Largely because of the efforts of the so-called "imperialistic" missionaries of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, we can think of and plan for missionary strategy in a manner which is almost staggering in its potential. In fact any mission's strategy which does not take into account the existence of the Church worldwide is a century out-of-date. Following the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910, when the realization of the potential partnership of the churches in Asia and Africa slowly dawned upon the churches of the West, there has been an increasing recognition of the fact that "mission" is no longer for the Western churches a matter of "from us to you" but rather of "from all of us together to the whole world," as well as "from you to us."

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that a truly contemporary and successful missions strategy must pay more than lip service to the existence of the Church worldwide — it must actively enter into positive and practical demonstration of that existence for the sake of the evangelization of the world.

The West recognizes that the churches of the so-called Third World, in spite of being small minorities, are being much more successful in evangelizing their own people than they are in the West.

If this International Congress is to achieve anything, it must be in the creation of facilities whereby the evangelical churches throughout the world can truly become partners in making disciples. This must begin with an appreciation of our unity in the Body of Christ and an acceptance of the fact that we all, from whichever country we may come, live in the midst of a needy people: that in our witness we all need the support and the fellowship of each other. The British Evangelical Alliance's Commis-

sion on World Mission in 1971 called its report "One World, One Task," and our strategy must recognize practically that this is the situation facing us.

Church unity as sponsored by the World Council of Churches finds little support from the evangelical missionary societies, because the International Missionary Council's integration into the W.C.C. in 1961 identified the missionary movement with a single concept of unity and a rigid ecclesiasticism. Is it possible to recognize "One World, One Church" without subscribing to the organizational unity of the various denominational churches? When we decline to join in the church unity movement are we in fact denying the very strategy of the worldwide church's united role in mission, which we would strongly support? We clearly must recognize the importance of organization as demonstrated by the plight of small churches which die in isolation in all countries. The evangelical fellowships which are steadily growing in many countries, offer the most promising means of maintaining unity of encouragement and action both nationally and internationally, without seeking to impose any one form of ecclesiasticism upon their members. The structures of churches and of missionary societies will necessarily and inevitably change to meet the current situations and opportunities arising in pursuit of our strategy, and I believe that the development of national evangelical fellowships is the Spirit's provision of a channel to make those necessary changes possible and effective. Without imposing ecclesiastical limitations they make cooperation possible.

3. *The carrying out of the strategy*

Instead of reverting to Mao Tse-tung's example of the success of "the employment of concentrated strength," we should look at the Gospel illustration of the great shoal of fishes threatening to break Peter's net, when "they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them" (Luke 5:7). This principle was followed when the church in Jerusalem, hearing of the Lord's blessing in many conversions in Antioch, sent Barnabas down to teach them, and when it was too large a movement to handle alone, Barnabas went to Tarsus to bring Paul for a year's vital ministry of teaching the church (Acts 11:19-26).

There are more evangelists, church planters and Bible teachers in the world today than at any time in the history of the church. Obviously this is consonant with the growth of world population, but in terms of present strategy it has more significance than that, a significance which surely cannot be lost upon those in churches in all lands who are concerned with the task of world evangelization. These facts must also be related to the potential mobility in terms of easy travel, to the great advances in linguistic facility, and the mass media. The men are available, and there are many more who could be available if adequately trained; the money is available in the hands of Christians; and the channels of communication are available in a diversity and to an extent never known before. The stage is set for the greatest missionary movement in all directions from hundreds of centers all over the world; and it is set at a time when there is evidence of a deep hunger to discover the true meaning of life in the hearts of young people everywhere.

But the strategy of the involvement of the Church worldwide must be taken seriously even at the expense of our long-established traditions and organizations. It is the work of God that must move forward, the building up of the Lord's Church and its continuing evangelistic outreach and influence in the world, and not our own organizations.

The carrying out of this strategy involves a number of different areas and aspects of the work of the churches all over the world. I have tried to write this paper to be applicable to the Church in any part of the world because while the bulk of overseas missionary endeavor still emanates from the churches of North America, Europe, and Australasia, the numbers of African, Asian and Latin American churches becoming involved in overseas work is increasing. It is therefore time for us to think and act together.

a. Cooperation. There is a separate paper on mission structures, but in the area of strategy, thought must be given to the kind of structures that cooperation demands. Is it possible to carry out the kind of strategy which calls for a pooling of all available resources to accomplish certain objectives, with the separate missionary society structures which exist at present? We might even go further and ask if it is possible to carry out the strategy from any missionary society structure which keeps itself separate from the church or churches it has brought into being. Is there, in fact, any more room for the separate existence of a missionary society if there is to be this kind of cooperation? How can we better ensure the building and sustaining of closer relationships between the evangelical churches in one country with those of another? I want to make a plea for the setting up of missionary fellowships by those societies working in given areas of the world. In this way they could pool their information and resources and meet more directly needs presented to them by the evangelical fellowships or other structures in those areas. This would help in a number of ways: (i) in presenting a more cohesive picture of the situation and needs in the particular area of concern; (ii) in channeling back into the "homeland" help in personnel and methods to assist in the work of the churches in that "homeland"; (iii) in assessing the priorities for the fellowship of service; and (iv) overcoming the present confusion of a multiplicity of societies.

Surely we all now accept that there is no further room for the maintenance of proprietary rights by a missionary society over an area or over a church. At least we know that the churches in such an area no longer accept such exclusive rights by a missionary society.

There are, of course, pioneer areas where societies have recently started work and where the churches have only just been formed, but for the most part societies are working in areas where churches have existed for many years. In some cases small churches have been formed and in other cases there are large growing churches, but it is recognized that the original purposes of the societies' operations have been fulfilled. Let societies stand back and face the possibility that another twenty years' service by them may not produce any large increase in the size of those churches. Of course, a society can continue to serve a group of churches, maintain institutions, but surely the time must come when it is recognized that the church or group of churches is adult and is the center of witness in the place. Is it not then time for individual missionaries who

feel so led of the Spirit to integrate into the life of the church or churches, while the society combines with others having similar interest in selective ministries to all the evangelical churches of that country?

In Britain there are signs of the birth of this kind of cooperation. Some societies are beginning to say to each other either, "We all serve one ethnic or religious group, let us do our praying, thinking and planning together," or "We have all served separately for many years in this same area; let us now combine to see what God has for us to do together for the whole area. Perhaps we can undertake together some of the tasks and ministries that have been missed by us all, and which the evangelical fellowship in that area would like to see done by somebody."

There are obviously particular areas in which the type of cooperation I have mentioned could be most fruitful. One of these is that of theological education. During the last few years national evangelical bodies have set up some kind of commission or fellowship for the study of methods of theological education, e.g., the Association of Theologians and Theological Schools in Asia (TAP-ASIA); the Theological Fraternity of Latin America; and the Theological Commission of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar. These represent the concern and purpose of the leaders of the churches in those areas so to educate the ministry and laity in the biblical foundation of their faith, that they can stand up against all the cultural and other contemporary influences that would wean them away from Christ. The strengthening of the theological and Bible colleges should be the concern of all evangelical Christians and certainly presents an area of fruitful cooperation. Similarly, courses in discipleship and lay evangelism are areas calling for cross-cultural cooperation.

b. Specialist societies. The Bible Societies have for long been recognized by all missionary societies and churches as the servant of all. While individual societies have done a great deal of translation work, the specialist task of finalizing, checking, printing, and publishing of the Bible has been left to the Bible Societies. The Leprosy Mission was recognized as the authority on the care of these sufferers in the context of the Gospel. Now we have other specialist societies in the realms of Christian literature, linguistics, radio, and aviation. Generally this recognition of the specialist societies has been universal and they demonstrate the great value of concentration upon a particular avenue of service for the good of all. Missionary societies have shown their recognition by the sending of personnel and the channeling of funds to these societies. The strategy of pooling our resources should be reflected in an increasing recognition of their place and the use of their services. It may well be that they have a great deal to teach missionary societies working in the same geographical area concerning the value of pooling resources.

c. Institutions. The mission institution, school, or hospital has been one of the great media for communicating the Gospel. The primary school in Central Africa might be regarded as the main instrument in the evangelization of that area. The mission hospital in India held a very secure place in almost any community, and in many cases societies can say that the majority of their converts came through the hospital. There are those who cry, "Down with Institutions!" for they believe hospitals and schools have had a voracious appetite for personnel and funds en-

tirely out of all proportion of their fruitfulness in conversions. What is to be their future in the strategy of mission? In some cases the question may simply be, "What is their future?"

We will look at them under two sets of conditions. First, where they are essential to witness; second, where witness is possible without them. Under the first must be included, primarily, witness in those countries which will only allow Christian witness when it is accompanied by medical and educational institutions. As executive secretary of the United Mission to Nepal from its inception in 1954 to 1961, I appreciate only too well such a situation. Five hospitals, three high schools, a technical institute, and a number of primary schools were the bases from which over 100 missionaries from twelve countries have worked. Churches have been established under an entirely evangelical Nepali and Indian leadership, and the missionaries for the most part have contributed to the life of those churches. I have just been back to Nepal, to join in their twentieth anniversary meetings, and it is now the time to look back and see what God has done through this united effort and to praise him for the privilege of being his messengers in that land. The government of Nepal has just taken over the schools and is in the process of taking over the hospitals, as we had expected them to do. The missionary personnel are for the present permitted to stay in their posts and it is likely that the process of taking over the hospitals could extend over ten years. These institutions have provided the opportunity we sought, and we do not have to decide on their future.

But what of the institutions which we struggle to maintain in other lands, where there is no such government restriction? The churches cannot run them, they cannot afford to, nor do they want to tie up ministerial personnel in administration. How do they fit into the strategy of discipling the nations? It may be that some Christians would want to run them on purely humanitarian grounds, seeing service for its own sake as an integral part of witness. But is there really a place for this or that institution in the strategy of the minority discipling the majority? Institutions are usually very highly regarded by those who run them, and it is often very difficult to submit to an objective assessment of their value in the strategy of the mission of the church. But we believe that such an assessment has to be made. Few individual missionary societies today are able to staff adequately their hospitals and keep them up to date with modern equipment. In India this difficulty was accentuated by the policy of the Indian government against the entry of new expatriate missionary medical staff. Yet it was seen that a number of these hospitals were strategic to the life and witness of the church in areas of extreme resistance. Should they be handed over to government or should they be abandoned because of lack of staff? Better that than let them deteriorate. The answer has been found in the setting up of the Emmanuel Hospital Association, an Indian-based evangelical body which has taken over the direction of the hospitals. The E.H.A. has been able to attract Indian doctors to the staffs of these hospitals in the belief that their maintenance of a positive Christian witness is vital to the area.

d. Groupings of men. In the world today there are new and growing communities which should greatly influence mission strategy and the use

of personnel and funds. This is not a situation which faces one agency but all the churches wherever they are.

(i) Youth and particularly the student world. In most cases half the population falls into this category, and while they present an immediate need, the decisions they make today influence not only their own destiny but also that of their country. We believe there is an unprecedented receptiveness because of the rapid secularization of their outlook, and also there is an urgency because of the influences of humanism as well as Communism and Marxism, sowing the seeds of political rebellion. Missionary societies have not yet realized the significance of this huge segment of the population; and all support must be given to the work of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students and similar bodies in their attempts to reach the student world.

(ii) Urban attraction. The growth of cities continues and they therefore have great significance for any strategy of mission. Peru's capital, Lima, for instance, holds fifteen per cent of the total population of the country. Kinshasa has 1,300,000 compared with about 250,000 in 1960. The Evangelical Fellowship of India has for some years now encouraged penetration plans in a number of Indian cities, when the local churches have worked together for twelve months' concentrated evangelistic effort among different sections of the urban community.

(iii) Traveling students and immigrant communities. For different reasons, these two groups are strategic sections for evangelistic effort today. The first because of their potential for the church on their return home, and the second because of their need to find Christ in the new environment away from the old religious ties.

Can we look at our programs in the light of these strategic groupings? Where are our churches' outreach or our missionary societies' endeavors chiefly concentrated? Half the population of the world is questioning, venturing youth. Is our hand stretched out to them, or are we still reaching over their heads or evading them in our journey to less significant groups? Without forgetting the unreached inaccessible tribes who need Christ, are we really involved in evangelism among the great sea of city dwellers?

e. Training for this strategy. There is need for a review of training methods in all theological and missionary training colleges. We call for church planters. Where is training for church planting available in our institutions of training for the ministry? The strategy is to make disciples to the ends of the earth — God's strategy for the saving of men in his world. Where can we really learn to disciple men? The missionary for today, wherever he comes from and wherever he goes, must be trained for this task. Are we training men for a task that does not exist, in a world that no longer exists? These men and women must be prepared for mobility of operation, be flexible in outlook, and highly skilled in their particular gifts. In pursuit of their missionary vocation many of them will have to win a place for themselves alongside professional men of other faiths or no faith, and their opportunities for witness will not be many if the quality of their work is poor. They have to be men prepared to assess their work honestly and regularly, to move purposefully toward the goals they set for themselves in witness and teaching. Missionary work can no longer be sealed within the inviolable evangelical vacuum. It is the man-

ner in which a man acts and reacts amid a host of varying situations and influences that stamps him as a Spirit-filled man fulfilling the Spirit's unswerving purpose of witnessing to Christ.

MISSIONS STRUCTURES

David J. Cho

Is it right that mission structure for world evangelization should remain unchanged in an age which has seen drastic developments in politics, economics, and the military situation during the century-and-a-half after William Carey?

Is it acceptable that the need of world missionary cooperation should still be unheeded during these fourteen years after the merger between the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches?

Is it still not too late for one-way mission traffic from West to East to be replaced by a two-way system?

What is the best and most effective financial policy for world missions in our generation?

What should be the national and cross-territorial cooperative structure for the newly growing Third World mission agencies?

What are the immediate problems of non-Western mission bodies in mutual, cooperative, and effective structure in connection with a Western counterpart which has a history of 150 years?

The purpose of this paper is to call for decisive action to shift from a hemispheric mission structure to a global one, from a one-way to a two-way traffic system.

1. Organizational structure

a. *Structural inversion and functional discord* — Any organization for mission must be a working organization. The principle of the organizational structure of mission should be one that emphasizes workable structure. The mission structure, therefore, is a constant process of innovation according to the degree of church growth and spiritual maturity on mission fields.

Planting structure in embryo is inadequate for cultivating time. Cultivating structure has to be renovated to fit in growing time as a third stage. And growing structure toward its maturity has to be reshaped to become reciprocal in the face of emerging missionary successors.

Eurican mission seems to have no choice but to engage itself in the formation of a fourth stage in cooperation with Latfricasian mission which has now reached its full-grown stage, passing through that of planting, cultivating, and growing. The first reason was that the organizational structure of Eurican mission has long endangered itself on the field because of its own structural inversion and functional discord. The structural inversion is called for when national personnel resources — not only in numbers but in educational level, expertise, and spiritual ability — over a period come to outweigh missionary resources, thus causing a dynamic imbalance. Functional discord, on the other hand, arises when Eurican missionaries and national leaders think very differently on matters of policy.

The intention of mission is that an established national church is to be not only self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating, but