



Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World

THE NEW PEOPLE NEXT DOOR

Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 55

Produced by the Issue Group on this topic at the 2004 Forum

hosted by the

Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

In Pattaya, Thailand, September 29 to October 5, 2004

“A New Vision, a New Heart and a Renewed Call”

In encouraging the publication and study of the Occasional Papers, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization does not necessarily endorse every viewpoint expressed in these papers.

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This Issue Group on Diasporas and International Students
was Issue Group No. 26 A and B
(there were 31 Issue Groups at the Forum)

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The context for the production of the Lausanne Occasional Papers

The Lausanne Movement is an international movement committed to energising

“the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.”

With roots going back to the historical conferences in Edinburgh (1910) and Berlin (1966), the Lausanne Movement was born out of the First International Congress on World Evangelization called by evangelist Billy Graham held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in July 1974. The landmark outcome of this Congress was the **Lausanne Covenant** supported by the 2,430 participants from 150 nations. The covenant proclaims the substance of the Christian faith as historically declared in the creeds and adds a clear missional dimension to our faith. Many activities have emerged from the Lausanne Congress and from the second congress held in Manila in 1989. The Covenant (in a number of languages), and details about the many regional events and specialised conferences which have been undertaken in the name of Lausanne, may be examined online at www.lausanne.org.

The Lausanne International Committee believed it was led by the Holy Spirit to hold another conference which would bring together Christian leaders from around the world. This time the Committee planned to have younger emerging leaders involved and sought funds to enable it to bring a significant contingent from those parts of the world where the church is rapidly growing today. It decided to call the conference a **Forum**. As a Forum its structure would allow people to come and participate if they had something to contribute to one of 31 issues (around which were formed Issue Groups). These issues were chosen through a global research programme seeking to identify the most significant issues in the world today which are of concern in our task to take the *good news* to the world.

This Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) is the report that has emerged from one of these Issue Groups. LOPs have been produced for each of the Issue Groups and information on these and other publications may be obtained online at www.lausanne.org.

The theme of the Forum for World Evangelization held in 2004 was **“A new vision, a new heart, a renewed call.”** This Forum was held in Pattaya, Thailand from September 29 to October 5, 2004. 1,530 participants came from 130 countries to work in one of the 31 Issue Groups.

The Affirmations at the conclusion of the Forum stated:

“There has been a spirit of working together in serious dialogue and prayerful reflection. Representatives from a wide spectrum of cultures and virtually all parts of the world have come together to learn from one another and to seek new direction from the Holy Spirit for world evangelization. They committed themselves to joint action under divine guidance.

The dramatic change in the political and economic landscape in recent years has raised new challenges in evangelization for the church. The polarization between east and west makes it imperative that the church seek God’s direction for the appropriate responses to the present challenges.

In the 31 Issue Groups these new realities were taken into consideration, including the HIV pandemic, terrorism, globalization, the global role of media, poverty, persecution of Christians, fragmented families, political and religious nationalism, post-modern mind set, oppression of children, urbanization, neglect of the disabled and others.

Great progress was made in these groups as they grappled for solutions to the key challenges of world evangelization. As these groups focused on making specific recommendations, larger strategic themes came to the forefront.

There was affirmation that major efforts of the church must be directed toward those who have no access to the gospel. The commitment to help establish self sustaining churches within 6,000 remaining unreached people groups remains a central priority.

Secondly, the words of our Lord call us to love our neighbour as ourselves. In this we have failed greatly. We renew our commitment to reach out in love and compassion to those who are marginalised because of disabilities or who have different lifestyles and spiritual perspectives. We commit to reach out to children and young people who constitute a majority of the world's population, many of whom are being abused, forced into slavery, armies and child labour.

A third stream of a strategic nature acknowledges that the growth of the church is now accelerating outside of the western world. Through the participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America, we recognise the dynamic nature and rapid growth of the church in the *South*. Church leaders from the *South* are increasingly providing exemplary leadership in world evangelization.

Fourthly, we acknowledge the reality that much of the world is made up of oral learners who understand best when information comes to them by means of stories. A large proportion of the world's populations are either unable to or unwilling to absorb information through written communications. Therefore, a need exists to share the "Good News" and to disciple new Christians in story form and parables.

Fifthly, we call on the church to use media to effectively engage the culture in ways that draw non-believers toward spiritual truth and to proclaim Jesus Christ in culturally relevant ways.

Finally, we affirm the priesthood of all believers and call on the church to equip, encourage and empower women, men and youth to fulfil their calling as witnesses and co-labourers in the world wide task of evangelization.

Transformation was a theme which emerged from the working groups. We acknowledge our own need to be continually transformed, to continue to open ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit, to the challenges of God's word and to grow in Christ together with fellow Christians in ways that result in social and economic transformation. We acknowledge that the scope of the gospel and building the Kingdom of God involves, body, mind, soul and spirit. Therefore we call for increasing integration of service to society and proclamation of the gospel.

We pray for those around the world who are being persecuted for their faith and for those who live in constant fear of their lives. We uphold our brothers and sisters who are suffering. We recognize that the reality of the persecuted church needs to be increasingly on the agenda of the whole Body of Christ. At the same time, we also acknowledge the importance of loving and doing good to our enemies while we fight for the right of freedom of conscience everywhere.

We are deeply moved by the onslaught of the HIV/AIDS pandemic – the greatest human emergency in history. The Lausanne movement calls all churches everywhere to prayer and holistic response to this plague.

"9/11," the war in Iraq, the war on terror and its reprisals compel us to state that we must not allow the gospel or the Christian faith to be captive to any one geo-political entity. We affirm that the Christian faith is above all political entities.

We are concerned and mourn the death and destruction caused by all conflicts, terrorism and war. We call for Christians to pray for peace, to be proactively involved in reconciliation and avoid all attempts to turn any conflict into a religious war. Christian mission in this context lies in becoming peacemakers.

We pray for peace and reconciliation and God's guidance in how to bring about peace through our work of evangelization. We pray for God to work in the affairs of nations to open doors of opportunity for the gospel. We call on the church to mobilize every believer to focus specific consistent prayer for the evangelization of their communities and the world.

In this Forum we have experienced the partnership of men and women working together. We call on the church around the world to work towards full partnership of men and women in the work of world evangelism by maximising the gifts of all.

We also recognize the need for greater intentionality in developing future leaders. We call on the church to find creative ways to release emerging leaders to serve effectively.”

Numerous practical recommendations for local churches to consider were offered. These will be available on the Lausanne website and in the Lausanne Occasional Papers. It is our prayer that these many case studies and action plans will be used of God to mobilise the church to share a clear and relevant message using a variety of methods to reach the most neglected or resistant groups so that everyone will have the opportunity to hear the gospel message and be able to respond to this good news in faith.

We express our gratitude to the Thai Church which has hosted us and to their welcoming presentation to the Forum. We are profoundly gratefully to God for the privilege of being able to gather here from the four corners of the earth. We have developed new partnerships, made new friends and encouraged one another in our various ministries. Notwithstanding the resistance to the gospel in many places and the richness of an inherited religious and cultural tradition we here at the Forum have accepted afresh the renewed call to be obedient to the mandate of Christ. We commit ourselves to making His saving love known so that the whole world may have opportunity to accept God’s gift of salvation through Christ.”

These affirmations indicate the response of the participants to the Forum outcomes and their longing that the whole church may be motivated by the outcomes of the Forum to strengthen its determination to be obedient to God’s calling.

May the case studies and the practical suggestions in this and the other LOPs be of great help to you and your church as you seek to find new ways and a renewed call to proclaim the saving love of Jesus Christ

David Claydon

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Introduction

This publication is about the opportunities and challenges presented to Christians by the presence of people from different countries, who are now living near them. It is written for vicars, pastors and other leaders of Christian congregations and ministries. It describes the findings of about 50 people who discussed this subject at the Lausanne 2004 Forum for World Evangelization in Thailand in October 2004. They wanted this message to be conveyed to all churches and ministries who are faced with these opportunities and challenges.

The movement of peoples in our world creates many new challenges. The word '*Diaspora*' meaning 'a scattering' is used to describe this large-scale movement of people from their homeland to settle permanently or temporarily in other countries. It was first used of the Jewish people scattered in exile from the 6th century BC onwards. The word is also used in the New Testament of God's new people, the followers of Christ, scattered in 'exile' (1 Peter 1:1; James 1:1).

There have been many Diasporas over the centuries. However, the 20th and 21st centuries have seen unprecedented movements of peoples, mostly because of war, famine, economic needs and opportunities. The effects of these migrations are deep and wide-ranging for the Diaspora communities themselves, for their host countries, and for their country of origin.

God controls these movements. The Bible is full of examples, from Genesis to Revelation, of God using them for his purposes. Christ's followers in all countries have great opportunities to engage positively and creatively with these movements, in order to influence them for good and to share the good news of Jesus in ways that are culturally and socially relevant. The overall goal for Christians is to work towards or to seek to influence societies in ways that promote harmony, mutual respect and the celebration of diversity, providing the opportunity for all to explore and discover spiritual truth for themselves and to hear the good news of Jesus.

One of God's commandments to His people is to love the foreigner and stranger in the land and to treat them with respect. God's command, reflecting His compassion for outsiders, has implications for Diaspora communities, the churches of the countries of origin, and particularly for the receiving churches of the host countries. The church in each of these contexts is challenged to remove negative attitudes and practices and to seize the opportunities.

A limited number of Diasporas are presented in this publication. We tried also to cover others like the Diasporas from English and French speaking Africa, the Arab countries of the Middle East, the countries of the former Soviet Union, Vietnam, Cambodia and Latin America. We were not able to do this in time for Forum 2004.

We would still like to let the whole church know about the other Diasporas. If representatives from these groups would like to describe their history for a second edition of this book, we would be glad to hear from them. Write to our Chairman, Ram Gidoomal, South Asian Concern, P O Box 43, SUTTON, Surrey SM2 5WL, UK

For more information about Forum 2004, go to the Website www.lausanne.org

1. We are all Migrants

The Scope of the Diasporas

Very few people today live in the geographical area where their ancestors originated. Most of us have come from somewhere else even if it was centuries ago.

The movement of peoples has occurred over the centuries for different reasons. In earlier ages, peoples of Asia scattered throughout their hemisphere and even crossed over to North America. South-Sea islanders took sail and inhabited far reaches of the South Pacific.

In the 16th-19th centuries, people moved within the Portuguese, Spanish, French and British Empires to fulfil economic needs. For example, Indian workers went to plantations in Fiji and Central America, or to develop the railways of East Africa. The colonial 'motherlands' were also centres of education and culture, attracting the cream of the future leadership of their colonies.

Millions of Europeans migrated in the 19th century to North and South America, Africa, Australia and New Zealand to escape poverty and make new lives abroad. This proved to be a major factor in the evangelization of the world even before modern missions.

The 20th and 21st centuries have seen unprecedented movements of peoples. War, famine and political upheaval were major causes of disruption and displacement in Armenia, Cyprus, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Somalia, Palestine and many other places. Post World War II Europe coincided with the end of the colonial era, resulting in an enormous demand for workers, both skilled and unskilled in the former colonial powers. There was also vast growth in the number of international students from former colonies coming to universities in the West to gain skills to build their countries.

- In 2004: There were an estimated 174 million migrants in the world (reliable statistics are very hard to obtain).
- There were 35 million migrants in sub-Saharan Africa.
- More than 20 million people in Western Europe alone were living in a different country from the one in which they were born.
- In the USA there were 31 million migrants, 85% of these had come from outside Europe, compared to only 38% in 1970.
- In 2003: The 15 countries making up the EU at that time had a net inflow of nearly 1 million migrants.
- In 2001: Some 20 million non-European Union nationals were living in the EU, and this amounted to over 5% of the total population.
- By 2050: One in four people living in the USA are likely to be Hispanic.
- Over 5 million people sought asylum in the EU between 1990 and 2000.

Regional and tribal conflicts in Africa, resulting partly from the colonial divisions of the continent, caused many to be displaced. At the end of the Cold War in 1989 another movement of peoples was triggered within Europe.

At the beginning of the 21st century the flow of peoples is likely to continue and increase for the foreseeable future.

These are factors that will fuel this growth

- on-going economic inequalities

- the quest for education and economic opportunity
- escape from political and social oppression
- demand for skilled workers
- aging populations in the developed world, in need of personal care and pension support
- religious persecution
- inter-tribal conflict
- students used to receive scholarships, but are now more likely to be funded from families
- urbanization
- population growth.

Some migrants become *permanent residents* in their host country though they may not have originally intended to stay. Some even become citizens. Others are *temporary migrants* including: international students (see Chapter 7A), contract workers, business people, professionals and entrepreneurs (see Chapter 7F), international bureaucrats and NGO workers, seamen, illegal immigrants, travellers, and military and diplomatic personnel. A third category is displaced people, such as *refugees* or *asylum seekers* who may be either temporary or permanent (covered by the Lausanne Forum Issue Group focusing on People At Risk)

Examples of Christian activity within Diaspora movements today

Certain ethnic groups have significant population outside of their homeland. Four of these are the Chinese, South Asians, Filipinos, and Iranians. Essays which include a historical sketch, conditions in host countries and evangelism approaches are found in the Appendices.

2. Diaspora in the Bible

What is behind the Diasporas?

The movement of peoples

God controls the movement of peoples

The movement of peoples in our world is part of God's purpose, from the Garden of Eden onwards. Paul told the Athenians that God 'determined the times set for [every nation] and the exact places where they should live' so that they would 'seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him' (Acts 17:26-27).

God moves His people in judgment and for redemption

God acted in judgment to expel Adam and Eve from Eden, to send Cain away, and to divide the languages at Babel. But then he began his purpose of redemption through the call of Abram to leave his own country and people for the land of promise, in order to father a nation through which all nations would be blessed. The new nation of Israel began in *Diaspora*, when Jacob and his sons were forced to Egypt (as economic migrants) and then migrated again to inherit the land of promise.

Throughout her history Israel had further experiences of God scattering her in judgment (Leviticus 26:33; Deuteronomy 28:64; Ezekiel 36:19) but also meeting her in the *Diaspora* for renewal and teaching so that she could communicate God's character to others (Ezekiel 36:23-27).

Diaspora was the place in which Israel learned new things about God, from the wilderness experience of the Pentateuch to the exile under the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman empires.

By the time of Jesus, the Jews were scattered throughout the known world – 'from India to Ethiopia' at least (Esther 8:9). Through the network of synagogues around which their communities were organized, first faith in the One Creator God and later the good news of Jesus the Messiah were transmitted everywhere, to both Jews and Gentiles.

God scattered the early Christian believers from Jerusalem through persecution (Acts 8.1, 4). As a result they crossed cultural barriers to share the gospel with the Samaritans and start the first Gentile church (Acts 11.19).

The New Testament writers addressed God's people in *Diaspora*, not only scattered culturally and socially, but spiritual travellers on the way to the homeland, living in two cultures at once (1 Peter 1:1; 2:11-12; James 1:1; Hebrews 11:13-17; 13:14).

God controls the movement of 'secular' powers

God's control is not limited to 'His' people. It extends to the rise and fall of the world's political and military powers. The vision of the empires in Daniel 2 and 7 demonstrates a philosophy of history: God is in supreme control - morally and spiritually, politically and militarily. Isaiah and Jeremiah emphasized that Egypt and Assyria, Babylon and Persia were instruments that God used for his purposes, and were themselves subject to his judgment (Isaiah 10:5; 45:1; Jeremiah 25:9-12). He directed the movement not only of Israel but of other nations as well (Amos 9:7).

A vehicle for change

God's people constantly faced the challenge of interacting with alien cultures and traditions.

One response: conformity and compromise

Israel was intended to belong to God and be distinct in every way, a model to the other nations (Exodus 19:4-6; Deuteronomy 4:6-8). The entry into Canaan brought new opportunities, but also brought challenges of alien cultural and religious practices to which Israel was constantly attracted. Israel failed to be distinctive. Instead she followed the other nations into idolatry, injustice, immorality, oppression and violence. The result was the judgment of the exile.

Another response: separate cultural identity

The small community who returned from exile to Jerusalem faced the old pressures to conform to alien religious practices. **Ezra and Nehemiah** insisted on very strict rules, particularly with regard to the Sabbath and marriage with people of other faiths. This tight control enabled the tiny Jerusalem community to maintain its identity and survive through the following centuries.

The Jewish Diaspora built their community life around the synagogues. It was both a religious and cultural identity. They adapted in one major aspect – by translating their Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek - the Septuagint. This gave access to God's word, not only to their younger generations, but also to the Gentiles.

Many Gentiles were attracted by their faith in the One Creator God and their clear *ethical* teaching. They became known as 'god-fearers'. But very few were willing to submit to the *cultural* requirements of diet and circumcision, which would cut them off from their Gentile society.

Struggling to adapt

The early church also wrestled with this question of culture. It began by assuming all the cultural requirements of the Jewish law. Even when God scattered the believers through persecution they preached only to Jews (Acts 8:1; 11:19). It took God's direct revelation to Peter and the initiative of *Diaspora* believers to encourage them to cross the cultural barriers and share the good news with Gentiles. The cultural issue almost split the church, as we see from the debate of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) and Paul's letters (Galatians 1-2; Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8-10).

The spiritual opportunities

The good news is for people of all cultures

Paul's theology grappled with the issue of mission to those of other cultures and faiths. How can God's kingdom be truly *universal*, so that people of all cultures can fit in and be truly accessible to all, regardless of their religious and moral achievement?

Paul found the answer to both questions in the gospel of God's grace. All have failed to reach God's standard - religious and non-religious alike - and so God has provided the solution himself in the death and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 3:22-25; 4:25). This sets the gospel free to fit into any culture and background, but the church has to work it out in practice in each generation.

Christ's followers do not belong to any single culture. They are not bound by any form of dress or diet, language or style of worship. But they still have to express their faith and ethics within a particular culture and society. There is no separate 'kingdom culture', unconnected with society.

Diaspora followers of Christ can help to develop new forms of cultural expression, with a fusion of different cultures, which will enable people of all backgrounds to draw near to God and follow Christ.

God's people should be faithful and obedient wherever they are placed

The Old Testament gives several positive examples of those who were faithful to God while living in a changed *Diaspora* environment:

Joseph was enabled by God to be faithful and prosper in very difficult *Diaspora* circumstances. As a result he not only influenced Egypt for good but also fulfilled God's purpose of blessing for Israel and through her for the whole world.

Naaman's Israelite servant girl witnessed to the power of the true God in her *Diaspora* location of domestic captivity, while **Ruth**, the foreign widow of an Israelite husband became a witness to God's faithfulness.

Jeremiah wrote to the Jewish exiles in Babylon: 'seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf' (Jeremiah 29.4-7).

Daniel and his friends were outstanding examples of how to live in an alien environment, particularly in the areas of diet and worship (Daniel 1:8; 3:18; 6:10).

Esther remained faithful in her exalted but lonely position and so was used to save God's people.

God's people should welcome all, especially the 'alien' and the marginalized

The early church struggled to accept people of different cultural backgrounds, as we have seen (Romans 15:1-7). James challenged his readers about discrimination on the basis of wealth (James 2:1-9), while the Gospel writers showed the example of Jesus who received people of all backgrounds, especially the marginalized (Luke 5:13, 29-32; 7:36-37; 8:2).

The Old Testament witnessed to God's overall purpose, from the beginning, to bless all nations (Genesis 12.1-3; compare Psalm 93:10-13; Isaiah 2:2; 11:10; 49:6; 56:7).

It also gave some specific pointers on welcoming strangers:

- The inclusion of Rahab and Ruth in the genealogies of David and of Jesus showed that Israel was willing (sometimes) to include and honour people of 'alien' background (Matthew 1:5-6).
- The special duty of care for the vulnerable and marginalized - widows, orphans and 'strangers' or 'resident aliens' (Exodus 23:9; Leviticus 19:33; Deuteronomy 10:19). Israel could understand and empathize with the situation of the 'alien' or 'stranger', as she had been in that situation in Egypt.

Passages like Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 5:3; James 1:27 show that the early church put this into practice and became known through the 2nd and 3rd centuries for its practical care of the weak and vulnerable. Hospitality - especially to strangers - is not just a Middle Eastern cultural value but a vital spiritual principle (Matthew 25:35; Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9; Hebrews 13:2). See further *The Biblical Perspective for International Student Ministry - Our Call to Hospitality and Community*.

God's people should look forward to His ultimate purpose for human society

'The kingdoms of the world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ' (Revelation 11:15). 'Babylon the great city', the icon of global economic activity, has been replaced by 'Jerusalem, the heavenly city' (18:2; 21:2) and in that city are 'a great number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues', worshipping God together (7:9).

The vision of the book of Revelation is one of infinite diversity in perfect unity. The reference to nations, tribes, peoples, tongues is repeated seven times in Revelation, each time in a different order. John wants to make his point absolutely clear.

The 'gospel of the kingdom' is to be preached to all nations, before this great vision will be fulfilled (Matthew 24:14). Jesus told his apostles 'you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8), echoing the words of Isaiah '...that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth' (Isaiah 49:6; compare Acts 13:47).

So the gospel is to be shared with all, while at the same time we pray that all will live together in peace and harmony, even in a society that does not yet accept the gospel. This leads to some creative tensions, which are all the more obvious and pressing in our global 'Diaspora' world, where the cultures and faiths are brought together and combined in new and unexpected ways. Diaspora followers of Christ, along with their brothers and sisters in the host communities are, best placed to work out this challenge, and so fulfil God's ultimate purpose.

3. Melting Pot or Salad Bowl? The Range of Changes

'However you look at it – sooner or later Diaspora brings change.'

Diaspora – the movement of people - inevitably stirs things up. It forces cultures and traditions to interact with one another - sometimes unwillingly. Change is inevitable.

A host of relationships are affected; between the host communities and incoming individuals; between the host communities and the Diaspora communities; between the Diaspora communities and their countries of origin; and within the Diaspora communities themselves. They affect those involved mentally, emotionally and spiritually as well as in practical ways.

Diaspora people, by definition, belong to more than one culture and have to learn to adapt. Some feel that their identity is questioned. They also contribute to changes in the countries and communities in which they live - sometimes welcome, sometimes not. Some 'newcomers' arrive into secure situations. For others, it is a sheer matter of survival. This means that they must be continually active, alert to their own interests, protective of their identity, while at the same time under pressure to adapt and integrate.

The host community – including, unfortunately, the Christian community – might feel uncomfortable about the 'newcomers', or even see them as a threat. They might be seen as an economic threat – affecting jobs and housing. They might be seen as a cultural threat – changing eating habits, music, traditional customs etc. They might be seen as a political threat – taking over control of decision making bodies. They might be seen also as a religious and ethical threat – influencing the established concepts of God, male-female status and relationships and family responsibilities.

Change can be painful and the changes brought by the movement of peoples are no exception. While the outcomes may be creative, the process can be long and hard for everybody involved. There is no agreement on how diverse societies should live together. Different models are debated. The American ideal of society was the *Melting Pot* where everything is assimilated in the whole. For some that has been replaced by the Salad Bowl ideal in which each part contributes to the whole whilst maintaining its distinctive form and flavor. Some prioritize *Integration* while others emphasize *Multiculturalism*. Many want *Contact* but fear *Assimilation*, while others desire total *Separation*. Whatever form the interaction may take, the result will still inevitably be change and the changes have to be coped with.

Personal changes

From simplicity to complexity

The cultural and social interactions between host communities and incoming people are complex. There are countless combinations and patterns of interaction. Boundaries are always under negotiation. Individuals become more than one person and communities are less likely to be monocultural and homogenous and more likely to be bicultural or even multicultural. Sometimes there is more openness to the gospel among the Diaspora because people in transition are receptive to new ideas. (See Enoch Wan, 'The Phenomenon of Diaspora: Missiological implications for Christian Missions,' in *Scattered: The Filipino Global Presence* (Manila, LifeChange Publishing Inc, 2004).

From local to global

Culture has become less confined by geography. It is not only manufactured products such as pizzas and cars that can cross national borders - and possibly be re-formed, repackaged and re-exported from one country to another. Ideas, fashions and life-styles travel more freely too. They travel faster and reach further than ever

before. Through their links with their countries of origin, Diaspora people are a significant channel of cultural extension as well as economic support.

'Even though migrants invest socially, economically and politically in their new society, they may continue to participate in the daily life of the society from which they emigrated but which they did not abandon. Transmigrants are often bilingual, can lead dual lives, move easily between cultures, frequently maintain homes in two countries, and are incorporated as social actors in both.' (Hanciles 2003:147)

For example, a young Indian student in the UK learns about New Age psychology and takes it back to India, where it is picked up by young Hindus who were not previously interested in their religion.

From isolation to involvement - or the opposite

The Diaspora experience can result in the isolation of individuals and communities, but it can also result in the opposite. Individuals and communities, who previously had lived in comparative isolation, now become more open and contact-seeking. Instead of 'going-it-alone' they now look for fellowship.

A woman in Bangladesh secured a tri-band mobile phone from micro-enterprise funding and became the telephone exchange for her remote village. When the phone rang, she would call from her doorway to a neighbour to tell her that her son was calling from San Francisco.

Changes for the worse

Some Diaspora people have to pay a heavy price. They have left behind family, friends, career, and status. Their dreams of the future have been shattered. Their expectations towards their new life have turned out to be mistaken. A Sudanese man in London has two engineering degrees but has to engage in domestic work to support himself because his specialty is not in demand in the UK.

Second and third generation immigrants become disillusioned and frustrated. The influence of the host society widens the gap between generations. Racial, religious and social discrimination continues despite legislation, public debate and the efforts of human rights activists. Feelings of exclusion and resentment fester and grow.

"We came to work in your homes as domestic helpers, contractual workers in your farms, factories and hospitals. We provide the human power for your ships that crisscross the oceans. Our work is backbreaking, oftentimes dangerous, dirty, degrading, de-skilling and dehumanizing. Many of us are abused mainly because of our being migrants and people of colour.

"Poverty, inequality, civil conflicts, persecution and desire to survive, forced us to leave our country and people. Regrettably, we do not feel a 'warm Christian welcome'. Instead, we are blamed for the crisis of your profit-driven society. We are seen as a wave of plague that must be turned back and controlled. There is now fear and trembling in our midst, not knowing what the future holds for us. What keeps us going is the satisfaction that our euro remittances help our families to survive, that soon we will return home - a dream which is getting to be a myth and illusion. In order to survive and to have hope and meaning in life, we organize 'migrant churches' which seem to fascinate some of you, for reasons we sometimes cannot understand.

"Deep within, we burn with anger, pain and humiliation. Anger at a sense of helplessness, pain in feeling alone and humiliation at the loss of self-respect. Many of us are caught in a cycle of kneeling before the toilet to clean it and kneeling in prayer for strength to do the same."

Cesar Taguba, An Open Letter to Christians in Europe
Proceeding Documents of the Conference

ESSERE CHIESA INSIEME / UNITING IN DIVERSITY, Ciampino-Sassone 26-28 March 2004

Changes for the better

Economics

There is no doubt that Diaspora for some has led to great prosperity and growing influence. The contribution to the economies of South East Asia by the Chinese Diaspora has been massive. Many Chinese have become rich in the process.

The Korean Diaspora is not far behind in the West, with a distinctive contribution in the countries of the former Soviet block and Central Asia in particular.

Indians went to East Africa to build the railways and do business. They dominated the local economies, but were then expelled in the 1960/70s. Some stayed on and others have recently returned. Those who were driven out are now prospering in Britain and North America.

The best known example of a prosperous Diaspora is the Jews. There is almost no sphere of life in which they have not excelled and few countries where some of them are not to be found.

The economic impact of these Diaspora groups on their own countries is also a matter of record. The greater part of the investment that has led to the remarkable growth in the economy of mainland China has come from the Chinese Diaspora all over South East Asia.

Liaison between South Asians in Diaspora is a significant factor in some of the successful economic projects in India and Pakistan. (See also the impact of Diaspora remittances on the economy of the Philippines in Chapter 7C).

Some people, such as entrepreneurs and professionals, migrate from richer countries to poorer countries in order to maximize their own financial opportunities, and sometimes out of a desire to serve others.

Education

Immigrants are often popularly associated with low-grade workers. Yet in America more than 30% of the members of the country's scientific and engineering workforce are immigrants. And 5% of science and engineering doctorates go to international students.

The National Health Service in UK would collapse if it did not have Diaspora health professionals to serve in it.

Politics

The election of people from other nations to seats in local and national governments is becoming increasingly common. Diaspora Jews returned to Palestine and created a new nation of Israel. They also influence US policy on the Middle East.

Culture

Diaspora people are prominent in the food industry, fashion, entertainment, music, clothing and dance. (See The UK Maharajahs by Ram Gidoomal.)

Immigration and creativity

'Creative outputs are 'bastards', whose parents may not recognize them... Every situation that increases the possibilities of contaminations between different cultural formulations potentially heralds creativity...

'Countries which are less open to immigration are the ones that should be at the bottom of the creativity, innovation and development rankings... The way immigrants were welcomed fed the technological boom in areas like San Francisco and Seattle. Almost a third of all the high-tech enterprises in Silicon Valley in the nineties were founded by immigrants from the seventies and eighties...

'The cultural scope of the immigrant, whether cultured or living in the street, can be a crucial fact for that recombining of concepts which is at the heart of creativity. Moreover it is above all minorities and not the establishment that push for change...

‘The need to open borders to immigration is even more urgent when populations are ageing.’
Riccardo Viale at a conference on ‘*The Age of Europe*’, Pontignano, Italy, September 2004

Changes that are confusing

Religion and ethics

Perhaps the most difficult changes brought by the Diasporas have to do with religion and moral standards. Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist temples and Muslim mosques are springing up in many cities. Sometimes church buildings are sold and they become mosques. We are experiencing now what other countries experienced when Christian churches began to be built in their cities in earlier centuries.

We may not like this. We may resent the call to prayer from the minaret of a mosque, but we have to adjust to it. It can be quite confusing. Sometimes we have more in common with Muslims with regard to prayer and giving and sexual standards than we have with our post-Christian neighbours. People of different religions sometimes unite to fight a common cause.

Christians, like all others, are caught up in this process of interaction and change. We are members of society and therefore part of the ongoing cultural and social change. However, Christians also view society and their fellow citizens – whatever their background - from an additional and overriding perspective that will sometimes be radically different from the prevailing views. They see things in the light of the Kingdom of God.

Recognizing that God is in control will enable us to seek how we can contribute in creative ways, whether we are part of Diaspora or host communities. In every situation we will seek God’s good purpose for human society, the furtherance of the gospel, and above all God’s glory.

4. The Spiritual Opportunities Where Christians come in

“Impacting the world without having to move;
Reaching unreached people groups;
Racial reconciliation;
Shaping future world leaders.”

These are some of the possibilities in the creative ferment of Diaspora. People from all over the world are living just across the street, attending the same schools, working at the same companies. Those in transition are often more open to the gospel. God's people are called to seize the opportunities for loving service (John 13:35), sharing the good news in season and out of season (1 Timothy 4:2; Acts 8:4-5), and making disciples (Acts 11:26; Philippians 4:22; Genesis 39:2; 41; 50:20). This call is to God's people in *Diaspora communities* and in the *host countries*.

Opportunities

Host Christian communities

- *Provide loving hospitality to care for the immediate needs of the 'stranger'*
People are most open when they are in transition; they are also the most needy during this time. This presents an opportune time to serve the felt and spiritual needs of their new neighbours, fulfilling the Biblical mandate to care for and welcome newcomers in our midst. In Australia, the Chinese church has found table fellowship and studying the Bible a vital instrument of reaching out to the local Chinese.
- *Break down racial, religious and cultural barriers before they can be formed*
Misunderstandings between cultures create obstacles. When loving hospitality is given and dialogue is present, these barriers can be prevented and potentially a more peaceful community may result. In a Midwestern city of the USA, there was racial tension against the Indian immigrant community. A church leader suggested a community dinner with the Hindus and Sikhs. This broke down walls of suspicion. It was followed by visits and spiritual dialogue. They now have a high level of trust and mutual respect.
- *Grow in mutual cross-cultural and Biblical values*
As cultures meet and dialogue, they can grow not only in mutual understanding but also in Christ-likeness. Christians have the opportunity to relate to their new neighbours and gain cultural understanding. On the other hand, the host culture can be influenced by their Diaspora communities. For example, individualistic Western culture may be impacted by an Asian collective culture with its emphasis on family solidarity.
- *Shape leaders from around the world*
Many international students are educated in foreign countries with the potential of becoming influential leaders in their country of origin. Gandhi and Mandela were both international students.
- *Reach people groups with fewer obstacles to receive the gospel*
People are more open when they leave countries that are resistant to the gospel. Language and geographical barriers to the gospel are also removed. Mexican immigrants were hosted and prayed for in a Christian woman's living room without her having to leave her home to do foreign missions.
- *Create new relevant forms in expressing Christianity*
Often Western forms of church are not embraced by other cultures. There are cultural practices which can be transformed into a presentation of the gospel. Diaspora followers of Christ have organized a 'Festival of Lights'

and an 'Alternative Diwali' celebration to share the good news with Hindu and Sikh friends.

- *Provide training for Christian leadership*
Partnering with Diaspora churches to provide Christian leadership training impacts the leadership of the Diaspora. Some host churches in Finland offer weekly theological education through Evening Bible School for the leaders of Diaspora churches using the Global University curriculum.

Diaspora Christian communities

- *Contribute to the society of their new country*
“Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” (Jeremiah 29:7) In Finland the international Christians filled the Cathedral on the Independence Day, 2004. They wanted to indicate their willingness to seek the welfare of Finland, and proclaim a blessing. The gathering was used to publicly provide the statistics that showed that the majority of migrants are Christian – not Muslim as the media often portrays.
- *Reach out to others in their own Diaspora through hospitality (Acts 8:4)*
Knowing the struggles and needs of a newcomer is an advantage for those who have already been there. This, coupled with an understanding of culture and language, can greatly minister to a fellow countryman (or woman). A Chinese American Christian professor regularly receives Chinese international students into his home, picking them up from the airport, taking them grocery shopping and generally orienting them to the culture. Many have come to his Bible study as a result.
- *Reach out to other Diaspora communities (Acts 11:19-20)*
Immigrants and International Students share common concerns of immigration, cross-cultural adjustments and spiritual needs. This enables them to know how to help each other regardless of country of origin. One Diaspora group may easily identify with the challenges of living in a new environment and may approach other Diaspora communities without a sense of superiority. Diaspora Christian communities are often willing to share facilities with other Diaspora Christian communities. A Chinese church is reaching Hispanic people through meeting felt needs and Asian Indian immigrants through sporting events. Christian international students are well placed to reach other international students.
- *Reach out to the marginalized people in the host country who may not be receptive to those of the host country (2 Samuel 5)*
Marginalized people, who are uncomfortable in their own host culture churches, are often attracted to Diaspora churches. A Filipino American lives in a low income Hispanic neighbourhood to serve to needs of the local children.
- *Be bridges of the gospel to the people in their countries of origin and in other countries (Acts 15:36-41; 8:26-40)*
Since people in the Diasporas are often admired as successful by their own people in their home country, they have opportunities to share their new found faith when they visit their homeland. A migrant in Australia shared a sermon tape with her parents back home in Hong Kong. After listening to the tape, the father became a Christian. International students who visit or return home have opportunities to tell their families and friends about Jesus.
- *Revitalize the Christian community in their host country*
Migrant Christians and their communities can significantly help established Christianity in the West to renew its mission and evangelism (Matthew 5:13; 13:33 and Jongeneel 2002:33). For example, African churches in London are growing much more rapidly than any other. South East Asians in

Sydney changed a dying church to a thriving one. Though actual close co-operation and interaction is still in its infancy, the Diaspora Christians are still having an inspirational effect (See Chapter 7). A similar story about a declining mono-cultural church being significantly revitalized as a growing multi-cultural and multi-national church is recounted in Where the Nations Meet: The Church in a Multicultural World by Stephen A Rhodes (InterVarsity Press, 1998).

Considerations

Host Christian community considerations

- Patronizing attitudes in the host culture lead to assuming a spiritual and cultural superiority. This in turn marginalizes the Diaspora community and church by disempowering the Diaspora leaders. Christians need to be careful not fall into this trap.
- Often the church's attitudes of racial and religious prejudice hinder sharing of the gospel. Black Christians from the Caribbean found coldness instead of welcome when they came to Britain. East African Christians never thought that Asians could follow Christ and so they did not witness to them for many years. International students feel rejected by such a climate, especially in church. Walls were built instead of being torn down. When the church remains silent to the vulnerable, immigrants and international students may face hostility without receiving assistance. Rather than loving and welcoming people of other faiths, Christians often ignore or avoid them.
- Lack of knowledge contributes to fear. The growing number of non-Christian religious buildings, the popularity of Eastern meditation practices and the political agenda of some religious groups can cause Christians to be paralysed rather than seize the opportunities for outreach. Some Christians do not allow or pursue culturally relevant worship forms, dress styles, and practices out of fear of compromising their faith with other religions.

Diaspora Christian communities considerations

- Lack of resources and understanding of their role in evangelism, discipleship and mission cause barriers. Challenges of Diaspora churches include lack of full-time or trained leaders, lack of cooperation of the church in the host country, lack of facilities, and sustainability.
- Diaspora believers are often a minority within a minority. They are a minority racially and within their own ethnic group they are a religious minority. As a result, they may feel insecure about sharing their faith with others, especially those of the host culture. Experience with rejection leads to fear of stepping out and more rejection.
- Diaspora communities often are inward looking. Many desire to retain cultural identity to the extreme of forming cultural ghettos. For the Diaspora church, inward looking behaviour creates barriers to reaching out to other ethnic Diasporas, the host culture and the marginalized.

5. Guiding Principles Making a Difference

Holding our commitments in creative tension

Increasingly this planet is becoming a 'Diaspora' world. This leads to some creative tensions where the cultures and faiths are brought together and combined in new and unexpected ways. In light of this, the following guidelines are relevant:

- **Christians need to combine their commitment to freedom of religion and conscience with the imperative to share the good news.** We have to hold together our absolute commitment to sharing the good news of Jesus along with an equal commitment to freedom of conscience, religion, and speech for all. Though Christians have not always been consistent in this, it is vital that we grasp and practice this truth in today's pluralistic world. One example was when a group of Asian business people of all faiths asked a Christian to organize a conference on 'Healing the Wounds,' that looked at issues of religious and social justice in Gujarat, India, in 2002. We must not let our commitment to tolerance keep us from finding ways to share our faith.
- **Christians need to stress the need for a personal and relational commitment to Christ that transforms all dimensions of their life individually and as a community.** A growing Christian will increasingly demonstrate Christ-like character, attitudes and goals. People from the background of another religion will be likely to think that being a Christian is just membership of a church or taking the name of Christian. We must present a clear explanation of the gospel.
- **Christians need to hold to their commitment to Christ, while affirming only that which is biblically acceptable in their own heritage, culture, and community.** They also need to value what in other cultures is biblically acceptable.
- **Commitment to Christ is often perceived as identification with Western culture.** People assume that turning to Christ involves leaving one's own community and joining another. We must work actively against this misunderstanding.
- **Christians need to affirm the uniqueness of Christ in ways that welcome those of other faiths.** Christ is unique because he has dealt with the universal problem of sin. Since he died for all, he welcomes all, regardless of background and needs. All come to a saving knowledge of God on the same basis of his free grace. Use of the term 'Christian' may have some negative connotations. The use of the terms 'follower of Christ' or 'disciple of Christ' may be more acceptable. So we need to be sensitive in the way we speak about Christ and our Christian faith.

From across the street to across the world.

The presence of the Diasporas provides exciting opportunities and potential to share the good news. New arrivals may have greater access to the gospel now than they had in their own country. At the same time they may have a greater need for discovery as they redefine their identity. For example, students from restrictive societies studying in New Zealand and Australia often take the opportunity to explore the gospel.

People of very different cultures and faiths from all around the world are living next to each other. As God gives opportunity, we need to seek ways to use this to share the good news not just with the new neighbours, but, over the longer term, with those they have left behind back home.

The traditional distinction between 'foreign missions' and 'home missions' needs to be replaced by a 'multi-directional' concept of 'world missions.'

A whole gospel

Our goal in ministry is to bring about through the gospel, the transformation of individuals, society, and environment (1Peter 2:11ff; 1Timothy 2:1-6). This calls for holistic ministry characterized by the following:

Building bridges

We need to find ways to serve people and care for their felt needs as well as build genuine friendships.

- The Tamil church in East London visited Tamils who were in prison on immigration charges, or who were sick. Their care and prayer had a powerful impact.
- A Chinese congregation in a small city in America connected with illegal immigrants transported from China to the US. Many of the prisoners were unable to speak English and appreciative of the care from the Chinese church. Most came to faith before being deported.
- The Springfield Project in Birmingham works with the families of Mirpuri Muslims from Pakistan, a very tightly closed community. After 7-10 years trust has been built up and there is a new openness.
- 'Operation Friendship' in New Zealand assists students in acculturating to their new society.
- Christians helping Afghani refugee families to adjust to life in Canada have brought some to salvation in Christ.
- An international student minister works with Muslim students in Cambridge through friendship, which has enabled him to be very open and frank. Christian house parties with outdoor activities and food provide a setting for lively evening bible discussions with international students.
- A missionary teaches English as a Second Language to a Punjabi Christian lady who is married to a Sikh husband. This opened the door to assist this family in moving their residence which opened another door to meet an entire extended Sikh family which led to a wonderful opportunity to share the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ with them all.
- A former student for the Brahman priesthood teaches Hindi to a local Christian missionary and opens his heart to hear the story of salvation in Christ. He is now attending a church in his language group.
- Visiting summer youth teams join outreach into the South Asian community. Follow-up has led to a church starting to be planted and regular outreach into about 12 families with the desire to lead them all to the Lord.
- Approaching an ethnic community leader with the statement and question: "Hello! I am a Christian in the area. I was wondering what your community needs that I may encourage or help with." This led to a strong children's and youth program being established and around 200 kids being saved. They now live across the country and are raising their own families in the way of the Lord.
- A Punjabi lady who still worships at an altar for her Hindu gods awakened one morning unable to move with excruciating pain in her neck and upper back. The missionary was called on to pray which she did. The lady was instantly healed and is increasingly open to hearing the gospel of Christ.

Working to address common concerns

We need to work together with people of all backgrounds on issues of common concern, such as drug abuse, youth issues, unemployment, and racism.

- Masala Bridge Builders are a newly developed resource for groups to meet and discuss issues that concern Diaspora groups.

- A local Diaspora church can seek to reach out to the migrants through ESL program in conjunction with the program provided by the immigration office. For example, in Australia, immigrants can study English free for over 500 hours. The church can provide facilities and invite the teachers sponsored by the government to conduct English classes. This can be extended to working with other community groups such as art groups, councils etc.
- International student ministries and Overseas Christian Fellowships can work with the Student Union, International Student Office during orientation and throughout the semesters to reach out to the international students in seeking to help them to settle and grow in a new country.

Demonstrating mutual respect and celebrating diversity

The gospel demands that we treat people with mutual respect, dignity, and generosity. With Diaspora peoples this includes:

- Serving Diaspora individuals and communities in practical ways, regardless of their faith.
- Opposing racist practices and policies.
- Being advocates for genuine refugees and asylum seekers, when governments are under pressure to restrict their freedoms.
- Allow international students to organize and contribute to cultural events such as having a potluck meal and program that features the food, music, games and other cultural aspects of a nation or region.
- Speaking out for diversity, when traditional mono-cultural patterns are emphasized.
- Giving our platform to Diaspora people and welcoming them into leadership.

Sharing the good news in ways that are relevant to people's culture

When sharing the gospel with Diaspora people, it is important to be sensitive to the different Diaspora people, their culture, practices and beliefs. Obviously, there are differences in how one reaches Middle Eastern Muslims from how one reaches Muslims from Indonesia. Or, in how one reaches Chinese people in the West compared to how it is done in China. And even, for example, how the many Asian communities living in London differ from each other.

The local base

The most effective ministries happen through a local Christian fellowship or community and when possible a local church. A solid ministry has two dimensions:

1. A spiritually nurturing community who worship and learn together, love and serve each other.

Peter's letter to the suffering Diaspora believers exhorts them to demonstrate 'sincere' and 'fervent' love for your brothers'. This love includes hospitality, service and the ministry of God's word. (1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; 4:8-11).

This loving welcoming community is the essential base for:

2. A witness to the wider community

In the complex social and cultural matrix of our Diaspora society, the church has to reach out to the local community in multiple ways. It will need to:

- Develop new, culturally relevant expressions of church for different groups (this means giving support and space to Diaspora Christians and others to do this)
- Develop links with other Diaspora groups in order to work together to face common challenges and serve their communities.
- Develop links with mission agencies and other Christian organizations for mutual learning and sharing of personnel and other needed resources.

Diaspora networks

Diaspora is a 'network driven phenomenon' (Hanciles) and functions through relationships and contacts around the world. Various kinds of Diaspora networks need to be developed in order to enhance effective ministry. Business and governments recognize the value of networking. For example, India's government and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry are aggressively networking with successful non-resident Indians to harness their resources and achievements for the uplift of India.

See (<http://trendwatching.com/trends/2003/03diasporamanagement.html>)

In the Christian world, Chinese Diaspora Christians have created a world-wide network for evangelism, as have the Filipino Diaspora Christians (See Chapter 7). The Association of Christian Ministries to Internationals (ACMI) was established in 1981 as a US/Canadian fellowship of international student ministry staff and volunteers to enhance networking, cross training and cooperation in North America and globally. It is recommended that all Diaspora groups learn from their experiences and explore networking in this way.

The search for partners

As the influence of Christianity declines in the West and turns it into a resistant mission field, the new global order creates new possibilities for Christians from old and new churches to form partnerships (Samuel Escobar, *A Time for Mission: The Challenge for Global Christianity* (InterVarsity Press, 2003), 26-51. These partnerships need to be encouraged and carefully nurtured. Students who return home after graduation create a great network of professionals.

It requires repentance, grace, humility and the recognition that we all need each other desperately in order to be effective in mission in today's world. Peter's exhortation to love is just as applicable when building relationships between different groups.

The outcome of partnerships is the sharing of expertise, materials, personnel, prayer and resources for training. (See Bibliography for lists of resources).

6. Options

Mobilizing Diaspora Communities

This can be achieved by, for example:

Planting churches

National or international networks, such as Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, CCCOWE, Filipino International Network (FIN), Ethnic America Network, and South Asia Concern may be willing to help mobilize the planting of local churches. There are various approaches:

- Homogeneous Church Planting: those of the same cultural background and language are often in the best position to reach out with the gospel to their own people. This gains from being initiated and funded by the leadership of an established church. The goal is to encourage the Diaspora Christians to form their own churches that enables a sense of belonging.
- Intra-Ethnic Group Church Planting: Established Diaspora Churches may work together by sharing resources for planting new churches for the new immigrants.
- Inter-Ethnic Group Church Planting: Churches of the same denomination but different ethnic backgrounds may pool resources together to plant a new Church for a different Diaspora group. For example, a Chinese speaking Church and an English speaking Church of the same denomination have worked together in the planting of a Filipino Church.
- International Church Planting: churches made up of members from multiple nations.
- Multi-ethnic churches with different congregations offering services in a variety of languages.
- Encourage local churches to allocate special funding for Diaspora ministries.

Instilling a missionary vision in the new church while discipling:

The Diaspora is not only a mission field to be reached but a group of people with great potential to be mobilized for the Kingdom. In planting a church for Diaspora, there should be the end in mind that it will be a Great Commission Church. The best time to introduce such a concept is during the formative stage of the new church, they should be shaped by a mission driven church growth philosophy. This to be actualized in all ministry aspects: teaching, preaching, planning and activities in the church. International student churches are being planted with significant growth in discipleship and outreach. Many students utilize the experience of being part of an international student church or fellowship when they return home and participate in various kinds of church growth endeavours.

Providing opportunities for implementing The Great Commission.

- Foster younger generations in an environment of mission.
- Identify and train leaders.
- Pray for the advance of the gospel by forming mission focused prayer networks.
- Encourage missionary awareness and opportunities such as missions conferences and short term missions.

Working with the church in the host countries

- Encourage the churches in the host countries to break through the ethnic boundary and reach out to the Diaspora. Help them to recognize that Diaspora provides a mission field on their doorstep.
- Encourage the churches to set up International Student Ministries.

- Inform the Church about the current situation of the Diaspora community.
- Build relationships with the Diaspora through cultural festivals, celebrations, special community events.
- Allocate resources to Diaspora ministries.
- Cultivate a friendly atmosphere to welcome members of the Diaspora who come to the church.
- Form networks and partnership with other ethnic Diaspora groups for ministries.
- Maintain relationships with local communities and government regarding the needs of the Diaspora, e.g. helping with language training, job training and placement.
- Provide theological training for present and future Diaspora leaders.

Getting support from the church in the countries of origin

Members of the Diaspora often maintain strong ties with their home countries, whose churches may provide ministry support. For example, they may:

- Help the churches and communities of the host countries to understand the cultural and historical background of the Diaspora.
- Share training materials so that the church of the host country may understand the Diaspora.
- Work together with the Church in the host countries in providing direction and advice for ministries and church planting.
- Mobilize prayer support for those who have moved overseas.
- Encourage the Diaspora Church to participate in the ministries of their home countries.

For example, for two decades, alumni of the Filipino movement of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship living in North America have been conducting an annual Balikatan conference for reunion and fund raising. They have financially supported the work of InterVarsity Philippines and fellow alumni who are in missionary service.

7. Case Studies from the Diaspora

A. The Formation of Leaders - International Students

For centuries, God has been bringing students to study in other countries. Today God is moving students and scholars to countries around the world where they can more easily hear and respond to the gospel. Middle Eastern students are in Asian countries, Bhutanese students are in the Philippines, students from the Pacific Rim and Latin America are in Canada, East Asians, Americans and Africans are in the United Kingdom. This is in fulfillment of Acts 17:26-27. *'From one man he made every nation of men that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.'*

Local churches and student ministries in every nation can share in this strategic opportunity God is giving to them to impact the world for Christ in their own town or city.

An influential, staunch Muslim family from a Middle Eastern country sent their son to study in India. The young man met us and asked for medical help for a long-standing physical problem. Having tried other treatments, all to no avail, we did not know what to do except to look to God. With much hesitation, we prayed over him. For three nights in succession, Jesus revealed Himself in a dream. The ailment disappeared at once. He believed in Jesus and was baptized. Because he faced severe persecution in his home country, he is a church-planter in another Middle Eastern country.

Why is International Student Ministry (ISM) so strategic?

International student ministry can significantly influence the lives of international students, the life and vision of the local Christian community, and the worldwide spread of the gospel.

1. How International Students benefit

- They value the warmth and welcome of a friend, family and home during a time of loneliness.
- Those from restrictive societies have greater freedom to explore the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- They are often more curious, open, and responsive to the gospel than they would be at home.

A Chinese woman walked into our discussion group for the first time. When we asked why she came, she shared, "I grew up without any religion. In these past years, the more I talked with my classmates in university, the more we felt an emptiness inside. We have been disillusioned, but we don't know where to turn. I came because I am looking for a guide."

2. How local churches benefit

- Members can develop friendships and communicate the gospel with people from all over the world without knowing a foreign language or leaving home.
- Relationships with international students provide valuable cross-cultural experience for those who wish to serve abroad.
- The church can be involved beyond praying for and giving to mission.
- It is one of the most cost-effective ways of reaching the world for Christ.
- Christian international students contribute to the life of the Christian community in the host country.

3. How the gospel benefits

- Returning Christian graduates often serve in positions of influence that impact their homeland or region in the realm of business, government, education, medicine, technology, etc.
- International students often return home and move into positions of Christian leadership. Returning international students who became church planters include: Bakht Singh of India, John Sung of China, and Kriengsak Chareonwonsak of Thailand.
- Many Christian students return to nations that are home to 'unreached people groups' as well as resistant religious groups.
- Returning students who had positive experiences abroad have opened doors for mission projects in their home countries.
- International student ministry often reaches a social class not reached by other mission work in their own country.

J studied at a university in the Midwest of the United States. He was used of God to influence a whole denomination in Malaysia with the vision of discipleship. Suzy, who studied at the same university, is the director of a Christian school in Indonesia that is leading children and families to Christ.

The biblical perspective on International Student Ministry

1. Our call to mission

Just as God reached out to us, we are commanded to emulate Jesus and 'go and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19). Through the centuries, missions have often focused on going. Today, with increasing numbers of international students coming to us from the ends of the earth, God is presenting us with an opportunity comparable to the day of Pentecost.

The Bible gives several examples of people coming to God's people in search of knowledge about God. The Queen of Sheba who went to Jerusalem in search of wisdom, had an opportunity to learn more of Jehovah and to eventually come to praise Him (1Kings 10). Philip was given the responsibility of explaining the gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch on his way back home (Acts 8:26-39). It is believed that the eunuch was one of the key people that contributed to the spread of the gospel to the African continent. In the same way, we are given the responsibility to explain the gospel to internationals who come to us. Perhaps we may be given the privilege to participate in the spread of the gospel in their home country.

2. Our call to hospitality

By virtue of our citizenship in the Kingdom of God, we are now 'strangers' although we still live in this world (1Peter 1:1). Abraham and the other people of faith are models of this dual citizenship. (Hebrews 11:13-16). The fact that we feel not entirely at home in our own culture helps us to understand a little of what those who come into our culture feel. This understanding motivates us to give hospitality. '*The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself...*' is a commandment given with the reminder of the Israelites' own difficulty while living in a foreign land (Leviticus 19:34).

The same call to understand and give hospitality is given to us today. In Matthew 25:31-46, the King Jesus identified with the guest, "*I was a stranger and you invited me in*" and said, "*whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.*" He said that to fail to give hospitality would incur judgment.

Priscilla and Aquila's hospitality towards Apollos helped him to understand God's way more adequately. Later, Apollos contributed to the life of the church where he was welcomed (Acts 18:26-27). In the same way, our care for the international students among us will serve as the bridge over which the gospel travels. In return, our community life is enhanced by their participation.

3. **Our call to community**

When internationals are welcomed into the local church we are saying to them what God says to us, “*You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and member of God’s household*” (Ephesians 2:19). God calls us to include people from other cultures into the community of believers. Such an integrated community demonstrates reconciliation and the unity of the people of God in the midst of a world fractured by ethnic and cultural differences.

4. **Our call to God’s purpose**

Internationals have often played important roles in God’s plan. His position in Egypt enabled Joseph to save the Israelites from famine. Moses grew up in the Egyptian palace and was later called by God to free the Israelites from Egypt. Daniel, an international student in Babylonia became an honoured advisor to several rulers. As individuals and as a community, we are to participate in God’s purposes to extend His reign over all the earth. It is God’s eternal purpose to have a church for himself from ‘every nation, tribe, people and language’ (Revelation 7:9). International student ministry is a call and an opportunity to partner in reconciling the world to Him and establishing His coming Kingdom. (See chapter 2)

M is a graduate student at a university in the United States. At the university’s orientation for new international students, M, who is a Christian, was delighted to be invited to a fellowship of Christian international students who are actively involved in a local church. M brings both Christians and non-Christian friends from campus to the fellowship at the church. When a member of the church visited her country, he made a special effort to meet M’s parents and family who are believers. The visiting American discovered that M’s parents had been cared for by Christians when they had been international students in the U.S. M’s father is a government leader in a Muslim county and is an outspoken witness for Christ.

5. **The current scope of International Student Ministry**

Few students studied abroad in the 19th century. The numbers of students increased during the 20th century, especially after World War II. The rate of growth continues to increase dramatically. In 2000 estimated figures worldwide stood at 1.7 million international students at university or tertiary level institutions. According to a report at the 16th annual Australian International Education conference the number of international students worldwide will potentially double by 2015 and double again by 2025. Political, economic and other factors may alter the flow and destinations of students studying abroad, but growth will continue.

Below are two tables showing the increase in the number of International Students in France and their home countries. International Students study all over the world and this is just one example.

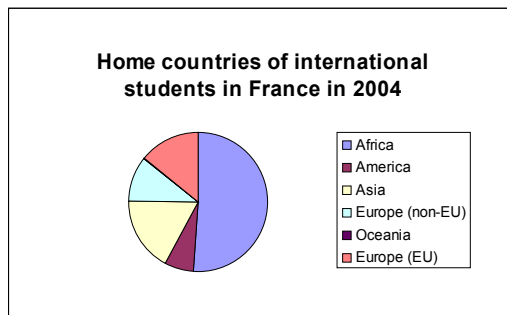


Figure 1

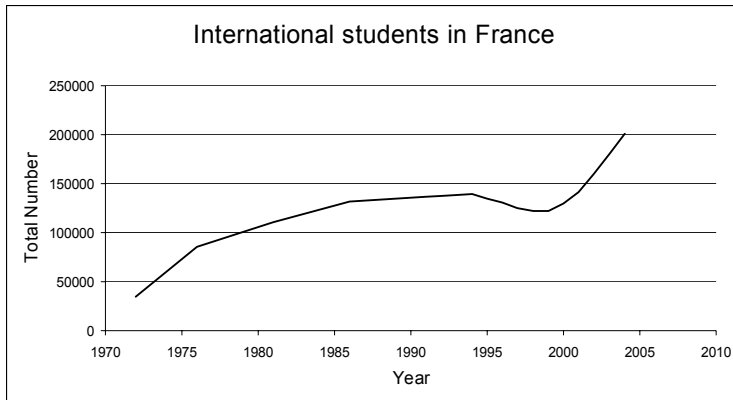


Figure 2

As the number of international students increased in the last half century, more Christians began ministries among these students. Intentional outreach by local congregations and student groups, often in partnership, multiplied. Some examples of this growth are:

Europe:

- ISM began in the United Kingdom in the 1950's with University and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF). When the numbers on international students began to grow in the 1980's, Friends International was founded in order to help churches catch the vision for ISM. Since 1985 it has begun ministries in more than 120 churches in 31 cities.
- God's people in European nations are ministering to internationals through student groups, local churches and mission agencies.
- In the Ukraine, a new ISM in the Crimea grew to a group of sixty within two years. Around Christmas they bought 100 chocolate bars and hand signed 100 cards, wishing students "Happy New Year" in Russian or in English. Four of them went to visit international students who lived in the dorm of a medical university. Amazingly, the guards let them in, although normally the access to student dorms in the Ukraine is very restricted. They knocked on doors, delivering cards and chocolates, and started conversations with students. Most were suspicious at first. Some asked how much they charged for 'this service.' But after a bit their suspicion gave way to gratitude. Some invited them to their rooms and even offered them tea.
- The Netherlands and Germany have well established ISMs.
- Believers in Portugal have shared the gospel with North Korean students.

Pacific/Asia:

- Australia's Overseas Christian Fellowship (OCF) was begun by Asian students in the 1960's, and continues to thrive as a student led movement.
- New Zealand has three ISM organizations that have a close working relationship: International Friendship Ministries, Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship, and ISM New Zealand.
- ISMs are growing in the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, Japan, and India. Diliman Bible Church in Manila has ministered to international students at the University of the Philippines for over 25 years.

North America:

- Organized outreach to internationals began in 1911. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (1944) and International Students, Incorporated (1953) were two early ministries. The growth of ISM in North America has accelerated since the

1980's. Local congregations, campus ministries, denominations, mission agencies, and several new organizations have ISM specialists.

- The (North American) Association of Christians Ministering among Internationals (ACMI) has been a catalyst for further growth through annual conferences and an email network.

Africa

- Organized ministries exist in South Africa and Ivory Coast. Elsewhere both Christian and non-Christian internationals attend local student fellowship meetings.
- Students from some African countries have purposefully gone to study in other countries and pioneered student ministry in their host countries.

Latin America:

- There are emerging ministries in Latin America.
- A Colombian student came to Christ in Brazil and after returning home, became the director of a national student ministry.

Hints and Ideas for International Student Ministry

Additional workers are needed for this strategic mission field. The impact of just one international student returning home as a dedicated disciple of Jesus Christ is enormous. Returning international students have the language, the culture, and no immigration barriers. They are part of the fabric of their society. They can be lifelong missionaries. Consider the example of Bahkt Singh who returned to India and over his lifetime contributed to the planting of more than 7,000 churches. Imagine the potential missionary force that could result from purposeful witness among the two million international students worldwide. Obviously, the Christian community must be mobilized for this mission opportunity.

1. Some general points

Careful attention to in-depth quality relationships results in evangelizing, discipling, and equipping the international students. We must remember that most students will re-enter their home cultures. Our goal is to produce students who walk with Christ, serve in the body and go on to multiply disciples in and beyond their nations. They need to be taught to feed themselves spiritually, given opportunities to serve in the church, witness effectively and to disciple others. They must also be prepared to handle transitions, live in a Christ-like manner, be servant leaders, and be lifelong learners.

Over time many returnees grow to be influential in their home country's church. A growing sense of partnership and connection can occur between the former host country church and home country churches. As the returned graduates mature in their ministry, the host church will be encouraged to continue their ministry among international students.

2. When you want to contact students

- Pray for a relationship with key students who can introduce you to their networks of international friends.
- Games and recreational activities and sports, such as a friendly soccer match or volleyball, are natural bridges for getting acquainted.
- Enlist local Christian students to help develop the ministry to internationals.
- Discover needs and meet them, i.e. friendship and families, hospitality, language conversation partners, admission help, assistance with issues such as accommodation, transportation and providing information.
- Discover common interests between individual students and believers, encouraging relationships on a basis of mutuality.

- In some settings, internationals may be vulnerable and need special attention:
 - Those dealing with homesickness, isolation, hostility, and cultural adjustments, may need someone available to listen, counsel, protect or defend, or include them in a community
 - Those dealing with traumatic issues such as visa problems, imprisonment, hospitalization due to illness or injury, or automobile accident may need help with legal, bureaucratic, or medical issues, and should be served primarily by the school's International Student office if possible.

On Chinese New Year we invited some students to have a meal with us. Later that evening, we decided to invite these students to visit some of our friends' homes, a part of the Chinese tradition. On the way there, a Chinese woman asked abruptly why I believed in Jesus. We were not talking about any spiritual (religious) matter at that time. This provided an opportunity to share about the gospel with her.

Two models for involvement

Believers of all shades and descriptions, ages and stages can connect with international students in their community and develop a relationship and ministry. Christian students need just to look around the campus to find international students in their classes, labs, library, living and dining areas. People from the community and churches can inquire at the International Student Office about opportunities to volunteer as hosts, language conversation partners, and other avenues of service.

Choose a model for ministry:

- Local Church Model – mobilizing church members to participate in ISM
- Campus Model – mobilizing Christian students to reach international students on campus

Combining ministry models often enhances the overall ministry. Partnering between campus ministry where students make contacts, local churches who can offer hospitality, and ethnic churches that offer the gospel in heart languages can be a powerful witness.

Local Church Model

Most Christian communities, irrespective of size, need only to exercise faith to begin an international student ministry that will add a significant dimension to their involvement in world missions. Local churches can adapt these suggestions for beginning a ministry in their own situation:

1. Seek the approval and blessing of church leadership and/or the support of denominational leadership.
2. Identify (lay) leaders to form a ministry team – possibly (but not necessarily) utilizing people who already have cross-cultural experience.
3. Recruit volunteers with an appropriate screening process.
4. Provide models of ISM through testimonies, videos, reports from other churches, and input from an ISM specialist.
5. Develop a strategy to connect with international students (friendship partners, teaching English, monthly socials, meeting new arrivals at the airport, visiting ethnic grocery stores, etc.).
6. Teach the team the biblical basis for ISM and the ministry skills relevant to ISM.
7. Provide resources, such as those listed in the bibliography, and regular encouragement to the leadership team & volunteers.

8. Ensure good channels of communication between the team, church leadership, and the congregation.
9. Encourage ISM teams from different churches and ministries to meet together for prayer, encouragement, exchange of ideas, and discussion of possible joint projects.
10. Churches in areas where other ISMs already exist may want to adopt an 'unreached' group of students on a given campus.
11. Send ministry team members to an ISM equipping conference.

Our church's international student ministry provides temporary housing to international students who arrive before the dormitories open. One year we housed a Chinese student, C, for almost a week in our home. At dinnertime I would pray before the meal and to my surprise C. began to pray after me, though he was not a believer at the time. After the semester started, he began coming to our international Sunday Fellowship. He also had contact with a local Chinese church. After he decided to make a career shift, he went back to China after one semester. Just before he left, C accepted Christ. We are encouraged that we will see him again in the Kingdom.

A local church can send the believing student as a missionary first to the campus and later to their home country or other place where God calls them. As they are vulnerable in the re-entry process, their host country Christian community should, where possible, help link returning international students to the body of Christ in their home country. Continued prayer, sharing resources, and communication with the returned graduate are important for their encouragement. Websites, phone calls, letters, and visits all help to stimulate encouragement of the returned graduate. The resulting feedback of returnees may stimulate the host Christian community's mission vision and involvement around the world.

Campus Model

Pray to the Lord of the harvest to raise up workers among students (Matthew 9:38).

1. Assess your situation.
2. Find Christian international students to be strategic partners:
 - a. If necessary, provide them with discipling and leadership development.
 - b. Pray with them for their country of origin and together learn about other countries whose students are present in the university.
 - c. Learn from them how best to reach out to their non-Christian peers.
 - d. Involve them in training and mentoring, especially about reaching groups such as Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus.
3. Consider how to best motivate Christian students from the host-country:
 - a. For example, today's students may need an experiential approach.
 - b. Look for students who already have cross-cultural experience or international friends.
 - c. Tell stories of personal experiences that present friendship with internationals as enriching and fun.
 - d. Communicate with established Christian student leadership structures so students can be motivated by their leaders who have seen how ISM fits into their existing vision and plans for missions.
4. Provide both Christian internationals and host country students with training in cultural sensitivity, communication, and worldview differences.

They may also need help in understanding students from resistant religious groups. Use media appropriate for students from your context.

5. Challenge Christian students (international and host country) to enrol in universities without ISMs in order to start student ministries in those universities. This can be a creative way of spreading ISM in restricted access nations.

German students do most of the international student ministry in Germany. When I was a freshman at university I immediately joined the international bible study group. One year later I became the leader of the group. I asked the staff workers to pray that God would double the number of guests within the next semester. From that day the group started growing. New students came to our group in really strange ways. By the end of the semester the number had almost doubled and we felt that God had heard our prayers. Since that day I know that prayer is what matters most in international student ministry.

Getting started

Prayer should permeate the entire ministry from the beginning and throughout each phase.

◆Profile the campus:

- Assess numbers of students, country of origin, services already provided for them.
- Interview international students to find out ways and places to meet students.

◆Discover and address the felt needs of students.

While visiting our local grocery store, my wife and I saw a Jamaican couple with a fully loaded shopping cart. Since it was near the beginning of the semester, we suspected that they were new students. We offered to drive them to their home (they had come by taxi), had them over for the evening meal, and then helped them with more shopping. They quickly became good friends and involved in our church bible study. Talk with other Christian ministries and individuals who have contact with international students.

◆Build relationships with students and campus officials, if possible.

- Pray for positive relationships with officials.
- Introduce yourself to the campus official or staff of the International Student Office
- Discover existing programs and needs not yet met
- Offer volunteer service where possible.

Opening doors to the gospel

Initiate contact through non-religious activities, such as language assistance or sports. This helps build friendships and trust which can lead to openness toward later participation in religious activities. Pray for discernment about students' spiritual openness. An international student's spiritual search can be encouraged in various ways:

- Investigative bible discussions (one to one or in small groups) Note: Religious discussions with students from restrictive societies are usually best one to one due to peer pressure concerns.
- Large group events (i.e. Christian concert or speaker)
- Language assistance programs such as tutoring or conversation exchange
- Religious and cultural discussions (e.g. What is the true meaning of Christmas?)
- Friendship dinners
- Mutual sharing of cultures
- Christian literature and media

- Storytelling
- Field trips to sites or natural wonders that spawn spiritual discussions
- Personal testimonies
- Exposing students to justice and reconciliation ministries
- Career mentoring by Christians within the same professional field

C came to Oxford, England as a visiting academic for six months. He came from a restricted access country in Asia where his grandfather was a Buddhist priest. He was surprised to find that all the people who offered him friendship were Christians. When a member of his department invited C to a bible study in his home, C went 'out of intellectual curiosity'. Later an ISM worker gave a bible in his own language. In a few days, he had read the Scriptures from cover to cover. "God speaks my language!" he cried. Within two weeks he put his faith in Christ and was baptized. A few days later C was on a plane home to his country eager to pass on the good news of Jesus to family, friends, and colleagues.

We should always endeavour to present the gospel in a culturally sensitive way with respect for the international student. Before international students become Christians, it will be important for them to compare the assumptions of their world view and the biblical worldview. They may also need to renounce some aspects of their former religious practices. (See Neil Anderson and Daniel Tong material in bibliography)

Relationships established before a person becomes a Christian are very important for discipling and follow-up. To prepare them for returning home, attention should be given to discipling, especially devotional life, small group bible study groups, skills and heart for ministry. The ministry responsible for new international believers should take responsibility for their care through re-entry and becoming established at home.

Alfredo put his trust in Jesus Christ while he was a high school exchange student in the United States. Upon returning to his home in Portugal, he went to university and became involved in a Christian ministry on campus. He later became the national director of that ministry. As the director, he developed a partnership with two international missions organizations to pioneer an outreach to international students at two major universities in Portugal. After further studies abroad, Alfredo is now a key leader in the Portuguese Bible Society.

B. The Diaspora of Talent – Business Men and Professionals

There is a Diaspora within the Diasporas. It is the Diaspora of Talent. It is represented in the bible by Daniel and his three friends and Esther. (Daniel 1, Esther 1.) From a human point of view it is pragmatic (Daniel 1:3). From God's point of view it is intentional. It is part of his purpose. Scattered through all the Diasporas there are men and women with God-given talent that enables them to make a unique contribution to their new countries. Some of them are godly and their influence is all the greater. Diaspora people everywhere and particularly the business and professional community are wielding an ever increasing influence. This is true in economics, politics, culture and spirituality. As with international students, evangelism to this group has to take into account their distinctive profile. Many in this group are multi-lingual, well-educated (often internationally), adaptable and creative. They are usually members of organized professional networks such as Chambers of Commerce, professional associations and their own ethnic subgroups. Many of them now live in middle class suburbs, having moved up market from areas of ethnic concentration. While well integrated, many hold tight to their own cultural ways.

However, along with other 2nd and 3rd generation Diaspora communities, although by and large well integrated in the host community, many still struggle between the expectations of their parents and their peer groups. Mixed marriages are increasing. However, many face issues relating to arranged and forced marriages, career choices and family tensions.

The Economies

The economic strength of Diaspora communities is demonstrated by the fact that they send home almost \$62 billion in remittances; in the Philippines, it is estimated that remittances amount to 32% of GNP dwarfing both foreign direct investment and aid flow into the country.

Zimbabwean economic migrants in the UK (circa 1 million) are financing a construction boom in the leafy Belgravia suburb of Harare.

Government

The Eritreans with virtually no international support managed to win a protracted 30 year war of independence through the financial support of its widespread Eritrean Diaspora. In foreign policy, Diasporas in their adopted countries have influenced governments to take action affecting the situation in their country of origin; a poor country like Armenia managed to persuade some powerful foreign governments such as France to recognize the 1915 genocide of Armenians in Turkey. They failed to do this in Germany which has a large Turkish Diaspora.

Diaspora communities are able to influence the government on the faith agenda because they are able to say things that the indigenous Christian may not be able to. Diaspora Christians can raise issues highlighting the social consequences of cultural practices especially where human rights are being violated – forced marriages and honour killings are examples of issues that have been raised in the UK and where government has been forced to take action against these illegal practices. Practices that have hitherto not been openly discussed for fear of offending the 'other' and attempting to maintain political correctness.

In another area, Diaspora Christians have engaged with government in speaking out on behalf of persecuted Christians in their countries of origin. They have campaigned for governments not to ignore but to take action against those countries which are violating human rights by persecuting Christians. The major protests in western capitals following Graham Staines tragic murder in India are a case in point.

Media and culture

Diaspora people can also be found in the corridors of power in government and politics; influencing fashion and design; catalysing creativity and innovation; and building their own places of worship. They are seen as a unique resource to both the receiving countries and their countries of origin, something that governments are increasingly recognizing and responding to in their policy making. The rapid growth of ethnic media (newspapers, radio & TV stations and the internet) in the Diaspora provides another opportunity for using these channels for evangelism. Many carry regular god slots or religious columns and are open to Christians taking their fair share under broadcasting and licensing rules.

Reconciliation

Diaspora Christians have also been engaged in encouraging reconciliation between different communities affected by violence in their countries of origin. South Asian Christian leaders played a key role in opening dialogue between the leaders of the different faith communities in the United Kingdom following violence between Hindus and Muslims in Gujarat. Even though they had different nationalities when they arrived, common citizenship within the host country provides a unique platform to bring together opposing groups for dialogue, debate and reconciliation.

Opportunities

Another positive outcome from reaching such communities for Christ is the advantage they possess over the indigenous population by virtue of the fact that they have a heritage of networks and special privileges accorded to them. They often have dual citizenship, visa exemptions which can be an important factor in mission to closed countries and a potential source for future missionaries.

Without these efforts 2nd and 3rd generation Diaspora might gradually disengage from their country of origin and roots - a great loss, spiritually as well as culturally, politically and economically to the nation, the Diaspora, and more importantly, the Kingdom. For a new generation of globally mobile skilled migrants, the danger of disengagement with the homeland is even greater.

The young, professional Diaspora from the 'old Commonwealth' and the 10 new EU states assimilate easily in Britain. Latin America and Africa are also haemorrhaging skilled workers and the brain drain has a detrimental impact on both continents so much so that the Mozambique President, Joachim Chissano in his recent African Union address, appealed to the African Diaspora not to lose their links, but to be 'advocates and ambassadors for Africa'. Diaspora Christians have a duty to be 'advocates and ambassadors' to raise awareness of the prayer needs and need for support for missions in their countries of origin and to see themselves and successive generations as potential sources for leadership and mission.

Witness

Outreach to the business and professional Diaspora communities can have consequences for world evangelism far beyond the size that they represent in terms of world population. The Sindhis are an unreached people group from the 10/40 window. They are business and professional people in the main. A significant percentage of those who have accepted Christ live in the Diaspora. Evangelism to this group represents a significant opportunity for mission at our doorstep, but needs to be approached in an appropriate manner.

The opportunity to build bridges into these communities is much easier as they are more open and prepared to partner across religious divides. On the other, many are economically successful and therefore self sufficient - they see no need for God or religion. Others are very spiritual, with tremendous faith in their own gods - all see Christianity as irrelevant. Outreach strategies to these communities that have been tried have included invitations to targeted events such as outreach dinners, professional networks, motivational Christian speakers and Alpha suppers with special attention being paid to cross-cultural sensitivities in the case of the first

generation. Friendship evangelism based on relationships and supported by prayer is one of the critical success factors. In addition, identifying and promoting successful role models from the Diaspora offer further opportunities for outreach.

Resources

Where Diaspora business and professional people have been reached for Christ, there is significant potential that can be unleashed.

The economic impact of the Diaspora especially in developing countries can be dramatic. The impact on funding missions might be even more dramatic. The South Asians in the Diaspora are increasingly playing a catalytic role in the mobilization of mission movements in South Asia. Diaspora Christians in the UK initiated a creative project that over a seven year period resulted in 50,000 teenagers raising over 10 million dollars for Two-Thirds World relief and development channelled through Christian agencies. Of greater importance, was the raising of the awareness of world mission amongst this youth constituency.

The development of materials for mission, drawing on the experience, resources and expertise of Diaspora Christians is proving invaluable in some cultures. They produce innovative, modern and culturally relevant materials that appeal particularly to the younger generation in their countries of origin.

Evangelism to this community continues to challenge the local church, and additional resources for research and training are greatly needed.

C. Lords of the Rim – The Chinese Diaspora

Chinese moving overseas has been happening for centuries. One history of it is called 'The Lords of the Rim'. It can be traced as early as the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD).¹ In the second half of the 20th Century, movements of Chinese from countries in Southeast Asia, Hong Kong and China were accelerated by socio-political factors. Though the political situations are relatively stable in many South East Asian countries where the Chinese are staying, considerable numbers of Chinese migrants are still moving to Europe, North America and Oceania. They do so for family reunions, children's education and better living conditions.

Present demographics of Chinese Diaspora

'Where there is water, there is Chinese.' Following is a table of worldwide distribution of Chinese:² The total population of Chinese in Diaspora is estimated to be close to 65 million with 2.77% being Christians.

	Population of Chinese in Diaspora	Population of Chinese Christians in Diaspora	Percentage of Chinese Christians in Diaspora	No. of Overseas Chinese Churches	No. of Overseas Chinese Christians
Asia	58,219,800	1,551,504	2.7%	6,867	1,551,504
North America	3,700,000	208,000	5.62%	1,200	208,000
Europe	1,364,000	13,065	0.96 %	146	13,065
Africa	208,000	570	0.27%	12	570
Latin America	933,600	5,240	0.56%	86	5,240
Oceania	322,900	14,500	4.49%	218	14,500
Overseas Total	64,748,300	1,792,879	2.77%	8,529	1,792,879

The conditions of the Diaspora community in the host countries

The conditions of the Chinese Diaspora communities vary in different host countries. Nowadays, the Chinese at large enjoy a stable and prosperous life in most parts of the world. However, Chinese in some areas have experienced tensions with the people of the host countries. Sometimes, their own behaviour or unprincipled trade, cause such tensions.

The unplanned impact of Diaspora on the worldwide Chinese Church³

The prophet Isaiah says, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9). Despite the undesirable causes of most of the people movements and the atrocities which many suffered, God has transformed grave human plights into rays of hope for new life. We are awed by God's wisdom when we consider the unfathomable expansion of

¹ Danny Wong Tze-Ken, The Transformation of an Immigrant Society: A Study of the Chinese of Sabah, London: Asean Academic Press. 1998, 2.

² "Worldwide Distribution of Chinese Christians and Chinese Churches", compiled by Cyrus Lam, an unpublished paper of the Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism, 2003. Please read the paper for regional breakdown of Chinese population and Chinese churches. A comprehensive research on Chinese churches around the world is being done by CCCOWE. Before the report on that research is done, this is the best data available.

³ For detail information, please see "Worldwide Distribution of Chinese Christians and Chinese Churches", compiled by Cyrus Lam.

the Chinese church outside of China. Very little of this growth was the result of intentional mission projects by mission agencies. Rather, most of the Chinese churches were planted by the Christians in Diaspora (in many cases, with the generous help of Christians in the host countries)! Within the last six decades, thousands of churches were planted (8,600) and over a million (1,800,000) of Chinese were saved.

In addition, creative modes of ministries, bible colleges and seminaries, even church leaders and theologians also grew from the Diaspora Christian communities. For example, the formation of CCCOWE is a fruit of the Diaspora Christians.

In spite of noticeable growth, the majority of the people in the Diaspora are still unreached (97%). The goal of evangelism is yet to be achieved. For example, there are more than 10,000 Chinese in North Korea and more than 50,000 Chinese in Saudi Arabia, but there is no established Chinese church in either one of these two countries. It is estimated that nearly a million Chinese will join the Diaspora in the coming decade. The churches in the host countries and the Diaspora should be mobilized to welcome and evangelize the newcomers.

Thankfully, there is renewed momentum in reaching the Diaspora communities. Chinese Christians are very active in sharing the Good News and starting new churches primarily among Chinese people of the host countries.

As the context and situation of the Chinese in Diaspora varies from place to place, no single approach to evangelism is effective in all places. However, some of the proven evangelistic principles are:

- Be culturally sensitive and relevant.
- Develop relational based communities characterized by genuine love and care.
- Present the gospel in the mother tongue.
- Develop leaders from the local Diaspora Christians.
- Engage in networking, partnerships and strategic alliances.

Potential partners in mission

In retrospect the Diaspora has been a spiritual blessing to the Chinese. The Lord has blessed the Chinese Diaspora Christians with many gifts. In some countries, statistics showed that the Diaspora have on average a higher level of education than the general population. Many of them are also blessed with financial resources.

Though Chinese moved overseas, the emotional and actual connections with the homeland is strong. In Eastern Malaysia, the Chinese communities have been established for generations. While they acculturated to the Malaysian culture, most of them still keep Chinese names and languages. Mandarin, Fuchow, Hakka and other dialects are commonly use through out the Chinese communities.

Many overseas Chinese visit their city or village of origin to maintain the connections and relationship. This provides a background and platform for the Christians in and outside of China to build up networks of fellowship and partnership. There are more and more conferences and visits during the past decades resulting in mutual understanding and sharing of experiences. Some overseas Chinese Christians share the gospel with their relatives when they visit their homeland. Many students became Christians when they studied overseas. Numerous Chinese top level leaders of ministries and churches in Singapore and Malaysia today experienced foundational and formational Christian growth while studying in Australia in the 60's and 70's. By the love and grace of God, these synergies certainly indicate a bright future for the Chinese Church for His glory that will bring blessings to China and other people groups.

Also, owing to new international relationships in the last two decades, Asians are more acceptable to the Muslims. Citizens of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, for example, are considered as brothers or friends of many Muslim countries.

Diaspora Chinese Christians find it relatively easier to approach Muslims and share God's love with them.

Thus, while Diaspora Christians should continue to develop strong local churches, an outward mission focus needs to be fostered. The Diaspora Chinese Church worldwide should call and send missionaries to reach others for Christ. May the Diaspora Churches be a blessing to all nations for the glory of God.

The CCCOWE Story

CCCOWE (Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism) is a spiritual movement that God raised up in the 1970's in the Chinese Church⁴, calling the Chinese churches worldwide to unite in spirit and in truth to proclaim the gospel to the world until the Lord returns.

In the second half of the 20th Century, millions of Chinese moved into the worldwide Diaspora for a variety of reasons. CCCOWE is the spiritual movement God raised up for the opportunity of reaching Overseas Chinese and building kingdom minded churches to fulfil His missionary mandate. The core belief of CCCOWE is that the Chinese believers and churches have a responsibility to obey both the Great Commandment of loving one another and the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations. CCCOWE is a catalyst with a global strategy given by God to hasten the growth of the Chinese churches and the expansion of His kingdom through the Chinese Christians in Diaspora.

Chinese churches worldwide have experienced tremendous growth both in number and in every other area since the beginning of CCCOWE in 1976. The increase in blessings is from the Lord as a result of the hard work of many believers and pastors, yet, CCCOWE does play a pivotal role as bridge, servant and a prophet for the Chinese Christian churches in building the kingdom of God.

The Lausanne Movement and the CCCOWE Movement

Like many other Christian movements, CCCOWE began in a prayer meeting and is sustained by the prayers of God's people. CCCOWE is first and foremost a spiritual movement, calling Chinese Christians and churches to prayer and to obedience to our Lord's commandments.

Well before CCCOWE was conceived, God had already raised up other evangelical movements and fellowships of Chinese churches, like NACOCE⁵ in North America and Chinese churches networks in other part of the world. However, there was not yet a worldwide network for the coordination and mobilization of Chinese churches for world evangelism.

It was in 1974, at the 'International Congress on World Evangelism' in Lausanne, Switzerland that some seventy Chinese church leaders first shared the vision of convening an international Chinese congress in a prayer meeting. The first 'Chinese Congress on World Evangelization' (CCOWE) was thus held in January 1976 in Hong Kong and The Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism (CCCOWE) was established to support the movement. Since 1976, CCOWE conference is held every five years in different countries.

Today, CCCOWE has 57 geographic districts each with its own local committee for the promotion of the CCCOWE movement locally. In some regions, like the U.S., Canada, Indonesia etc., the adjacent geographic districts also form a CCCOWE Inter-District office for their regional needs.

CCCOWE is serving the worldwide community of Chinese churches by convening regular and special worldwide and regional conferences, establishing

⁴ For the purpose of this paper, "Chinese" means "Chinese living outside of the Mainland China" and the same for "Chinese churches" unless stated otherwise.

⁵ NACOCE stands for the "North America Congress of Chinese Evangelicals."

prayer network, publishing periodicals and literature relevant to the needs Chinese Churches, coordinating resources, both human and material, for the building up of the churches and the kingdom of God among Chinese churches, doing strategic research concerning Chinese churches and world mission and paying visits to worldwide CCCOWE districts to encourage church leaders and pastors.

The following three important factors contributed to the success of the CCCOWE movement:

1. *Net-working for a common purpose:*

The CCCOWE movement is inclusive, open to all and yet with an explicit goal. It is a fellowship with a common purpose. The explicit purpose of the CCCOWE movement is to advance evangelism both locally and globally for the Chinese people and from the Chinese churches to the ends of the world. The aim of CCCOWE is to encourage the Chinese church worldwide working together for the evangelization of the Chinese and also mobilize the Chinese churches to be involved in world mission. The CCCOWE movement has always focused on its unique mission.

2. *Fellowship without domination:*

CCCOWE is a vision driven movement that demands no authority or commitment from the participants other than the same evangelical faith and evangelistic calling. CCCOWE has no membership and thus reserves no privilege for anyone. Everyone joins the movement as an individual and stay on through participation. This principle created an environment for genuine fellowship in Christ and a unity based on common purpose.

3. *A spiritual movement coupled with strategic planning:*

In order to serve as a prophet for the Chinese churches, CCCOWE takes upon itself the responsibility of doing research on relevant issues and the overall condition of the worldwide Chinese churches, especially in matters concerning the Chinese in Diaspora and world mission.

In the beginning of the CCCOWE movement, the leaders set forth five 5-year plans for the movement in order to help building up strong mission-minded churches. They are as following:

- 1976-1981: Renewal of Vision - Rekindle the vision of cooperation and evangelization.
- 1981-1986: Actualization of Vision - Stimulate efforts in joint ministry and evangelism.
- 1986-1991: Focusing on Growth - Quantitative and qualitative growth in the numbers of Christians, congregations and workers.
- 1991-1996: Evangelism to the Chinese - Evangelization of the Chinese worldwide.
- 1996-2001: World Evangelization - Cross-cultural evangelization of all nations and peoples.

A renewed vision and re-structuring for a new millennium:

After 25 years of labour and God's blessings, the Chinese Church has grown into adulthood. The number of Chinese churches in Diaspora has grown from around 3,000 to over 8,500 and one third of them have become involved in Mission in meaningful ways. That is a very significant increase from the ten percent involvement in 1978. With the growth of the Chinese churches in a post-modern world, Chinese churches face a new reality and context for ministry and mission.

In order to better serve the Chinese churches in Diaspora, CCCOWE has decided to set a new course for its ministry in the 6th congress held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2001. Five principles will guide the future direction of CCCOWE ministries. They are localizing ministry functions, building up the team spirit, raising up young leaders, streamlining operation and focusing on prophetic vision.

Other than the on-going ministries, CCCOWE has added new ministries for the new challenges:

- Up-grading and expanding its ministry on the internet (<http://www.cccowe.org>).
- Promoting church ministry coordination among Chinese churches worldwide in order to build up local churches and help achieve the ultimate goal of world evangelization. 18 ministry coordinators were appointed to the task of coordinating different church ministries in four categories: believer's ministry, church ministry, evangelism and world mission.
- Commission a global research study on the Chinese churches in Diaspora in order to gain understanding and data needed for strategic planning.

CCCOWE will continue to serve faithfully as a servant for the Chinese Churches worldwide, calling them to live up to our Lord's expectation of being light and salt to the world.

D. God's Secret Weapon – The Filipino Diaspora

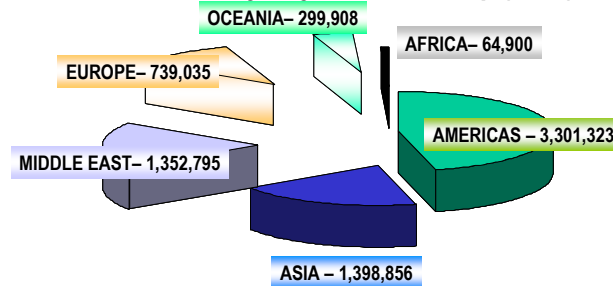
The migration of people from the Philippines has always existed because of trade within Asia. With the expansion of Spanish (1521–1898) and American (1898–1946) colonization, Filipinos went as galleon workers to Europe and labourers to North America.

The list of Filipino Exodus by categories chronologically in the last 150 years is as follows:

- The *Ilustrados* (late 1800s) were the so-called cream of the crop of Philippine society during the Spanish colonial era. They were typically mestizos or children of mixed European and local marriages. As the privileged few, they were sent to Europe to further their education. Many of these European trained *ilustrados* returned to lead the revolution against the Spanish rule.
- The *Pensionados* (early 1900s) were children of influential Filipinos who were friends (with special favour) of the United States. They were sponsored by the American government to study in the United States, and like the *ilustrados* they were mostly mestizos.
- The *Sacadas* (1906 – 1940s) were mostly Filipino men who laboured on Hawaiian sugar and pineapple plantations, orchard and vegetable farms on the American mainland, and in the Salmon canneries on the Alaskan coastline.
- The *Soldados* (1915-present) were volunteers recruited to serve the United States army, navy and merchant marines during World War I — a trend that continued after World War II. They were given the privilege of staying permanently in their adopted homeland, and eventually allowed to embrace American citizenship.
- The *Estudiantes* (Post World War II – present) are not only children of the wealthy Filipinos, but include the Filipino state scholars and practitioners who sought further training outside the Philippines. While most of them returned to their homeland to serve their nation, others remained to join the work force in their host nations.
- The *Immigrantes* (1960 – present) were Filipinos who voluntarily left their country to reside mainly in the Western world, particularly in North America, Australia and Western Europe for greater economic opportunities.
- The *Martial Law Exiles* (1972 -1986) were victims of martial law declared by then President Ferdinand E. Marcos in 1972. This period consequently resulted in a massive exodus, including wealthy Filipinos. Most of them settled in Western nations.
- The *Overseas Filipino Workers [OFWs]* (1980s-present) are Filipinos deployed by the Philippine government to work as migrant workers all over the world. They are referred to by their employers as expatriates or temporary workers. The duration of their contracts overseas typically range from one to three years. OFWs are not immigrants nor have acquired permanent resident status in their host countries. OFWs leave the Philippines with the intent of returning. There are two types of OFWs – the sea-based and the land-based. The sea-based OFWs are sailors working on cruise ships, fishing boats, oil tankers, container ships, and oilrigs. The land-based OFWs include medical workers, educators, entertainers, scientists, engineers, construction workers, care givers, bankers, etc.

The following are estimates of the OFWs according to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. (POEA).

Stock Estimates of OFWs by Major World Group (2001)



Source: Commission on Filipinos Overseas, Government of the Philippines, Department of Foreign Affairs

The Filipino Diaspora's global distribution by major world groups is as follows:

- Western World (4 million)
- Buddhist/Hindu World (1.3 million)
- Islamic World (1.7 million)
- Jewish World (30,000)

The socio-economic and missiological implications of Filipino Diaspora

The root cause of the massive Filipino exodus in the past three decades is the high level of unemployment and poverty at home. Moreover, the acceleration of globalization of trade and labour has lured millions of Filipinos to seek overseas jobs. Approximately 2,800 are deployed for overseas employment each day. The socio-economic and Missiological implications of Filipino Diaspora are as follows:

1. Economic implication

Today, there are close to 8 million OFWs deployed in more than 180 countries. They remit back to the Philippines a sizeable part of their income. According to the Philippine government, the remittance of OFWs has become the major avenue of foreign currency (e.g. US\$ 7.2 Billion in 2003). Thus, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has hailed OFWs as 'the Philippines' modern day heroes.'

2. Social implication

Recently deployed OFWs are females who serve as medical professionals, domestic workers, caregivers and entertainers. There is a gender difference among OFWs: Females are under 35; males, 35 and above. A large number of female OFWs have intermarried with locals. This has resulted in a surge of mestizo children (e.g. Filipino-Japanese, Filipino-Chinese, Filipino-Arab, Filipino-Canadians, Filipino-Italians, etc.). Hence, Filipino blood is now 'sprinkled' and 'intermingled' across the nations. These OFWs have become an agent of social change in their host nations because they have injected their culture, tradition and religion into their adopted communities.

3. Missiological implication

Of nearly 8 million OFWs worldwide, 80% are Roman Catholics, 15% are Protestants and a conservative estimate of 7% of these figures are evangelical Christians. With 7% (or 560,000) of the 8 million OFWs being evangelical Christians, they constitute a major force for the cause of Christian mission.

Filipino congregations emerge and thrive wherever Filipino diasporas are found, (e.g., Canadian Prairies, the remote Arctic Circle, the oil fields of the Arabian Peninsula, the urban jungles of Singapore, Hong Kong, Taipei, Tokyo, the islands of the Pacific, and in the mega cities of Europe and North America). There are even fellowship groups on cruise ships and fishing vessels. Since Filipinos are adaptable,

acceptable, and accessible, they are now involved in cross-cultural ministries as well. In several cities of the world, including Singapore, Hong Kong, London and Toronto, clusters of Filipino congregations have formed ministerial fellowships for cooperative missions and evangelism initiatives. Innovative evangelic strategies include music concerts, festivals, literature and video distribution, and compassionate work.

In May 1995, the Filipino International Network (FIN) was launched in response to the need for a coordinated global effort to motivate, equip, and mobilize Christian OFWs to help fulfil the Great Commission. To accomplish this objective, FIN coordinates regional and global strategic consultations for Filipino Diaspora leaders, distributes evangelistic tools like the Jesus Film, facilitates evangelism and discipleship training seminars, and conducts Family Life Conferences to strengthen OFW marriages and to reach the mixed-marriage couples and their families. To under gird all these, FIN gathers Christian Filipino Diaspora leaders to pray for local and global missions.

Conclusion

Providentially the Philippines became the only Christian nation in Asia due to Spanish colonization. Similarly, massive exodus of Filipinos driven by economics and politics, God's providence and sovereignty has overturned the root cause of the Filipino exodus for His glory. The Filipino Diaspora has penetrated the Western World, the Buddhist World, the Islamic World and the Jewish World.

E. A Sub-continent Abroad – The South Asian Diaspora

South Asians have been on the move as far back as history records. In the centuries just before and after Christ, Buddhist and Hindu missionaries carried their message in all directions, but especially to South East Asia. A Chinese traveller to Cambodia in the 1st century AD saw more than one thousand Brahmins from India living there and teaching the people. The whole region was influenced by Indian trade, colonization, culture and religion. The evidence is still there today, in temple architecture and Sanskrit words, especially in the vocabulary of religion, law and philosophy.

By the 13th century Hindu influence was largely replaced by Islam, at least in Indonesia and the Malay kingdoms, where Gujarati Muslim traders were active. In the 19th and early 20th centuries the British Empire became the dominant vehicle for spreading Indians abroad, as labour forces for the expanding plantations in Fiji, Malaya, South Africa and Central America, or to build the railways and run the trade of East and Central Africa. Indians were also going abroad to study, to prepare for careers in law and the public services, back home or elsewhere in the Empire, Mahatma Gandhi being the best-known example.

In 1947 the bloody partition of India resulted in hundreds of thousands of people moving within the region and beyond. Later, the need for workers, skilled and unskilled, in Britain and then in the USA, resulted in the movement of thousands more. The expulsion of the East African Asians in the early 1970s brought substantial groups of entrepreneurs and professionals to the West. The end of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st have seen this process continue. South Asians are now in demand as skilled professionals, consultants, entrepreneurs and traders.

Size and breadth

There are approximately 20 million South Asians outside the sub-continent of South Asia. The figures below give some idea of the numbers across the world at the dawn of the 21st century.

Australia	1,362,140 'Asians' excluding Chinese
Burma	854,404 Indians
Canada	917,075 South Asians
Denmark	23,287 Pakistani, 14,199 Sri Lankan, 3,996 Indian
Fiji	387,585 Indians
France	60,000 Indian, 30,000 Pakistani, 50,000 Sri Lankan
Germany	7,156 Bangladeshi, 34,709 Indian, 36,924 Pakistani, 54,617 Sri Lankan
Guyana	352,902 Indians
Holland	109,553 Indians (majority from Suriname)
Italy	69,108 South Asians
Kuwait	203,179 South Asians
Malaysia	1,881,799 Indians
Mauritius	829,927 Indo-Mauritians
New Zealand	28,900 Indians
Norway	26,286 Pakistani, 11,918 Sri Lankan, 6,836 Indian, 546 Bangladeshi
Qatar	151,252 Indians, 151,252 Pakistanis
Singapore	343,958 Indians
South Africa RSA	854,371 Indians
East and Central	Approx 1,141,800 South Asians

Africa (not RSA)	
Suriname	161,666 Indians
Sweden	2628 Bangladeshi, 10377 Indian, 2713 Pakistani, 5700 Sri Lankan
Switzerland	5 151 Indian, 2281 Pakistani, 34, 230 Sri Lankan
Trinidad	444,996 Indians
UAE	1,261,958 South Asians
UK	1,053,411 Indians; 747,285 Pakistanis; 283,063 Bangladeshis; estimated 100,000 Tamils
USA	1,678,765 Asian Indians, 153,533 Pakistanis; 41,280 Bangladeshis (excluding mixed marriages)

Note: It is notoriously difficult to find accurate statistics. This partly reflects the sub-continent's history. Some lists use 'Indian' to refer to people originally from undivided India but now from different nations. That's why 'Asian' is widely used as a classification. But that can also be confusing: does it include other parts of Asia as well? Details of sources for the figures can be found in Catalyst for Change: The South Asian Diaspora, INSADL, 2005.

Causative factors

Through the centuries, the causes of movement have been similar, but have varied in importance. The earliest migrants travelled for *trade* and also exported their *culture* and *religion*. The major migrations of the 19th century were driven by the demands of empire for a global *labour force* and the opportunities for *trade*. They took their *culture* with them, and from the end of the 19th century a stream of gurus and teachers disseminated their *religious* teachings, beginning with the arrival of Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1893. In the 20th and 21st centuries *war* has driven people in fear (Partition in 1947; the Sri Lankan civil war from the 1990s), while the *global market* is calling increasingly for skilled *workers* and *business* entrepreneurs.

The marketplace is not only commercial: *culture*, *religion* and *ideas* are still major exports. Hindu and Buddhist concepts and practices, e.g. yoga, have percolated deeply everywhere. South Asian Muslims are the largest and most devoted religious group in the West. 'Indian' restaurants rival Chinese as world favourites, while 'Bollywood' films and music are becoming the latest craze. *Education* continues to be a major factor - around 200,000 Indians a year apply for student visas to the USA alone.

Diaspora community in the host countries

South Asian Diaspora communities divide along generational lines and the length of time out of contact with the 'mother country'. The subculture of Diaspora communities which have been settled abroad for generations are often based on the culture and values of the time they left, with varying degrees of assimilation into the host society.

In the more recent Diaspora settlements, for example in Britain and North America, the divisions between the generations are sharp. First generation individuals regard the sub-continent as 'home', while knowing that they made a choice to migrate. Second generations are caught in between two cultures, leading to the acronym ABCD - American Born Confused Deshi - they know they belong to two worlds but sometimes feel neither accepts them. Third generation individuals inhabit a fusion world with confidence, but they risk alienation both from their parents and the larger society, especially if their community is not doing well in education and employment. There are also large disparities between Diaspora communities. Some are very successful in education, business and professional life while others struggle, with huge unemployment rates, poor education results and growing drug and gang problems. All communities have faced discrimination, ranging from overt hatred to polite indifference, from obvious exclusion to 'glass ceilings' at higher levels.

Percentage of Christians in the movement

It is hard to estimate the number of Christians in the South Asian Diaspora. It is probably less than the 2-3% proportion of Christians in the sub-continent. The majority of South Asian Christians in the Diaspora are from a Christian background in South Asia. In Britain the South Asians are largely Punjabi, from Pakistan and North India, while in North America there are many more South Indian Christians. Many belong to Asian Christian Fellowships, usually reflecting their regional and language background, worshipping in the same style as they used to 'at home'. Some professionals, especially those who do not live in a strongly South Asian area, may be part of local churches from the host community, usually in twos or threes. Second and third generation South Asian Christians may join either. Believers from Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh backgrounds are still relatively few. Those that have turned to the Lord in the Diaspora are often from different social and caste backgrounds from the traditional Christian community in South Asia.

Effective evangelism approaches

Effective evangelism approaches among the South Asian Diaspora communities hardly exist. By and large the host country churches have found it difficult to relate to people of a different culture and established faith and have either given up or left them alone. Work with young people, for example bible clubs, has been fruitful in a number of countries. Several of today's leaders came to Christ as school or university students. However, for the vast majority of South Asians, Christianity is seen as essentially a part of western culture. Jesus (however greatly they respect him) is the god of white and black people. Effective approaches will require:

- Conviction that Jesus is Saviour and Lord for people of every culture and race, including South Asians from Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Muslim, Sikh or any other faith background
- Willingness to build bridges of friendship and trust through loving service, sharing common concerns and personal relationships. This is necessary to overcome barriers of suspicion or fear (for example with Muslim communities) and to get behind the misperceptions of 'Christianity' and focus on following Christ rather than becoming a 'Christian'
- Commitment to allow people to follow Christ within their culture and community. This will include awareness of family and community, rather than just individuals. It will be sensitive to forms of worship and religious language. It will consciously seek to develop new forms of church in which people can follow Christ in a way that is open to other members of their community, rather than separating them off. These forms will of course vary greatly.

The number of churches and groups doing this are still a handful. But there is growing evidence that their approach is beginning to bear fruit and will multiply in the next ten years.

The Relationship of Diaspora Christians with host country/countries

Adopting effective approaches of evangelism will require change both from Asian Christians and from the host country churches. They will need to work together in close partnership. A major challenge for South Asian Diaspora followers of Christ will be to engage the larger church in their countries for this task.

Note: South Asians are people living in and originating from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

F. A New Persia? – The Iranian Diaspora

The Iranian Diaspora has existed for centuries; however their numbers have dramatically increased in the past 30 years. Near the end of the 1970's, in the midst of secularization and modernization, Iran sent more students overseas than any other nation. This was sustained by economic wealth brought in by oil. With the overthrow of the Shah Pahlavi, Iran was proclaimed an Islamic Republic by Ayatollah Khomeini. The regime instantly implemented strict Islamic law and economic policies which curtailed secular influences and Persian/Zoroastrian culture.

The new revolutionary government engaged in an eight year war with Iraq, where 1 million Iranians were killed, injured, or displaced. The loss to the Iranian economy was estimated at one trillion dollars. The regime also imprisoned close to 100,000 people, mainly from oppositional political parties. Subsequently thousands of them were killed. Non-Islamic minority groups, such as Jews, Armenians and Assyrians have faced new pressures and restrictions under the Islamic government, forcing many to leave. Religious anti-conversion laws and persecution of Christian converts also served to frustrate many.

In addition, the political instability contributed to a deteriorating economy, which was caused by the withdrawal of foreign investors. With an unemployment rate over 15%, coupled with the increased cost of living, many found life in Iran nearly impossible and decided to leave.

From 1981 onwards, Iranians began to leave Iran for places of refuge spanning the globe. Initially Iranians flooded to the United States, Pakistan and Turkey. A second wave of emigrants went to continental Europe and Canada and the next wave to the United Kingdom. With deteriorating conditions in Iran, those who were studying abroad chose not to return, but to settle in their respective countries. The Iranian Diaspora currently totals four to five million people, or about 7% of the total Iranian world population.

Iranians Diaspora and their host countries

Turkey has become an important gateway for the Iranian Diaspora. As Iranians do not need visas to enter Turkey, many make Turkey their first stop before continuing on to Europe and beyond. Over the past two decades, Turkey has hosted between half a million to a million Iranians. Table 1 lists some countries with a significant Iranian population.

Table 1 - Number of Iranians per country

Country	Iranian (Approx.)	Population
United States	1,000,000	
Arabian Gulf States	500,000	
Canada	100,000+	
Germany	100,000	
United Kingdom	100,000	
Sweden	60,000	
France	30,000	
Belgium	30,000	
Holland	30,000+	
Denmark	10,000	
Norway	6000	
Finland	2000	

Most Iranians living outside of Iran enjoy good living conditions. They are generally not congregated in ghettos, but dispersed in their host communities.

Iranians are often successful in their host countries, working in top levels of leadership. Early waves of immigrants to the United States are financially successful and well settled. Iranians in Europe are doing well, although generally less settled and less wealthy. In places like Turkey, because they are not allowed to work, they are economically worse off. Some work illegally and are often taken advantage of by their employers.

Response to the gospel

Iranians are the most receptive Muslim people to the gospel both inside and outside of Iran. More than two decades of strict Islamic rule have served to create disillusionment with Islam, hence openness and receptivity to the gospel is increasing. Although less than 1% (50,000) Iranian in the Diaspora have accepted the Lord, their openness is increasing. It is interesting to note that receptivity to the gospel seems to be inversely proportional to their socioeconomic status. Iranians in America are less open to the gospel than those in Europe. Iranians in Turkey are very open to the gospel, only surpassed by those still in Iran. The openness of Iranians seems to be outstripping personnel and resources, creating a desperate need for trained Farsi speaking Christians to join the work.

Much of the evangelism taking place is done by Iranian believers themselves. They have established churches and house churches in many of their host countries. When Iranian Christians form their own congregations, they tend to be independent and often lack denominational affiliation in their host country. Other Iranians attend local churches and become part of the congregation, which reflects the desire of many Iranians to integrate into their host culture. Iranian Christians are proving to be effective missionaries to countries like Afghanistan.

One caution in reaching out to Iranians is to ensure sincerity in their commitment. Some may profess conversion in order to attain refugee sponsorship. In light of this baptism should not be rushed into and without proper observation of true heart change. Contact with Persian Christians and resources may be necessary. There is a need for host country churches to partner with Iranian Christians and churches to reach Iranians in the Diaspora.

The openness of Iranians seems to be outstripping personnel and resources, creating a desperate need for trained Farsi speaking Christians to enter the gospel ministry.

Note: Iranians are not Arabs. They are a different people and speak a different language. They are the descendants of the Persians.

G. The Super Salad Bowl – Immigrants in the United States

The United States of America is almost a whole country of immigrants. Apart from the few original inhabitants left, everyone has come from somewhere else over four hundred years. This means that it is too great a task to try and describe the range and complexity of its immigrant character.

USA became Christian by Immigration

This was mainly from Europe between the 16th and the 19th centuries. Millions of English, Scots, Welsh Irish, Swedes, Norwegians, Italians, Poles, Germans, etc. brought with them their Christian faith such as it was and it became a country with a mainly Christian but multinational population. The 'melting pot' policy helped them to become 'One Nation under God'

USA is still growing by immigration

It is estimated that now the United States is receiving just under 2 million foreign residents annually. Most of American history was about two groups, Black and White, or people of African and European descent. From the 1960s on, this changed, largely due to a relaxation of immigration controls. By 2000, the United States was home to 30 million immigrants, about 11 percent of the population. Over 13 million migrants arrived in the 1990s alone. Almost 5 percent of Americans have been in the country for a decade or less.

In 2000, 35 million Americans were counted as Hispanic, almost 60 percent of them of Mexican ancestry. Nearly 12 million more Americans were Asian, of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Korean stock. Asians and Hispanics combined make up 15 percent of the population today, but this share is projected to grow to almost 25 percent by 2025, and to 33 percent by 2050. By mid-century, 100 million Americans will claim Hispanic origin. They will then constitute one of the world's largest Latino societies, more populous than any actual Hispanic nation with the exception of Mexico or Brazil.

There is a significant Christian presence within all these Diasporas

The number of people in the Diaspora means that in many cities of the USA there may be thousands of Diaspora people but from different Diasporas. The significance of this is not yet appreciated by Christians in the USA or in the rest of the world.

Preoccupied

In the USA, the White churches of European Descent are still preoccupied by their need to send their own missionaries to the rest of the world. They are unaware of the much larger number of Christians who have come to them from the rest of the world who have a better chance of reaching their own countrymen and a contribution to make to their adopted country. They have not yet grasped the significance of Diaspora for the Kingdom.

The Non-white churches tend to be so big that they do not need to think about anyone else. Or they are so small and disconnected that they feel forced to live in isolation. Or they are so recently arrived that language difficulties cut them off from wider fellowship. They too have not yet grasped their significance for the Kingdom.

Two-Thirds World Christians

Christians in the Two-Thirds World fall into two camps. There is a small but energetic number who will move heaven and earth to get to the USA either to study or to stay there permanently. They provide important links between USA and churches in other countries. There is a much larger number who are influenced by the anti-American attitudes of their own secular leaders and write off USA Christianity as rich, self-indulgent, imperialist and insensitive to the rest of the world.

Europe and the Old Commonwealth

Christians in Europe and the Old Commonwealth countries are also divided. Some have a quiet admiration and real gratitude for the American Churches and what they do for the Kingdom. Many have been influenced by the secular culture's critical, condemnatory and dismissive attitudes that sometimes go so far as to think that American Churches are sub-Christian.

All of these attitudes have to change if Kingdom priorities are to drive our witness to Christ and the gospel. This is a major shift in our context that holds tremendous promise for the future of the gospel if we can but grasp its significance and act. It will not be difficult to change our attitudes when we understand the realities of the situation.

Whites not the majority for much longer

In the late 1990's California became the nation's first majority-minority state, in which non-Latino whites ceased to form an absolute majority of the population. Within a decade, Latinos alone will constitute a majority of California's people. Latinos also make up one-third of the population of Texas, the second largest state, which could achieve majority-minority status as early as 2005. While the proportion of foreign-born people in Houston was less than 3 percent in 1960, today it is about 25 percent. The white majority, state by state will over time become the minority. Looking at these changes should make us reconsider our view of American history and its future.

The Latino Christians are bringing youth, enthusiasm and growth

Latino populations will account for much denominational growth in coming decades. One reason for this is that Latinos are generally much younger than longer-established populations. The national census of 2000 showed that the median age for Hispanics was about 26, younger than that of any other ethnic group and far lower than the median age for Anglo-Whites, which stood at a venerable 38.5. The same proportion of young people is also to be found in the other Diasporas.

Their faith is important to them in their adjustment to the new society and they form enthusiastic congregations. Around half the congregations active today in the Boston-Cambridge area worship in languages other than English. Since immigrant congregations are often small, this does not imply that anything like half of all believers are non-Anglophone, but it does suggest a vigorous growth. When the Greater Boston Baptist Association used posters on subway trains to spread its evangelistic message, the languages used included English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Korean. Today, around a third of the Black population of Massachusetts is foreign-born, with roots in the Caribbean or Africa itself, and this influx is suggested by a new wave of Black churches.

Some Diasporas have higher proportions of Christians than exist in their home countries

This is understandable. In situations of instability and persecution like the Middle East, many Christians have felt that the only way to survive was emigrate. Earlier we saw that there is a higher proportion of Christian Chinese in America than in Asia. Also, because the atmosphere is less threatening and hostile, it is easier to become a Japanese Christian in America than in Japan. The Korean community in the United States is deeply imbued with Christian teaching: Christians outnumber Buddhists by ten or twenty to one.

Even the balance between Roman Catholics and Protestants is different from Latin America. Among first-generation Latinos in the United States, Catholics

massively outnumber Protestants by 74 to 18 percent, but among the third generation, the Catholic share has shrunk to a 59-32 majority. To try and reduce the continuing haemorrhage of believers, Latino Catholics in the United States have tried very much the same solutions as their counterparts in the Philippines or South America, importing Pentecostal customs like traditional music and instruments during services, and encouraging emotional expressions of spontaneous praise and thanksgiving. These tactics may or may not succeed, but in any case the Latino religious scene has been so volatile in recent decades that detailed predictions of any kind are rash. Whatever the exact denominational balance happens to be, the changing racial picture is only going to strengthen overall Christian numbers.

Diaspora Christians believe and practice a biblical gospel

Diaspora Christians from the *South* read the Bible in a way that makes that Christianity look like a wholly different religion from the faith of prosperous advanced societies of Europe or North America. They are quite at home with biblical notions of the supernatural, with ideas like dreams and prophecy. Just as relevant in their eyes are that book's core social and political themes, like martyrdom, oppression, and exile.

Millions of Christians around the world do in fact live in constant danger of persecution or forced conversion, from either governments or local vigilantes. For modern Christians in Nigeria, Egypt, the Sudan, or Indonesia, it is quite conceivable that they might someday find themselves before a tribunal that would demand that they renounce their faith upon pain of death. It is their kin that make up the Diasporas in USA. They provide live links to the poor, the oppressed and the persecuted Christians around the world.

For Diaspora Christians it has to be the whole gospel

Poverty or the fear of poverty is one of the main driving forces behind the migrations in our time. People recently arrived in our Diasporas have real live memories of that poverty and know its causes. The debate about evangelism versus social concern is an irrelevance to them. Any Gospel that does not address the issues of poverty and discrimination is not good news at all.

Will it be a 'melting pot' or a 'salad bowl' religiously?

Currently, there is little appreciation of the enormous changes that are coming about because of the demographics in USA. As a consequence, segregation would not be too hard a word to describe the relations between the White and the Non-White Churches. Kingdom of God thinking realizes that if this can change, tremendous forces for good could be released in America and in the rest of the world. So what is required to bring about this change?

All Christians need to seek out other Christians who are not like them, 'the new people next door', and develop friendships and understanding with them. All congregations need to reach out to other congregations that are not like them and work out how they can affirm their unity with respect for their differences. Within Denominations or people of similar spiritualities, there needs to be formal and informal contacts that will harness all the parts to further the goals of the whole.

This will not be easy. It will encounter resistance. This is understandable because we are all more at home in our own culture than in another. Perhaps it will take a few more trances and sheets let down from heaven (Acts 10). What must not happen is that patronizing attitudes or territorial considerations creep in and confound hope and deepen the divisions.

This Study is heavily drawn from the book, The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity by Philip Jenkins (Oxford University Press, 2003) 105, 214-220. The whole book is worth reading.

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Twenty-four investigative bible discussions covering God, humankind, sin and experiencing God.

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Network of international student ministries and volunteers in North America.

Campus Crusade for Christ - www.bridgesinternational.com

European International Student Ministries (EISM) www.eism.penpal4u.net Links to European ministries.

Friends International - www.friendsinternational.org.uk

Institute of Hindu Studies, US Center for World Mission - ih@uscwm.org

InterFACE Ministries - www.iface.org

International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. www.ifesworld.org Links to student ministries worldwide.

International Students, Inc.-www.isionline.org; (see Resources link);

www.internationalstudents.org (Website for seekers)

ISM Canada www.ismc.ca

International Student Ministries of New Zealand, Inc. - www.ism.org.nz

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship USA - www.intervarsity.org/ism

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