

Cross-Cultural Perspectives from the General Director



Paradigm Shift: From Missionary Fields to Missionary Forces

A quick scan of mission's organizations reveals that regional missionaries are far from a new phenomenon. For example: there is a growing mission's movement among denominational churches in South Korea. They send out one missionary per 4.2 congregations causing them to rank number eleven in the world.

A mission's sending agency in Nigeria sends out 3800 missionaries to 38 nations. There are over 25,000 missionaries from Africa to other parts of the world. What is happening? The rest of the world is catching a vision, is becoming energized and mobilized. We should expect nothing less among us who proclaim the whole gospel. In fact, we should be the pacesetters.

Scott Moreau said missions is a two-way street on every continent. Perhaps, this is what Rev. N. A. Urshan had in mind when he said "the whole gospel to the whole world by the whole church." Our North American missionaries forever remain my heroes; models of personal sacrifice and commitment. Regional missionaries will not change that. We once partnered with them to evangelize their nations. Now the table has turned. In obedience to the Great Commission they place the yoke on their shoulders. They partner with us to reach all nations.

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work” (Ecclesiastes 4:9, *NIV*).

Although there will always be the need for North American missionaries there is a possibility roles will change as missionary fields are transformed into missionary forces.

I envision there will be a need for training regional missionaries for their cross-cultural ministry. National workers need to be multiplied and mobilized for the harvest. This requires men and women who are willing to train, mentor, and encourage.

As we build strong, responsible churches we need to instill a mission’s burden and emphasis that will produce missions-minded churches that will send and support missionaries to other cultures.

As we partner with regional missionaries we will be careful how we provide funds. We expect each national church to be involved in giving. Yet, we will also endeavor to match funds given through the regional commissions for missions. Balance is needed. We will not foster unhealthy dependency. Our efforts in raising PIM support or designated monies for the general operation of the regional missionary program will be carefully invested and administered.

As we step into the future, it is encouraging to know, that we will have others by our side. We can march forward with an emerging force of regional missionaries.