

Global Christianity; “Missions” and “Missionaries”

Our Father, we praise You for Your grace, mercy, and love. We thank You that You are good and great. As we meet together in this course, we look to You, our Father, to guide us again today. Thank You for the privilege we have of being called into Your service, of knowing You as our Father, and of belonging to a church that stretches down through the centuries and stretches all around the world. As we think of You and seek to learn how better to serve You in Your mission to redeem this world, our Father, we pray for Your guidance and help. We ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

As I mentioned to you a previous time, I want tell you at the beginning of each class about some recommended works related to missions. One of those books is by J. H. Bavinck, called *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*. This was written in the early part of the twentieth century, and it is a text that many of us cut our theological and missiological teeth on a few years ago. It has been a standard mainstay textbook in conservative, Reformed missiological circles. Bavinck is a Dutch Reformed missiologist, and he sets out one of the clearest Reformed understandings of an organization of mission thinking. I commend this text to you to get some of the basic Reformed approaches for understanding the foundation of mission in the Old Testament, the goal of mission being the glory of God, and some basic Reformed postures with respect to the mission enterprise.

Another one is a book written by David Bosch, called *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. It was published in the early 1990s. David Bosch was a South African missiologist who was tragically killed in an auto accident right before this was published. It is his magnum opus, and it is used as a mission textbook probably more than any other single textbook in English-speaking theological seminaries. It is a comprehensive look at the mission understandings throughout the Bible, then understandings of mission throughout the history of the church, and current issues that the church faces in world mission today. It is incredibly comprehensive, and it is for good reason that it is used in so many classrooms today. You cannot say that you are up on mission thinking if you have not gone through Bosch.

For us here, let me make a couple of further notes about this book. He does not always take the view of Scripture to which we would adhere in terms of seeing it as inerrant. You will read some remarks about source documentation, 2 Isaiah, and other things that should make you uncomfortable. That does not take away from his biblical exegesis per say, but it does point out his formal view of Scripture and how we would disagree with that. One note that I will make further about the book is that, despite its comprehensive nature, shockingly almost, as you go through the book and as you look at the bibliography and index of names in the back, you see very few non-Western authors listed. To write a book about theology in general, much less mission theology today, without being worldwide in your scope is unthinkable. This was written 10 years ago, but even at that time there was already so much in print to be cited. That is an oddity about this book, and I think it is a shortcoming despite the fact that it is used so much and offers so much.

One more recent book is published by James & Lillian Breckenridge, entitled *What Color Is Your God?: Multicultural Education in the Church*. I just discovered this recently, and it is helpful in that it takes mission issues with respect to multiple cultures and brings it home to a local church situation for local ministry. It does not just talk about mission “out there,” but it talks about what happens with multicultural ministries among where you are, especially in North America. I commend this to you to think about Christian education and about all aspects of ministry in a North American local church situation. We are, in this part of the world now, involved in multicultural ministry as well. I think this is

a very helpful book in that regard.

Let us go to our second topic for the lesson, which is global Christianity. In many ways this topic is fundamental and foundational to an understanding of God's world mission today. It is important to come to grips with the reality that the church of Jesus Christ is now a worldwide church of Jesus Christ, and we stretch all around the world.

As a preliminary note, globalization has been a buzzword for a while. There are trends toward globalization in business, cultural realities, and communications. This is a reality. When you travel the world, you will see similarities due primarily to the spread of Western culture and aspects of Western culture via communication, travel, and the world economy. However, we have to note that despite globalization as a reality, there are resilient particularities of local culture, language, and habits that will not go away. It is easy to think that there will be one uniform, monolithic, global culture that will wipe out languages, habits of peoples, and appearances. But if you go to any major city, though they may look alike, you also have a huge multiplicity of cultures and languages, and those will not disappear. If you look at incidences in history, there are military powers that have sought to destroy and wipe out languages through colonial rule. Some examples are the Japanese rule in Korea and the Soviet empire. Some have said that the spread of the British Empire and eventually the American Empire seeks to obliterate local languages and customs through the spread of English. Local languages may disappear, but by and large, local languages and cultures will stay. We must not be fooled into thinking that the world will become a single, monolithic, global place where everyone is alike. That will not happen, and that bears a lot of consequences for the Christian church.

Let us look at some sheer demographic realities of where we as the Christian church are today. A hundred years ago, fully half of the Christian church was found in Europe. A large percentage of the part of the world that became the U.S.S.R., along with North America and Latin America, made up the remaining Christians. A portion of those were Roman Catholic. Small percentages of Christians were found in South Asia, Oceania, East Asia, and Africa. Once you move further in the twentieth century, post World War II, into 1970, 1985, and near 2000, those percentages shift. Latin America and Africa now have the highest single percentages of the world Christian population. The percentage granted to Europe, 20 percent, is probably quite generous. Those of you who have lived and traveled in Europe will know the reality of the Christian faith in Europe. There has been a comeback, and revivals have taken place in Eastern Europe in the past decade. Nevertheless, in many parts of Europe, the Christian faith has largely receded from having an active role in people's lives and public life in general. North American still has a substantial part of the world Christian population, along with South Asia and East Asia. These percentages are based on the Barrett encyclopedia from 1982, and I have not updated them yet for the new 2001 encyclopedia. They are generally close, although East Asia will have higher percentages because now we know much more about what has happened in China than we did 20 years ago. The point is that when you look at the Christian world today, we have shifted southward. There is no denying the demographic realities; that is who we are as a Christian church. There is no single dominant place, but if there were, it would either be Latin America or Africa in terms of the sheer numbers of people adhering to the Christian faith.

Let me give a few examples of countries in the world and how their populations have changed with respect to adherence to the Christian faith. I have picked three, and these are also from the 1982 Barrett encyclopedia. In Kenya, Nigeria, and South Korea 100 years ago, there was negligible Christian affiliation. Once you get to 1970, however, you see Kenya moving from 60 percent to 70 percent to 80 percent of the total population being affiliated with the Christian church. You can evaluate that how you will; much of it is the Church of Kenya, an Anglican church. It could be Roman Catholic, but there is

also a heavy Protestant affiliation of various kinds, including evangelical. If you have ever been in Nairobi on a Sunday morning, you will see almost everyone headed off to church for worship. That is just the way it is. In Nigeria, approximately half of the population there is Christian, and the other half is probably Muslim. South Korea has had a significant increase in the number of Christians in that about a third of the overall population is Christian. If you do not already know this, the Christian faith grew significantly in the whole Korean peninsula in the early part of the twentieth century. With the Korean War, most of the Christians in the north had to flee southward. That has made South Korea that much stronger in terms of Christian population. As we will see later in the course, the church in South Korea has a strong sense of calling of being God's specially chosen people to carry out His mission to Asia in particular but indeed to all the world.

We can cite many other countries in terms of how the majority, more of the population in certain countries, is affiliated with the Christian faith. Let us talk about why that happened. One way to understand it is that as Christianity shifted to different areas of the world over the last 2000 years, it is part and parcel of how Christian faith has grown and spread. Andrew Walls speaks of these macro-cultural shifts that have taken place throughout history. He breaks them down into six phases from 2000 years ago up until today. He notes that the first phase of Christianity was largely encompassed within a Palestinian Jewish framework. Just in the nick of time, as Jerusalem was destroyed, the Christian faith spread outward into other cultural areas. He notes that it spread into all different directions, but the Christian faith particularly took hold in the Hellenistic Roman world. It moved throughout the Roman Empire gradually as the second phase. When you read Christian authors of the day as the barbarian hordes overran the empire, writers fretted that the Christian church itself would be destroyed because there had been such a close alignment developed. Then just in the nick of time as the Roman Empire was destroyed and it looked like the Christian church would be destroyed, it spilled out into these northern barbarian European savages. The Christian faith took root there, and you enter into yet another phase, the barbarian-European phase. Then with the Reformation especially, you see a solidifying of the Christian faith into its fourth era, the Western European phase. The fifth phase took place over the last 500 years as Europe expanded. The Christian faith came through Europe to other parts of the world, and simultaneously you see a gradual recession of the Christian faith in Europe throughout the period of the Enlightenment. Once you enter the twentieth century with the two world wars, the Christian faith almost evaporated from Europe. It simultaneously entered into other parts of the world and took hold, grew, and flourished. Now we are in a sixth phase, which is a period of cross-cultural transmission. You can almost call it a southern phase on a macro sense. Really it is the southern continents of the world that are the strongest areas of Christian adherence. These sorts of macro shifts and changes are a description of Christian history. It is not a straight-line development in the way we want to think about it. These sorts of cultural leaps explain or describe what has happened in macro Christian history. That is where we are in our day.

We are indeed a global, worldwide Christian church. As a result, we have a number of contemporary perspectives that emerge and arise from being a worldwide, multi-cultural, multi-national, international church. That is who we are. You have more and more writings with mission theology from alternate centers. Even many North American mission writers have significant non-Western experience in ways that change them in significant ways. Miriam Adeney represents some of the mission and instinctive thinking in the Philippines where she had experience. She talks about how the former Western theology and its crystallized, precise propositional form that comes in is out of sync with the normal way of thinking about the way worldviews are developed and the way theology would develop contextually. She notes these different categories of thought to where in a non-Western Philippino setting there is more of continuity between the spiritual and the material than what you would normally have in a Western setting. There is continuity between the natural and supernatural, the mind and body, and

theology and economy. You do not separate out economic, physical matters from spiritual, religious matters, which we can tend to do in our Western setting. There is also continuity between the individual and the group and between systematic, crystallized, clear formulations of theology and uncertainty and mystery. You have myriads of these sorts of different shapes and contours of theological articulation emerging in the worldwide church over the last generation or two. That has proved to be a stimulus, challenge, and threat to many of us where some of the theological ground is shaken just a bit. Some of what has been familiar needs to be expanded and rethought regarding the complexity of the worldwide church's understanding of God and His mission.

William Dyrness had significant experience in the Philippines as well. He has been the dean at the school of theology at Fuller Seminary. In one of his books he notes the particularity of theologies, including a Western theology. He points out that Western theology developed in a particular historical setting within the Enlightenment on the backdrop of Greek philosophy in the way that Christian theology became interlocked with Greek philosophy. He does not critique that per se, but he just notes it as fact. The essence of theology as it came to be developed in the West came to be thought about and explained with precision and certainty within particular ecclesiastical histories. When that style of theology is moved into non-Western settings, there is a sense of dissidence. You hear all sorts of stories of non-Western theological students going to Britain, France, Germany, or North America and studying theological systems. They return home, get off the plane, and Grandma rushes up and talks about how a student's mother is dying, and she asks him to come and do something. There is a total disconnect with that reality in the theological system that he has learned. What does Christian theology have to say about these traditional realities? What about the ancestors that will not go away? You come to note the particular character of Christian theology.

We must not take this and run and say that everything is confined to cultural realities. It is not necessarily true that theology is particular here and therefore totally irrelevant to a different setting. Some people make that implication, but that is not the necessary implication. There is still a universal Christian truth, but it is not just strictly one universal truth that applies exactly the same way to every situation. There is a tension and a coming together of what is particular and what is universal.

Paul Hertig wrote about Jesus' migrancy, where He was from, where He did His ministry, and the people among whom He ministered. He also notes the way that Matthew writes about that. He points out that Jesus and His followers were Galileans, which comes out very strongly in the Gospel of Matthew. If you read through the Gospels, note those place names. When Peter tries to sneak into the trial to see what was happening to Jesus, one of the slave girls notices him. She says, "I know by the way you talk where you are from." The Galileans were kind of country-bumpkin types of people, and Jesus was as well. He was not from the center of cultural power and prestige. They were from the margins, and what you see from a worldwide Christian church is people coming from the margins. In terms of the way theology is understood, practiced, and taught, they are still at the margins where economic influence is the strongest. People who are at the margins write to say that they can see in the Scriptures where God has always been at work in the margins. You have these sorts of new challenges coming forth as well.

I suggest to you that we think about the church as a worldwide, global reality that needs to filter down into our instincts of our self-identity. It is so very critical. When you meet up with a person, his or her and your own ethnicity will never go away, and the Gospel comes to us as particular ethnic people. But that is not necessarily the primary category for how you understand yourself in relation to other people. The same God created you, and if you are in the Lord together, the same Jesus Christ redeemed you. That is your commonality as you are brought together in your different ethnicities. It gives you a bit of a critical distance from your own cultural ethnic home to where you can provide a measure of critique

toward yourself. It is easy to go to one end of the spectrum and only be critical, especially if you are a white North American. One of the easiest things to do is to be critical of everything that is white North American. We need to know how to be appreciative and grateful but also how to gain a measure of critical distance no matter what sort of person you are.

The worldwide nature of the Christian church also affects our understanding of world mission today. It is out-of-date to continue to think about Christian world mission as going from here to everywhere else. That is no longer the case, though our instincts often times tell us that that is what mission is. We think about declaring God's glory to the nations, and we think that the nations are everywhere else and America is the headquarters. Those are some of our instincts, and there are historical reasons for those being our instincts. It is not anyone's fault that we feel that way instinctively, but we need to go back and unpack that history so that we can catch up with reality. We really are a worldwide Christian church. We are not everywhere, and there are still unreached peoples. But you cannot find an area in the world now where the Christian church does not live. The latest statistics from Barrett's encyclopedia tell us that the Christian faith now has adherence in every one of the world's political units, approximately all 238 countries. No other religious faith comes even close to that. That is remarkable! It does not mean that there are no unreached peoples and the job is finished, but it does point to the worldwide, global reality of the Christian church. That needs to further inform our instincts as to who we are.

Another implication of understanding this is to have a respect for and recognition of Christ's worldwide church. Verkuyl points out that one way of having respect for and recognizing the worldwide Christian church is to note that mission history and church history come together as two sides of the same coin. It is not as though church history starts in Jerusalem, runs through Europe, and comes to North America where it ends, and mission history is where Christianity has some effect in other parts of the world. That is the instinctive way that we have been taught. But as the Christian faith spreads into Europe, it is also mission history. As the Christian faith comes to North America, it is mission history. Similarly, as the Christian church develops in northeast Africa, India, Korea, and Indonesia, it is also church history. It is two sides of the same coin. You can call all of church history mission history, and you can call all of mission history church history by looking at it from different angles. To develop that way of understanding church history and mission history is a way of having respect for all of the worldwide Christian church. It is a way of recognizing the worldwide Christian church.

It still is too often the case that cross-cultural mission enterprises will go into an area different than their own and have little to no recognition of Christian history that is already there. It is as though Christian history starts with them. It is bizarre the way that happens. My own personal experience as a North American going to Japan in 1986 was that somehow I knew that there was a Christian history, but I knew nothing about it and did not think I needed to know anything about it. When I stepped off the plane, my instinctive notion was, "I am not really sure what happened here before now, but it does not really matter, because I am here now. The Gospel starts here. Our missionary forefathers helped me get here, but now it starts." That was my notion.

Another way of having respect for and recognizing the worldwide church is to understand and critique the worldwide church. To understand the worldwide church means to read, listen, and ask questions. We need to say, "I really have no clue about what has happened in Malawi. There is a church in Malawi? I had no idea." We need to be honest, say that, and ask questions. This is key. There is a ton of material available about things like that, especially with the Internet. We need to seek to understand and know that there is worthwhile reality and theology being done elsewhere. We need to not be afraid to mutually critique each other. It is a popular notion in our day to say that if we are in one culture, we cannot critique something in a different culture. In Christ we need to critique each other and be critiqued. When

you move into a new setting, you are a guest, you show respect, and there is a time to be quiet, learn, and listen. But to think that you have nothing to say into the setting denies another part of the body of Christ of what Christ can offer them through you and vice versa. Show respect to someone like Kazoh Kitamori, who wrote *Theology of the Pain of God*, which is one of the most important works in all of history and especially in the twentieth century. He wrote during World War II. When his book was translated into Western languages in the 1950s, he made a big splash, and a number of theologians in Europe and North America said they finally had a good, authentic Japanese Christian theology. It made a big impact, and it still has a big impact. When you look at theology in Japan, that is one of the lists of books you would have to say is of significant importance. Part of showing respect for him is to critique his work after understanding and working hard to seek to understand what he wrote. Those are some of the implications for recognizing and functioning as a part of the worldwide Christian church.

Let us talk about how you avoid the distinction between “the home front” and the rest of the world where one place is headquarters and the rest is the mission field. This is especially hard in light of the fact of existing structures like a home mission board and a foreign mission board.

A side note to this is that in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), we do not have boards, but we have committees. There is a big reason for that historically, especially with regard to mission boards versus mission committees. There was a discussion in the nineteenth century to where some in the northern church insisted that you have mission boards. Contrary to that, there were those in the south who said that you do not have boards because a board is autonomous and has final authority. These decisions need to be subject to the church and the church courts, so you have committees that are under the authority and responsibility of church courts. In the PCA, we do not have boards per se. For legal purposes, educational institutions might have something called a board, but in reality we are all committees. It is the church courts who have final say for Christ.

It is helpful to note a couple of things with respect to why the PCA has Mission to North America (MNA) and Mission to the World (MTW). That very language connotes that North America is not the world and everything else is the world. The reason for that distinction includes expedience. Functioning domestically does not require some of the same legal and logistical matters that functioning internationally does. You do not have to get a passport if you move from Tennessee to California. There are tax implications. In addition, there is the background of the notion that the Western world is the Christian world and the rest of the world outside of that is the non-Christian world. When you talk about the time when the PCA was formed in the 1970s, in evangelical circles that was very much an unspoken assumption among most people. In our day, some people ask the question of why we should have the distinction between home mission and foreign mission. Essentially there is no difference, so it raises the question of how to avoid an unhealthy distinction. This is a question that is asked in the midst of a macro historical shift from being a Western-centered Christian faith and all that that means for cross-cultural mission and being a worldwide Christian church. We have to consider what that looks like as far as the whole church being used of God to reach out to and minister among the whole world. It is a question that arises in the midst of transition, so it is a good question. Answering the question in the concrete takes wisdom, patience, and courage. We will talk about some of these matters in the concrete as we go through the course.

In light of the Christian faith's worldwide presence, including all of the world's 238 nations, let us talk about unreached people groups and the focus on the 10/40 window. There is so much to do in many parts of the world, for example in Europe. When I gave the statistic as Barrett's compilation does, that the Christian faith has adherence in all of the world's 238 political entities, speaking politically, you can say the Christian faith is present in all of the world's nations. As you know biblically, when you talk

about the nations, that is not usually equivalent to political entities. You talk about people groups, and those are different from political nations. Often times there is overlap, but certainly there is not equivalency between the peoples and the United Nations' recognized political nations throughout the world. For example, if you look at Nigeria, there are more different languages there than in all of Europe. There are all sorts of nations within the political entity of Nigeria. While you have the Christian church present in all of the world's political units, it is not the case that the Christian church will be present among all languages and all people groups. The definition of an unreached people group is something that people tweak. Normally it is used to say that an unreached people group is a people group that does not have an indigenous Christian presence that, on its own with God's help, is capable of reaching the rest of its people group. It needs outside help to do that. The 10/40 window is one of those missiological terms that many of you will know, and it is due to being between 10 degrees and 40 degrees latitude, stretching across northern Africa and much of Asia. That is the 10/40 window, and people always modify that to focus on different areas. Undoubtedly the strong presence of Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism in that area points to a low Christian percentage. That area needs to be prayed for and labored among on behalf of the Gospel. At the same time, look at Europe and even Saint Louis. There are needs everywhere. We need to see the entire world as the mission field and follow God's particular calling without letting ourselves off the hook to move cross-culturally. To continue to be pushed toward reaching unreached people groups is part of the trick. We all want to be comfortable, and we need to be pushed. But if we truncate everything strictly into reaching unreached people groups and forget all areas of the world, that is not full and complete either. How to keep all factors in mind is an important question.

It is confirmed that those, especially North Americans, who have been critiqued for being culturally chauvinistic in imposing their own cultural values have reacted largely by being too accepting and embracing everything and not critiquing anything. We need to be very careful about that. On the other hand, newer non-Western missionaries who go are committing the same wrongs of cultural imperialism. They need to be reminded as well about the need to be sensitive.

Let us talk about strategies to reach immigrants coming to various parts of the world. Our third topic is entitled missions and missionaries. First let us note the distinction between organized and unorganized missions efforts as far as the Christian church is concerned. You can see this from the earliest chapters of Acts. None of this is outside of the control of God's own providence, good grace, and mission intentions.

When you look at so-called unorganized efforts and go through the first chapters of Acts, you will recall that Pentecost happened just as Jesus said that it would. The Holy Spirit comes, and the early disciples declare the praises of God. People there from surrounding areas hear the glories of God announced in their own languages. So the church at Jerusalem, having waited in Jerusalem for the Spirit to come on high, forms a missions committee and launches a cross-cultural missions work. Wrong! The Christian church stayed in Jerusalem because, as far as they were concerned, the Christian church was Jewish. That was obvious to them, so that is where they were. The Christian church spread outside of those cultural confines through persecution. There is a little cross-cultural conflict within the church, and therefore the deacons are appointed in Acts 6. Stephen is stoned for allegedly criticizing the religious establishment of the day, which he certainly did in many ways. In the wake of that persecution of Stephen, we move into chapter 8. "On that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria." In Acts 1:8 Jesus said, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth." Now He takes them to Judea and Samaria through persecution. They go about preaching the Word. God leads Philip into Samaria to preach to the Ethiopian, He converts Saul, and He convinces Peter that the Gospel

is indeed through all sorts of people through coming to Cornelius. When you get to Acts 11:19-20, "Those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus the coastlands and island, to Antioch northward, speaking the Word to no one except Jews alone." It was still beyond the realm of possibility for them that anyone but Jews would accept the Messiah. It was self-evident, but "there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus." This was a revolutionary practice. This was not an organized missionary effort. These are people who were running for their lives; they were fleeing persecution. They are immigrants, and they served as missionaries, spreading their faith.

That sort of reality has happened throughout history, and it continues to happen throughout our day. Living in Japan I increasingly saw Christian laborers from Africa who came to find work and send money back home. Those were, without question, God's missionaries. They worked in small little shops that an official missionary could never reach. How could I reach the back storeroom of a small sushi shop as an American missionary? That just would not happen, but that is where some of these folks worked. Look at so many of the Christian refugees from the Sudan who have had to flee that tragic situation. Has not God used them as missionaries in various places in the world, including this one, to bring revival and challenge to churches here and to bring the good news of Jesus? Look at the missionaries from Korea who were taken forcibly by the Japanese to Japan. There are so many others who have been moved against their will. Saint Patrick was taken initially as a slave from England, where he was born, to Ireland. He escaped, but it was in the wake of that experience that Patrick received God's more formal call to be a missionary to Ireland. That is all within God's good providence.

We know of incidences throughout history where you have people who go for political or economic reasons as immigrants, and it is as they go somewhere that they hear about the Christian Gospel. In the Old Testament we see the Israeli slave girl who goes in the house of Naman the Assyrian. God used her to tell Naman's wife that he should talk to the prophet of Israel. Naman goes and hears about the God of Israel through this little slave girl. God orchestrates all these things. I suggest to you that within His overall world mission, that is probably the more substantial and widespread aspect of His world mission. I do not want to diminish the importance of what we do in an organized way, but I want you to recognize that it is God's world mission. I do not think there was anyone in the Christian church who planned the recession of the Christian church out of Europe and the spread of Christianity throughout Africa and Latin America. Certainly the modern missions movement for the past 500 years is a direct cause of the spread of the Christian faith throughout the southern continents. But the way things have turned out was not a part of some macro plan that the church came up with. It is all within God's own direction.

Within that there is the matter of the organized missions effort. You see that in the New Testament too, for example in Acts 13 where the Holy Spirit comes to the church at Antioch while they worship and serve Him. He says to set apart for Him Saul and Barnabus to the task to which He had called them. The Holy Spirit led them from Antioch into Galatia and Asia Minor. Eventually they went into Europe, and that was an organized missions effort of the Christian church within the providence and direction of God.

It is usually after the fact that we will see what God has done in a specific place. When you go back to the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference, which was at the height of Western confidence and missionary expectation, Africa was at the bottom of the evolutionary scale. This showed the mindset of the Westerners at the missionary conference. To them, if Africans were human, they were certainly animists, and there was nothing of value within Africa. To think that Africa would become as Christian

of an area in the world as it has become would have been a total surprise. Now we look back, and you can almost see what some people have called God's sense of humor that it has happened that way. It was not so much that people went there to see God move that way, but we see it happen afterward. That is not to say that we should not have our antenna up for how God leads and directs us. But we need to recognize that usually in unseen and unknown ways God raises up works of His Spirit, who works at His initiative in ways to remind us that He is the one who does it.

In thinking about who missionaries are, we can divide them into several categories. On the one hand all Christians are missionaries. God has sent us all into the world to serve Him. In talking about missions, Ralph Winter makes a very good point when he insists that not everyone is a missionary. When you look at the organized missions effort of the church, not everyone is a missionary. There are certain people who are set apart and led by God to intentionally work cross-culturally. It does not necessarily mean that you have to move outside of your own political nation's boundaries. But to intentionally work cross-culturally is where missionaries are going to be seen to be working. Part of my definition of a missionary is the reality of moving across cultural boundaries. That can be distinguished from someone who is an evangelist and does not necessarily move across cultural boundaries. Cultural realities and differences are really at the heart of what God's mission is about. He grants His redemption of the cosmos among all peoples. Everyone is a missionary in the sense that the Great Commission was given to all of the Lord's people and in the sense that Jesus told His disciples, and us by extension, "Just as the Father has sent me, so send I you." It is basic to our lives as Christians, and it is basic to our understanding as the Christian church to be a missionary church that we understand ourselves to be sent into the world to serve Christ. I make a semantic distinction, and I align myself with some themes that Ralph Winter has pushed to preserve the distinctive role of intentional cross-cultural missionaries. It is a semantic distinction.

I have noted the difference between career missionaries and short-term missionaries. That is to note those categories that we have and how they shift. Fifteen years ago, a short-term missionary was someone who went somewhere for two or three years. A career missionary was someone who went for life, and they knew they would come back in a box. Nowadays, a long-term or career missionary is anyone who goes over for a couple of years. A short-term missionary is someone who goes anywhere for any length of time: one week, one month, six months. That is just to note how there has been a huge shift in recent years, especially in North American and Korean missions. There are all sorts of one-week trips that take place. I have seen one-week trips that go from Korea to the Philippines to do medical work, for example. I wanted to note the terminology as it is used in our day about short-term missionaries. Fifteen to 20 years ago, it would have been unheard of to call someone a missionary who went for one week to do something. It was not part of our capacity to think that way yet, but now it is very commonplace. So many people go on short-term mission trips that we need to recognize that terminology as it is used. Now mission agencies count missionaries, and those numbers enter their totals. Mission agencies will make a distinction usually between career units and short-term units, and within short-term units they will note summers. It is important to note those differences. Many cross-cultural missionaries today who are sent by mission agencies of their churches to work cross-culturally operate within their own macro political boundaries. For example, in India, Brazil, and Indonesia there are hundreds of cross-cultural missionaries within those places. They never leave the country but cross-culturally the ministry is significant.

For our remaining time I want to look at some of what Wilbert Shenk wrote in his book *Changing Frontiers of Mission*. Let me note what I think are a few important points of his chapter on page 177 called "Missions in Search of Mission: The Changing Portions of the Mission Agency."

Shenk notes at the beginning of the chapter that mission is always focused on the future, on God's final new heavens and new earth stage toward which He moves His world. Yet in the meantime He is committed to working through human agency. It is His mission, but it is implemented through human agency. You can see the interplay between His mission and human participation in it. We are coworkers. The human response to what God has been doing oftentimes has been to create an agency or institution in light of God's calling. Inescapably, he notes, those institutions will be products of their particular historical and sociological context. That is self-evident, but it is helpful to note. When you start to look at modern-day contemporary mission agencies and mission societies, it is important to note the particular historical settings within which they arose in order to understand some of the challenges that we face now. On page 178, Shenk points out that it is important to note the origins of the mission society. He uses the missionary society as a generic description of what we would call mission groups or agencies. It is important to note the change in historical situations today and the process of institutionalization that has gone on.

Shenk notes that when mission societies started arising a couple hundred years ago, there was institutional precedence, which you had to have. There was the monastic movement: Dominicans, Augustinians, Franciscans, and Jesuits. Those movements were one historical precedent. There were the trading companies. The roles of the Dutch and British trading companies won in letting the Western world (Europe) know about other parts of the world. Second, they showed how, logistically, people could go to other parts of the world. This was critical for the formation of mission societies. Third was the whole idea of a voluntary society, a group for which people would volunteer to participate. People would voluntarily give money and pray for someone to go. When William Carey had a strong sense from reading about Cook's travels in the wider world and developed a burden to go to India, there was a group that came together to give money and pray to send him to India. That missionary society was formed there in the early 1790s within that particular historical setting. Shenk notes that it was strategic and expedient the way the missionary voluntary society was formed. It is not directly revealed in Scripture that you set up a missionary society in a certain way. Shenk does not say that it was bad, but he said that within that setting that is what they had to go on. That is what they did because it only made sense to do it that way to accomplish the task. It developed as a means of missionary action beyond Christendom. It is something in which you garner up resources from the home front to send to the non-Christian world out there. It also developed as a specialized activity of a minority of Christians. We still have the reality with us that there are missions people over in one place. They are somewhat eccentric, always beating drums, and asking for people and money. There are a few people who do that, and they are not really theologically astute. The leftovers do that. That is due to this reality of the missionary society.

Shenk goes on to note that we have had a changed historical and cultural situation in the last generation. Around 1910 was the height of the imperial era and Western missionary confidence. Through the twentieth century, World War I shattered European confidence, and World War II really shattered Western confidence. Then from the United States' perspective, the Vietnam War came and shook the confidence that the United States had in its ability to move around the world freely at its own will. Those have been major aspects of the change in situation in which we now find ourselves in the world mission situation.

After World War II, there were independence movements in the 1950s and 1960s of nations throughout Africa and Asia who were formal colonial possessions of Western powers. They had become independent now, and churches were growing there. You started to hear calls among the non-Western world, wondering why the missionaries were still there. Those countries had grown, and they did not want the missionaries anymore. Theologically there were public calls in the 1960s and 1970s that

wondered why the missionaries were still teaching. The natives were not sure that the missionaries knew who they were or that they cared for them. There are some significant points made by some non-Western theologians, for example John Beady in Kenya. He said the theologians knew more about dead heretics than they knew about them. They did not know who the Kenyans were or that they were even there. They had studied the missionaries and knew all about them. This is the dynamic that took place. That was not everywhere; there was still warm cooperation among Westerners and non-Westerners. But those sorts of voices started to come.

The economic crisis of the early 1970s began to raise the specters that this was not a movement with infinite financial resources. Europe experienced that after World War I and World War II. Those realities started to change the situation of it being a "West to the rest" to being one that is a little bit more confused. Certainly now with the end of the Cold War the world is no longer a bipolar world that way that we have seen it, but it is one that is much more multi-polar. It is all the more difficult to see from the United States. Militarily, the United States is the main superpower in the world. That gives it the freedom to do what it wants to do, by and large. It can act unilaterally in many situations, and that affects the way we view the world missionally as well. Nevertheless, it is a multi-polar and much more confused world than it used to be. That is part of the changing situation in which we find ourselves.

Shenk goes on to talk about the institutionalization of mission agencies. They were created to do these important tasks, and they should continue. This is a "God-given task," they say. But situations change, money dries up, and there are not as many volunteers. Why should you continue an evangelistic church-planting ministry in Korea? It is important to look at how to deal with the fossilization that can occur. While Shenk and others point to the identity crisis that many mission agencies find themselves in, he points out that it is an opportunity to create something new and good. We will look later at the Three-Self formula for beginning indigenous churches. It was articulated in the mid-nineteenth century by Henry Venn, an Englishman, and Rufus Anderson, an American. Part of the reason that Henry Venn, as a general secretary of the Church Missionary Society, developed the idea of the Three-Self-Church was that the Church Missionary Society did not have enough funds to support indigenous pastors. We did not have the fund to support them, so maybe they could support themselves. Maybe the churches could do that. It was a crisis they faced, and out of that developed this very pervasive missionary idea of the Three-Self Church. The point is that times of crisis can lead toward creative opportunities. Challenges are whether or not missionary societies should simply mark time. Who decides whether societies should change, shut down, or adjust? Those are important questions.

On to the future, Shenk encourages us to note that on the one hand there is a changed center of gravity of the Christian church. It is no longer based in North America and Europe. There has been a worldwide shift. Second, when you look at the entire world, including Western cultures, you need to see there is a missions frontier as well within the West. When you think about world mission, think about that term "world" in a couple of ways. There is the Johannine sense of world being a sinful and unredeemed world that God is working to make right. And there is a geopolitical world. There is no place within the geopolitical world that is not in the mission field. I have been asked a number of times since returning from Japan, "What is it like since you have been off the mission field?" I have to decide how I will respond to that well-meaning question of concern. You cannot leave the mission field. Shenk concludes, "Let us celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of the modern mission society while remaining poised to follow new paths." That points to the current situation of uncertainty and crisis that we see.

I have a question for you to think about for our next lesson: what is the theological significance of the inherent place of translation within the Christian faith? We did not get to the question you were to ask yourselves for this class because we did not get through as much material as I thought we would. The

question was about contextualizing and who the major players are in contextualizing the faith. I want you to think about the specifically theological significance of the inherent place of translation. The fact is that translation is inherently a part of the Christian faith, and there is theological significance to that.