



On Mission 2019

*The State of the Global Gospel:
Present and Future Trends*

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Third World Mission Force***

I'm TV Thomas, originally from Malaysia, but presently live in Canada. I'm an Evangelist, Missions Mobilizer and Networker. I serve as Chairman of Lausanne's Global Diaspora Network (GDN).

I want to share with you about the emerging "third world" missions force. One of the perennial questions we have in missions is this, "Who is going to get the job done?" Who is going to get the job done? I'm grateful from the very outset to say what the Western Church has done. We are grateful for what the Western Church has done in global missions since the call of William Carey. There's been hundreds of missionaries who have gone and served overseas. Many, many countries have been evangelized because of the Western Church. But there's a promising Third World Mission Force that is emerging. Many more personnel are going to come from the "third world" because of two positive realities.

Positive reality number 1 - is the amazing growth of the majority world churches in the last 70 years, we have witnessed the de-colonization from the West taking place. Tens of countries got their independence from their colonial powers. These instigated tens of national churches to be allowed to become autonomous national entities. What does this mean? The national churches were released to choose their own indigenous leaders. Secondly, the national churches also encouraged to determine the old ministry agenda. This, I believe, translated into two outcomes in the Bible-believing, Christ-exalting churches of the majority world. National churches engaged in intentional evangelism and church-planting. Thousands upon thousands of individuals have come to saving faith in many countries of the world. Hundreds of churches have been planted in urban and rural settings. And I want to say, the majority world churches have exploded, causing amazement even to the Western missionary.

National churches have also embraced the missionary mandate of the Church. National churches realized whether they're small or strong, they too have a responsibility to be a partner in the cross-cultural mission of the Church. So, we have seen sharp increases in mission participation in the last four decades in the majority world. National churches have become investors in global mission. National churches have become senders in national and international missions. This is extremely commendable. Majority world mission agencies have emerged mobilizing majority world Christians in cross-cultural missions within their own country as well as overseas. So today, 4 out of 5 top-sending countries are from the majority world. South Korea, Nigeria, India, China

and of course, the US. Brazil is a power house for mission sending. Singapore claims to be the Antioch of Asia. That tiny island is giving to missions, sending missionaries because many of their churches are mission-saturated. The "Back to Jerusalem" movement in China is going to produce hundreds of workers to global missions. It's absolutely clear that the majority world mission force is growing at an exponential rate far above that of the West.

In light of all this, we need to do two things. We need to strengthen partnerships with indigenous, national churches with mutual cooperation and accountability. Secondly, we need to support national missionaries without creating a culture of long-term dependency.

So, the first positive reality is this: The amazing growth of majority world churches. The second positive reality is the tidal wave of human migration. It seems the world's population is moving. Human migration is one of the defining issues of our contemporary world. Migration involves the movement of people across national boundaries. Trans-national migration is now a global phenomenon. This global phenomenon is occurring in an accelerated pace on an unprecedented scale and in unpredictable directions.

According to the United Nations, an international migrant is a person who lives and works outside the country of birth for more than one year. United Nations estimates in 1980, there were 100,000,000 international migrants. By 2010, there were 214,000,000 international migrants. The latest stats we have is from 2018: 258,000,000 live and work outside their country of origin. Migration used to be from the South to the North, but in the last 10 years, it is from everywhere to everywhere. Now people migrate for various reasons. For good reasons, that kind of migration, we call them voluntary migration. But people moved also because of sad reasons, we call it in-voluntary migration. Some motivated by economic reasons for employment; for seizing business opportunities elsewhere; someone motivated by lifestyle choices of all to see a better future for their children. Some moved to enhance educational advancement opportunities. Others are forced from their homelands by natural disasters like tsunamis, famines, and floods. Then there are those who flee from their homelands, because of intolerable conditions of political strife, civil war, political persecution, or even religious persecution. This massive flow of people around the world is drastically changing the social, cultural, economic and religious landscapes of countries and also of continents.

Friends, this is a demographic reality that no one can ignore. And this is a demographic reality that no community can avoid. Therefore, it is not surprising why the United Nations' Secretary-General Antonio Guterres compellingly urged world leaders in January 2018 to celebrate Global Migration as a positive global phenomenon. Now, as Christians, we have a greater reason to celebrate the contemporary phenomena. We as Christians must believe that it is our Sovereign God Who is scrambling the nations around the world. And this massive movement of people across borders is no surprise to our Lord. I believe, God is allowing this for His ultimate redemptive purpose. Let me read for you, a passage in Scripture that surprised me several years after I finished a seminary training and was involved in ministry: Acts 17 verses 26 and 27. "And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined the appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation. That, they would seek God, that perhaps they might go for him and find him. Though he's not far from each one of us."

Friends, the Church of Jesus Christ has an amazing opportunity. The Great Commission compels the Church to embrace these people on the move. These people on the move - we call the "Diaspora people". The Church of Jesus Christ should expedite its efforts to help and love every single migrant into God's Kingdom. Now, among the migrant populations, there's a sizable number of believers. And in the growing field of diaspora missiology, we say, our mission is "To the Diaspora. Through the Diaspora and Beyond the Diaspora". Three dimensions. Our mission is, "To the Diaspora, Through the Diaspora, and Beyond the Diaspora". This demands mobilization of diaspora people are an important key. They need to be missional wherever God locates them. Diaspora Christians and diaspora congregations could be equipped and mobilized to join the mission force for God to reach their own people, and to reach others cross-culturally.

Let me summarize: Who is going to get the job done? Yes, the Western Church must continue to mobilize to engage in God's mission. We must keep the message in front of every believer. In the West, we can be encouraged that the Lord is raising cross-cultural workers in the growing majority world churches. And we can be encouraged that the Lord could mobilize the diaspora Christians and congregations to join God in His mission. Let's pray and hope that this will become a fast reality. Amen.