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Advancing Models of Mission
Evaluating the Past and Looking to the Future

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editors

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About the Contributors
Preface

As long as Christians have been engaging in missions, they have been reflecting on the best way to do missions. From China at the turn of the last century, Roland Allen critiqued the Anglican mission of which he was a part, believing that their mission station approach did not lead to the spontaneous expansion of the church. From India, Donald McGavran argued in his book *The Bridges of God* that church growth happens best through family and kinship ties. Based on his missionary experience among the Maasai in Tanzania, Vincent Donovan eschewed individual conversions in favor of community-wide statements of faith. Over the last few centuries of the missionary movement, strategies have been developed for indigenous church planting, Bible translation, orality, people movements, social justice, education, and chronological Bible storytelling.

The world is changing; strategies for discipling the nations must be regularly examined and updated to address those changes. The Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS), an academic organization committed to using research to “advance the cause of world evangelization,” recognized this need for updating missionary methods and strategies. EMS determined that the theme for 2020 would be “The Past and Future of Evangelical Mission” and encouraged members to rethink long-held paradigms of missiology in preparation for the regional and national meetings. Dozens of professors of missions, mission leaders, and missiology students wrote papers for their regional EMS gatherings, on themes ranging from Business as Mission (BAM), to the C-Spectrum, to historical approaches toward women in missions, to the implications of missions for those with disabilities or mental health issues. Many of these authors were recommended to bring their presentations to the national conference in September of 2020—a conference that, as things turned out, could not have any in-person meetings.

The worldwide struggle with COVID-19 served as a poignant example that missiology must be flexible and responsive to the times. The fact that EMS was able to move the conference fully online offers encouraging evidence that evangelical stakeholders in missions do, in fact, listen to the needs of the day and respond with nimbleness.

Many of the presentations at the EMS conference on “The Past and Future of Evangelical Mission” also demonstrated ways in which missionaries are updating their paradigms and models of missions. As the editorial team, we compiled thirteen of those papers in this volume. We tried to capture a broad range of robust scholarly works that critically examine the past and reimagine the future of evangelical mission. Since the resulting compendium can introduce students

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*1 “Who is the Evangelical Missiological Society?” https://www.emsweb.org/about/who-is-ems/*.
to a variety of missiological themes in the context of the twenty-first century, we believe it is an excellent resource for courses on missions.

Because missiology is so interdisciplinary, it is difficult to place these chapters neatly into unique categories. But we have ultimately settled on three main parts: models and missionaries from the past, revisiting models, and models for the future of missions.

In part 1, "Looking Back: Missionaries and Models from the Past," Matthew Winslow (chapter 1) reveals how the modernist/fundamentalist debate impacted missionary outreach in China: Those who maintained a high hermeneutic argued for the primacy of evangelism, whereas others believed that missions could serve the Chinese people without persuading them to convert. Emma Wild-Wood (chapter 2) provides social history of twentieth-century evangelicalism in East Africa, showing that the movement attempted to challenge inequalities of power, wealth, and influence that had become increasingly racialized. In chapters 3 and 4, Linda Saunders and Robert Gallagher describe how early Protestant missionaries (Rebekka Protten and Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, respectively) paved the way for culturally contextualized missionary work. And Xenia Chan and Lisa Pak (chapter 5) trace how Confucian ideals have historically impacted views about women in mission.

Part 2, "Revisiting Long-Held Models," contains critiques of prominent missionary models. Ken Baker (chapter 6) contends that much of the debate about the unreached people groups (UPG) model can be settled if we conceptualize missions more as a role than as a task. Michael Crane (chapter 7) further deconstructs the UPG model, explaining that unreached peoples are also found in large cities, where they are not in enclaves but rather are integrated into heterogenous social groups. Rochelle Scheuermann (chapter 8) also touches on UPGs, suggesting that if we retain the model, we must update it to include other marginalized groups, such as people with disabilities. Martin Rodriguez (chapter 9) considers another seminal missiological model: critical contextualization. His application of identity theory and power dynamics points to dangers in Hiebert's model. And Allan Varghese (chapter 10) revisits the debate surrounding the role of social action in missions. He proposes (based on data from the work of Pandita Ramabai and Amy Carmichael) that providing social uplift serves as an apologia for the gospel.

Part 3 looks to the future. Annette Harrison (chapter 11) examines ways in which current trends will impact the who, what, where, when, why, and how of evangelism. Todd Johnson's analysis of demographic data (chapter 12) points to several aspects that future missionary work must address, including increasing conflict with other global religions, the importance of women in the Christian church, and the incorporation of leaders from around the globe.
The appendix surveys thirty milestones in missions over the past fifty years. Luis Bush and Tom Steffen have traced the history of these ideas, showing how each model or event reverberates in our missionary outreach even today.

Down the road there will undoubtedly be more scholarly examinations of the past and future of mission. This is appropriate. Missiologists serve the church by applying academic ideas to real challenges faced in the field.

Kenneth Nehrbass, Aminta Arrington, and Narry Santos