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The Past and Future of Evangelical Mission

Academy, Agency, Assembly, and Agora
Perspectives from Canada

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THE PAST AND FUTURE OF EVANGELICAL MISSION
Academy, Agency, Assembly, and Agora Perspectives from Canada

Evangelical Missiological Society Monograph Series 15

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Preface

NARRY F. SANTOS

THIS EDITED VOLUME, *THE Past and Future of Evangelical Mission: Academy, Agency, Assembly, and Agora Perspectives from Canada*, is a result of the Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS) Canada Regional Meeting in March 2020. The theme of the annual regional meeting in Canada, along with the other seven regional events in the US, is captured in the main title of this volume. The EMS Canada 2020 conference had 24 papers, six tracks, and three plenary presentations with responses from four centers (Tyndale University in Toronto, Ontario; Canada Institute of Linguistics in Langley, British Columbia; Ambrose University in Calgary, Alberta; and Steinbach Bible College in Steinbach, Manitoba). The Ontario and British Columbia centers were able to conduct their simultaneous events in person, while the Alberta and Manitoba centers could not because of the COVID-19 lockdown protocols. Instead of their in-person sessions, the latter centers received the video recordings of the three plenary presentations and responses, along with the copies of paper presentations in their province.

What is unique in this year's compendium is the inclusion of insights from the agora Christian sector in society. In the first two EMS Canada volumes (*Mission and Evangelism in a Secularizing World* and *Mission Amid Global Crises*), we were able to hear significant voices from the Canadian academy (seminary/university/Bible college), agency (mission group/denomination/parachurch), and assembly (local church). In this current volume, we can finally hear major voices from the agora (marketplace/business/tentmaking)—voices that are usually missing in missiological conversations. Along with the academy, agency, and assembly, the agora voices need to be heard fully, especially as we consider the future of evangelical mission in

Canada. In the last chapter of this volume, Fuller issues the following clarion call on the crucial role of church in marketplace mission:

Theological and cross-cultural knowledge and experience is available through the agency and the academy, but traditional delivery methods do not work well for marketplace workers. Churches need to coordinate better with agency and academy leaders to provide accessible training opportunities, including in-service and on-line models that fit well with marketplace realities.

The book is divided into four major parts. The first part (“Mission in Retrospect and Prospect”) comprises two plenary presentations that present thought-provoking perspectives on mission—a sobering look at the past and an optimistic outlook about the future of North American evangelical missiology from an immigrant mindset, and a prophetic challenge in viewing Western mission through indigenous eyes. Since this edition seeks to showcase various voices, the plenary presentation from the agency (chapter 1) is followed by a response from the assembly, while the plenary presentation from the academy (chapter 2) is followed by a response from the agency. The second major part (“Past Christian Mission and its Relevance to Present Mission”) highlights three papers that handle how Christian writings in late antiquity relate to contemporary contextual mission, how reflections in the past several decades on epochs in redemptive mission bring hope for future mission, and how a historical-theological exposition of the proper place of women in ministry from immigrant cultural contexts can invite current churches to welcome emerging young women leaders.

The third major part (“Present Evangelical Mission and its Relevance to Future Mission”) contain four papers that reflect on relevant Canadian realities—discussing how to view multiculturalism differently can positively influence mission and church, how city engagement by a network of churches can yield differentiated unity, and social and spiritual transformation, how churches in conflict can take part in reconciliation of community for the healing of memories, and how a fresh look at power and participation can revitalize evangelical mission. The fourth and final part (“Present and Future of Workplace Mission”) presents two papers on the value of God’s mission in the workplace—one paper offering a theology of workplace mission through the *imago Dei* (or image of God), and the other paper emphasizing the integral role of the church in cross-cultural marketplace ministry.

In addition to the plurality of Canadian voices coming from the academy, agency, assembly, and agora, this volume offers more diverse perspectives and backgrounds (from women and men; from indigenous, immigrant, and Euro-Canadians; from coast to coast to coast; from first-generation and second-generation leaders)—all reflecting on the lessons and relevance of evangelical mission's past and future. As coeditors, Xenia Chan and I come from different backgrounds and contexts but have the shared desire to gather diverse Canadian voices that reflect on evangelical mission through EMS Canada.

Xenia and I would like to thank all the paper, plenary, and response presenters at the EMS Canada 2020 regional meeting, the chapter contributors who revised their papers, the center coordinators (Ike Agawin, Sherman Lau, Carl Loewen, Charlie Cook, Lauren Goldbeck, and Timothy Tang), and Gary Nelson (former president of Tyndale University) for writing the foreword. We also extend our gratitude to Anthony Casey (EMS VP of Publications) for accepting this volume under the Evangelical Missiological Society Monograph Series, and to Chris Spinks (Pickwick editor) in working with us in the process of publication. Moreover, we express our grateful acknowledgement for the granting of permission to include in this edited volume a revised and condensed version of “The Proper Place for a Woman” by Xenia L. Chan and Lisa H. Pak in *Advancing Models of Mission: Evaluating the Past and Looking to the Future*, Kenneth Nehrbass, Aminta Arrington, and Narry Santos, eds., (Littleton, CO: William Carey, 2021), chapter 5, 65–78. Used with permission.

Finally, the COVID and post-COVID realities, along with the relevant social justice, gender, and anti-racism issues of our day surely impact the present and future evangelical mission in Canada. May this volume help trigger fresh insights and help catalyze decisive action that can prompt the academy, agency, assembly, and agora to join hands more often in seeking to help fulfill God's mission for us in Canada and beyond.