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Mission
Amid
Global Crises

Academy, Agency, and Assembly:
Perspectives from Canada

Edited by: Narry F. Santos and Mark Naylor

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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FIGURES AND TABLES

FOREWORD

Edward L. Smither

Jesus spoke of coming crises and hardships before his death:

> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains (Matt 24.6-8, NIV).

But at the same time, the Lord also declared: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt 24.14, NIV). God's mission is accomplished amid global crises.

The twenty-first century world faces many crises: natural disasters (tsunamis, hurricanes, and drought), as well as man-made ones (war, human trafficking, and violence). These problems necessarily become the context for mission for the twenty-first century global Church. How does the missional Church think biblically about and respond to accelerated forced displacement of peoples, to perpetrators and victims of human trafficking, and to the poor and hungry?

These are the types of questions raised and addressed by members of the Evangelical Missiological Society of Canada in this volume. The chapters in this book show that there is much to be learned from ministry in Canada that will be useful to address the multiple crises beyond its borders. I draw attention to two factors that make Canada a fruitful context for the theme of

engaging in mission amid crisis. The first is the arrival of new Canadians through the federal government's policies on immigration and refugees. Over half the residents of Toronto were born outside of Canada. The second factor is the social change in both urban and rural areas as Canada becomes increasingly secularized and polarized around issues of values.

One thing I admire about the approach of the Canadian Evangelical Missiological Society is that they are reflecting on mission and crises by deliberately involving the academy (seminaries, colleges, professors), the assembly (churches and denominations), agencies (mission organizations and NGOs), and the agora (the marketplace). How good it is when thinkers, activists, and problem solvers gather to listen, discuss, reflect, and act. This is a great model for the church and missiological networks around the world to follow.

May the essays in this volume raise new questions, force us back into Holy Scripture to reflect on twenty-first century mission, and help us to be wise in our approach to mission.

PREFACE

Narry F. Santos

M ission *Amid Global Crisis: Academy, Agency, and Assembly Perspectives from Canada* is an edited volume composed of papers that were presented at the Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS) Canada Regional Meetings in March 2019. The following five EMS Canada Centres hosted and coordinated these simultaneous regional meetings: (1) Trinity Western University and ACTS Seminaries (Langley, BC); (2) Jaffray Centre at Ambrose University (Calgary, AB); (3) Providence University College and Theological Seminary (Otterburne, MB); (4) Tyndale University College and Seminary (Toronto, ON); and (5) Kingswood University (Sussex, NB).

This book seeks to embody the Canadian voices that engage, address, and reflect on major global crises directly affecting the Canadian Church and Christianity. These voices represent the 3As (Academy [seminaries and Bible colleges]; Agency [mission groups and parachurches]; and Assembly [local churches and their leaders]). EMS Canada hopes to create venues where the 3As can intentionally interact with and listen to one another in engaging ways. To facilitate such interactions, three plenary speakers were invited, one from each of the 3As and their respective respondents were part of the other As. The small group discussions after the plenary sessions were facilitated with 3A delegates around each table. Thus, the book's subtitle reflects this intentional interaction: "Academy, Agency, and Assembly Perspectives from Canada." For this volume, six papers originated from the Agency, five from the Academy, and two from the Assembly.

The main title of the volume is based on the theme of the

2019 EMS Canada Regional Meeting—"Mission Amid Global Crises." This theme expresses our desire to be on mission with God to address the issues, realities, and challenges of those trapped in the midst of global crises, and to help meet their needs. As Sam George and Miriam Adeney say, "Never before in human history have we been so inundated with reports and images of atrocities happening across the globe. In this age of unprecedented mass displacement, the world needs an unprecedented humanitarian response and a renewed global commitment to protect people fleeing from conflict and persecution" (George & Adeney, 2018, p. xxvii).

This book resonates with the call to be part of a "renewed global commitment to protect people fleeing from conflict and persecution." In Part I, we reflect on the biblical and theological bases for doing mission in the context of global crises (Chapters 1–5), with emphases on the roles of Christian mission, humanitarian agency, and the Church in ministering to the poor and displaced among us. In Part 2, we focus on the pressing global crisis of the displaced as experienced in Canada (Chapters 6–9), giving concrete examples from the 3As in reaching out to those who are suffering. In Part 3, we explore two emerging challenges in the Canadian landscape (Chapters 10–11); that is, LGBTQ+ and Bible translation in difficult situations. The Introduction in the next chapter gives an overview of all these 11 chapters.

The foreword is written by Dr. Edward Smither, President of EMS, and constant cheerleader of the EMS Canada effort to produce a compendium every year. Through Ed's leadership, the EMS Board (including the VPs of all eight EMS Regions [seven in the USA and one in Canada]) encouraged the Canadian presenters to read their papers at the EMS National Meeting in Dallas, TX on September 12–15, 2019 and to become part of an edited volume for the selected Canadian papers. This current volume, which is the second EMS Canada compendium, is the fruit of such encouragement and collaborative effort.

The first EMS Canada volume, *Mission and Evangelism in a*

Secularizing World: Academy, Agency, and Assembly Perspectives from Canada, was released and launched at the EMS Canada 2019. Regional Meeting. This first volume appeared as the EMS Monograph Series Number 2 and as a compilation of select papers and plenary talks from the EMS Canada 2018 Regional Meetings.

As co-editors, Mark Naylor (former EMS Canada VP) and I (current EMS Canada VP) are thankful to the Tyndale Academic Press for publishing this book and to Dr. Gordon King for his valuable help in editing it. We are also grateful to all the plenary and paper presenters who graciously contributed and patiently reworked their papers to be part of this volume. Lastly, we would like to thank the EMS Canada Centre Coordinators for promoting and coordinating their regional meetings in 2019 (Mark Naylor, Daryl Climenhaga, Charles Cook, Lauren Goldbeck, Timothy Tang, and Matthew Friedman). We salute your dedication and faithfulness in being part of God's mission in Canada.

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INTRODUCTION TO *MISSION AMID GLOBAL CRISES*

Mark Naylor

The crucifixion of Jesus was a crisis that shook the lives of his followers and convinced them that the revolution they were hoping for had been snuffed out. This was only the first of generations of crises throughout the history of the Church. Some early events, such as Saul's persecution described in the book of Acts, threatened the existence of the nascent church. Other crises arose from the challenge of heresies, while still others created major divisions that are yet to be healed. Even during times of prosperity and power the Church was threatened by the seeds of complacency and corruption that subtly developed into a deadly apathy that undermined faith communities.

Crises that threaten the mission of the church are a concern of this volume on "mission amid global crises." Attention is also given to other crises that threaten the lives or well-being of large numbers of people. Theses complex events are a recurring reality, raising questions of how followers of Jesus should respond so that the transformative power of God's Kingdom is revealed. The authors in this book have researched and reflected on the intersection of crisis and God's mission, providing insights into how we can face crises in a transformative manner while maintaining integrity with the mission of God.

But what are the parameters of and how do we determine what qualifies as a "crisis"? How does the reference "global" clarify the type of crises we are considering? What constitutes "mission" as it is impacted by or as it seeks to address "global crises"?

"Crisis," in this volume, is any situation that threatens the well-being of a society, creates human suffering, and for which no

immediate solution is available or obvious. "Global" modifies "crises," not by insisting that the crises must be global in scope but indicating that any identified crisis in the world is an appropriate subject to be addressed through a Gospel-shaped lens by followers of Jesus. The "global" adjective stresses the interconnectedness of the human race; wounds in any one part of this world are our wounds. We cannot turn a blind eye to the pain of those who live outside our borders without denying the One who died as redemption for all the *ethna*. The whole world is the focus of Jesus' ongoing mission.

"Mission," then, in the title "Mission Amid Global Crises" considers how Jesus' Church is to join their Lord in His mission, responding to the crises that face us today. This response may come from Christians who are not directly affected, but who recognize their call to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those who suffer. It may also be the Christ-centered response of those who have been directly impacted by a crisis and are suffering from its consequences. At times, Christians caught in a crisis may be supported by others from the outside to bear witness through a kind of partnership in God's work of mercy and justice.

The chapters in this volume contribute to the conversation about mission amid global crises by asking and proposing answers to the following questions: How does an evangelical church address humanitarian crises in a way that maintains obedience to the witness of the cross? How does a Christian community provide substantial biblical orientation to a crisis? How do Christians cooperate with secular institutions without compromising our primary commitment to Jesus? What examples of Christian service provide a witness to Kingdom transformation and model love and redemption? The following summaries demonstrate how each chapter contributes to the conversation.

In chapter 1, Rupen Das poses a question about the relationship between evangelism and providing humanitarian aid in light of *code of conduct* demands laid out by secular humanitarian agencies. He suggests that the right response is to

recognize that proclamation and acts of compassion are "integrally linked," but then goes on to ask if Christian humanitarian work is valid where proclamation is lacking. He asks these questions with sensitivity to holistic worldviews found in the global south that do not separate the material from the spiritual. In doing so, he expresses the difficult challenges facing Western agencies: (1) to overcome the influence of the Enlightenment on their thinking; and (2) to appreciate the contrast between their organizational frameworks and the assumptions of those they seek to serve. He also considers the nature of the relationship between humanitarian agencies and the local church and how, by validating each other's strengths, they can work synergistically together.

In chapter 2, Beth M. Stovell provides a biblical theology of God's Kingdom justice with a focus on the issue of global poverty. She views poverty as "some kind of lack" that can affect people theologically, socially, and economically; that is, in respect to their relationship with God, others, and their context. The integration of these three dimensions of poverty is evident in her exploration of commands given to Israel to care for the poor. The response to poverty is shown to be the responsibility of local and national leadership under the rule of God. This response includes spiritual and social restoration to address and overcome injustice. Stovell challenges the Church to be active in the three levels of poverty engagement—first alleviation, then prevention, and finally eradication, by addressing all three relational dimensions.

In chapter 3, Kimberly Morrison, building on the reflections of Charles Taylor (1989, 2007), presents a word of hope—a *macarism*—for the contemporary displaced migrant by proposing a way of flourishing that is guided by Jesus' vision of the Kingdom. She first explores the disorientation to a person's identity and sense of meaning that comes from displacement, and then examines two possible "maps"—scientific naturalism and a Buddhist worldview—that orient the displaced person as an object "being acted upon." As a flourishing alternative, she proposes that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount provides identity and space for the

displaced migrant to discover an identity as a child of God that both acknowledges the depths of suffering and gives an orientation to light and life in the midst of the pain. Morrison then explores this flourishing pattern for the displaced through the experiences of Naomi and Ruth in the book of Ruth.

Sam Chaise, in chapter 4, argues that Canadian Christians are tied to a "nation-state" narrative when considering a response to immigration, rather than shaping their understanding according to the biblical redemptive story. He challenges the Church to be formed by its identity as the people of God and follow Jesus by creating "initiatives that welcome newcomers, accompany refugees, and build inter-cultural relationships" in order to "bless the nations." Such an orientation will cause Christians to be at the front of the line when welcoming refugees.

In chapter 5, Terry G. Smith proposes that a Christian response to need can be distinguished from other humanitarian expressions that are not driven by Christian motives. Based on a "praxeological interconnection between the Biblical text, the missiological model and the faith community," Smith posits four criteria that include a biblical understanding of shalom, the dignity of the recipient based on the *imago Dei*, the Church's posture embodying Christ in service to the world and the glory of God.

In chapter 6, Minho Song addresses the way churches can respond to the Yazidi community in Toronto, a refugee community traumatized by the brutality of ISIS fighters. He outlines the suffering of the people, as well as describing their worldview, culture, and religion. The response of the Young Nak Korean Presbyterian Church of Toronto to the needs of the Yazidi community is recounted, followed by a three-step process of caring for them that can open the way to presenting the Gospel message. This includes understanding the world through their religious and cultural perspective, extending support to reunite family members, and contextualizing the Gospel so that it can be understood and embraced.

Narry F. Santos and Samuel Chan challenge us to "love the

stranger" in chapter 7, as they recount a Chinese-Canadian church's work to sponsor displaced Syrian families. They begin by presenting a theology of God's concern for the sojourner from the Old and New Testaments, and then provide a case study about how the church has responded to this mandate by helping Syrian refugees. Three major lessons come out of their case study: (1) collaborate with like-minded groups, (2) be humble, wise, and patient in service, and (3) be united as a church in the sacrifice required.

In chapter 8, James Grunau describes the work of Journey Home Community (JHC) and how the organization came to address the needs of refugees coming to Metro Vancouver. He is careful to define refugees as those who have been forced to migrate because of threats to their freedom or even their lives. JHC's mission includes empowering local churches to care for refugees. In describing the witness of the cross to refugees, Grunau's concern is that those who want to address their spiritual needs do so within a holistic context, recognizing that "offering support and help for any felt need *is* an end in itself!"

In chapter 9, Mark D. Chapman and James W. Watson highlight the role of the Tyndale Intercultural Ministries (TIM) Centre as a catalyst for research on the relationship between immigration and ministry practice. They illustrate the tangible results gained through the TIM Centre initiative through four community-based research projects and discuss how the research was conducted, disseminated, and applied. The TIM Centre's role in bringing other resources to bear in applying the research finding is also described, such as teaching and training opportunities for immigrants. The authors provide suggestions for the TIM Centre and other organizations about how such work can be expanded efficiently and effectively.

Xenia Ling-Yee Chan confronts us with a different crisis in chapter 10—that of the trauma and hurt faced by LGBTQ+ members of Canadian Asian and evangelical church communities who are rejected when they "come out." After documenting

historical interactions of those identifying as LGBTQ+ as well as personal anecdotes and interviews, Chan turns to Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4 to provide a pattern of interaction with those LGBTQ+ who feel wounded, misunderstood, and rejected. Chan invites us to enter into a place of "holy insecurity," which causes us to gaze upon Jesus as the one who brings transformation and redemption to both us and the "other," as we reach out and offer honour to those who have been shamed.

Finally, in chapter 11, P. David Jeffery recounts the experiences of Bible translation teams that worked in crisis situations and were forced to relocate to safe locations to do their work. Jeffery discusses the challenges, disadvantages, and advantages of such displaced projects, and makes suggestions for future teams in times of threat. He concludes by noting similarities between the creative approaches taken by teams in order to ensure that the projects continue. One of several concerns noted for teams working outside of the country, where the translation will be used, is the need to maintain relationships with key church leaders who will both use and promote the Bible version. A high level of perseverance and commitment is required in order to overcome challenging obstacles.

A crisis is overwhelming and disorienting. All people hope that they will not be caught up by a personal or social crisis of any nature. However, we cannot be naively optimistic about the reality of the world in which we live and are called to serve the kingdom of God. The Christian hope is not that we will *not* face crises, nor is it that we will be able to overcome every crisis. We seek to be faithful and place our hope in the Saviour who has conquered sin, death, and the devil. The crisis of the cross was overcome by the resurrection that transformed the disciples with confidence in the living Lord Jesus who builds his Church, the Holy Spirit who empowers, and the Father whose plan of the Kingdom cannot be shaken.

Part 1

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL
REFLECTIONS ON MISSION AMID
GLOBAL CRISIS

CHAPTER 1

THE MISSION OF GOD AND THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES IN RESPONDING TO THE GLOBAL CRISIS

Rupen Das

Introduction

In the past few decades, the role of Christian humanitarian agencies has changed and there is no proper understanding yet of how they fit into the mission of God. In a chaotic world, there is an increasing concern to respond to human need, yet within significant sections of western evangelical Christianity, there is still confusion as to how to prioritize this within Christian missions and how to integrate it with proclamation.

Migration, displacement, and the resulting diaspora communities are not a new phenomenon. However, humanitarian emergencies resulting in forced displacement and migration are the new normal in the global community. Displacement and migration originate in contexts of poverty, hardship, and chaos—often rooted in conflict, economic, and environmental catastrophes. Because of the sheer volume of refugees and migrants, the destination countries are struggling with existential issues of integration and identity. These countries wonder how the displaced people relate to the former's long-held values of freedom of religion, cultural diversity, individual rights, and the concept of citizenship and who belongs. The United Nations' Global Humanitarian Review of 2018 identified conflict as the main driver for humanitarian need over the long term, while natural disasters continue to affect people for periods of time. The report stated that out of 135.3 million people requiring aid,

assistance was provided to only 97.9 million. In order to provide this aid, US$ 25.2 billion was required (UNOCHA, 2018).

Whether through conflict or natural disaster, the consequences are the same. People are displaced. In 2018 the United Nations reported that the number of people forcibly displaced had reached 74.8 million (UNHCR, 2018). This included refugees, those internally displaced, and the stateless. It is the highest global number since World War II.

Christian agencies have been at the forefront of humanitarian responses. According to a 1953 study, 90% of all post-World War II relief was provided by religiously affiliated agencies (Ferris, 2005, p. 315). However, in the decades that followed, the religious motivations for humanitarianism were replaced by a secular worldview (Barnett & Stein, 2015, p. 5), as religion came to be seen as a hindrance to progress (Jones & Petersen, 2011, p. 1292). The suspicion (sometimes overtly stated) is that local religious institutions, because of their communal and evangelistic nature, would not be able to adhere to the humanitarian principles of impartiality and non-conditionality (Kraft, 2015, pp. 2–3). As a result, there was a significant rise in secular non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that were motivated by and operated on humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law. In order to be relevant and respected in a changing professional context and to be able to access bilateral and multilateral funding, most Christian humanitarian agencies separated the spiritual dimensions of ministry from temporal assistance. As a result, there is not much that differentiates them from their secular counterparts.

The challenge for Christian humanitarian agencies is highlighted in the "The Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief" (Geneva, 1994), which articulates the fundamental assumptions of humanitarian assistance (i.e., being non-political and impartial in terms of religion, creed, race, and nationality). The emphasis is on aid being unconditional and based only on need. The only driver for the assistance should be the humanitarian imperative.

Yet, this needs to be balanced with a respect for local culture and customs, which invariably includes religion, religious values and worldviews, and religious institutions in society.

Aid should never be conditional on religious activity or involvement. However, the mandate and operations of Christian humanitarian agencies based on the Red Cross Code of Conduct raises some significant questions about the understanding of Christian missions.

- What is the relationship between evangelism and providing humanitarian aid? The 2001 Micah Declaration explained the relationship between the Great Commission (Matt 28.19–20) and the Great Commandment (Matt 22.37–40) this way:

> Integral mission or holistic transformation is the proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ (Micah Network, 2001, p. 1).

The Micah Declaration finally provided the right balance between the verbal proclamation of the Gospel and the demonstration of its reality. Neither operates independently and each has significant implications for the other. While acknowledging that proclamation and acts of compassion are integrally linked, it did not clarify how both can be operationalized without perceptions of manipulation or conditionality.

- Is humanitarian assistance or other acts of compassion by themselves valid ministry and part of the mission of God, even if there is no proclamation and evangelism? Here are other related questions: What are the biblical and theological

foundations for such ministries? What is the difference between secular humanitarian agencies and their Christian counterparts that are involved in similar work and that also do not do any evangelism or any sort of spiritual ministry?

- If disaster relief, community development, and other ministries of compassion are separated from other aspects of spiritual ministry, what are the objectives of these ministries? Is socio-economic transformation, what Christian NGOs aim for, a biblical concept? How different is it from the social Gospel and its roots in liberal theology?

- Finally, what is the relationship between Christian humanitarian agencies and the local church? This has raised questions about ecclesiology and accountability.

These are not new questions, but for each generation, they assume a fresh sense of urgency. There is a need to answer these questions again, as the culture, contexts, and times change (Das, 2016a.; Das and Hamoud, 2017).

In trying to understand the relevance and place of humanitarian agencies in the midst of global crises and Christian mission, there are new lessons and insights emerging that are enabling evangelical missiologists to understand the mission of God—*missio Dei*—at this time in history. To regain an effective place within the mission of God, what are some concepts that humanitarian agencies need to grapple with?

The Role of the Local Church as Partners in Mission and the Global Crisis

A few decades ago, I observed that a good number of Christian NGOs walked away from partnering with local churches, because they felt that the latter did not have the capacity to manage projects and had questions about manipulation and conditionality when churches did evangelism and recruited members in the midst of humanitarian crises or poverty alleviation projects. Recently, I noticed that while local churches acknowledge the

necessity of legal and operational independence of Christian NGOs, these churches are recognizing more the critical role that they can play in humanitarian crises and in long term community development. This role is most relevant when those who have been displaced, affected by disasters, or marginalized from society need a community to help in their rehabilitation in the aftermath of a crisis or need integration into the mainstreams of society.

Social scientists acknowledge religious institutions such as churches, mosques, and temples are an integral part of communities. As social institutions in the community, they have obligations to that community. They not only address matters of spirituality but also provide and build social capital, besides being venues through which social services are provided (Bodenhamer, 1996, p. 1). Plamen Sivov, writing from the context of post-Soviet Bulgarian society, asks whether institutions such as churches can have a role as agents of community development, when previously the welfare state provided services and managed change. While affirming that the local church, as an institutional service provider, has no distinct advantage compared to other NGOs or the government, Sivov describes the local church as a distinct community. He writes, "Whenever a communal spirit, high level of personal motivation or a personal approach to the sometimes dehumanized 'target groups' is needed, the church has a lot to offer. The church cannot compete on the grounds of quantity, but it has no match on the grounds of quality or holistic personalized approach, when it comes to provision of different kinds of care for the vulnerable groups" (Sivov, 2008, pp. 214–215). It is this communal spirit and holistic approach to human beings, if churches were properly trained, could prove vital in addressing the needs of dehumanized and marginalized groups.

This communal spirit was evident in the response of local churches in Lebanon and in many countries of Europe to the Syrian refugee crisis. An indigenous Lebanese Christian NGO (Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development [LSESD]) with international funding, developed and implemented

an extensive response to the needs of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and those internally displaced inside Syria, all through local churches (Das, 2015, pp. 43-50). This provided a local identity to the humanitarian response rather than that of an international agency and strengthened the credibility of the local church. It enabled a local faith community to demonstrate compassion. It empowered the local church to expand its understanding of ministry. And finally, it ensured a long-term ministry to the refugees after the initial needs were met.

Such approach forged a new type of relationship between agencies and the local church. While LSESD provided the back-office functions of program design, proposal writing, accessing funds, procurement of supplies, monitoring, and reporting, the local church could be a church and do what a church does—show compassion, evangelize, teach, preach, disciple, equip, and pray, without any manipulation or conditionality to the aid that they provided. Humanitarian agencies are able to do what the local church is often unable to do—provide the technical expertise needed in specific humanitarian sectors (water, food aid and food security, shelter, nutrition, economic development) and provide an awareness of the complexity of migration issues and international refugee law. Yet, these agencies need local faith communities where those in need can feel safe and have a sense of belonging. These local churches, because of their knowledge of the local community and volunteer base, are effective implementing partners for the agencies (Das, 2016).

There is now a greater understanding of how humanitarian agencies can partner with local churches. Each partner brings its strengths and expertise in working together to maximize impact.

The Need for Humanitarian Agencies to Understand the Global Dimensions of the *Missio Dei*

I notice that Christian humanitarian agencies have the tendency to focus on responding to immediate needs and working towards long term socio-economic change, just as their secular

counterparts do. They see this as ministry, since it demonstrates the love of Christ. Those involved in community development use terms like "Kingdom work" or see their ministry as "building the Kingdom of God." Their motivation is encapsulated in Micah 6:8. "And what does the LORD REQUIRE OF YOU? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Beyond that, there is limited understanding of eschatology, minimal awareness of historical theology and the struggles between the social Gospel and liberal theology versus the fundamentalists, and little acknowledgement of the mission of God and what He is doing at this point in history. What they can miss is the understanding of the context within which they operate—namely, God's purposes being worked out in the midst of both man-made and natural disasters. They may not consider themselves as mission agencies but identify themselves as Christian humanitarian agencies, and in some vague way believing they are doing "Kingdom work."

As mentioned earlier, displacement and migration because of disasters and persecution are not a new phenomenon. The movement of people (both forced and voluntary) resulting in diaspora communities permeates biblical history, not as a background to the main narrative, but as fundamental to God's purposes. Old Testament scholar and missiologist Christopher Wright observes:

> Migration runs like a thread through the whole Bible narrative. People on the move (for all kinds of reasons) are so much part of the fabric of the story that we hardly notice it as a major feature. Indeed, when the text actually points out that YHWH, God of Israel, has been involved in the migrations of peoples other than Israel, some Bible translations put that affirmation in parentheses—as though to separate it off from the main story, even though it is an integral part of the theological context of the story. YHWH is the God of all nations and all their historical migrations and settlements (Deut. 2:10–12, 20–23) (Wright, 2016, p. 1).

The present global refugee crisis and migration is being used by God, as He has throughout history, for the Great Commission and for renewing the Church. Unlike historical missions where western missionaries went out and ministered to the unreached and the fledgling church in the global south, today Christian immigrants and refugees from Asia, Africa, and Latin America are revitalizing the church in the west[1]. Church historian Phillip Jenkins writes about the impact of immigrants on traditional Christianity in Europe, UK, and North America with these words:

> Southern influence grows through two distinct but related phenomena. In some areas, Third World churches undertake actual mission work in secularized North America and especially Europe. Commonly, though, evangelism is an incidental by-product of the activities of immigrant churches, an important phenomenon given the large African and Asian communities domiciled in Europe.... When we measure the declining strength of Christianity in Europe, we must remember how much leaner the statistics would be if not for the recent immigrants and their children (Jenkins, 2007, pp. 113, 115).

Migration and displacement are also presenting new opportunities for evangelism and proclamation among previously hard-to-reach people. Migrants and refugees, foreigners who are away from all that is familiar to them—lost and alone in their new country—seem to be much more open to God in their desperation than they were in their home countries. Missiological researcher Jenny McGill writes,

> Migration blesses insofar as it enables the person to experience God and thus experience a change of self-understanding

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1   I have numerous first-hand examples of Burmese Baptists being integrated into churches in Finland, Syrians in Sweden, Iranian and Afghan refugees in Germany and Austria, Ghanaian, Caribbean, and Nigerian immigrants in the UK.

> (Gen. 32:22–32; Ex. 3). The nearness of God is perhaps no more acutely felt than during an experience of physical displacement (McGill, 2016, pp. 204-205).

Today, this is most evident in the openness to the Gospel among the Iranian diaspora globally, and Syrian and Afghan refugees in Lebanon and across Europe.

Within the mission of God, there is a unique role for Christian humanitarian agencies to demonstrate the love and compassion of Christ to people devastated by conflicts and disasters or trapped in poverty, regardless of whether there is proclamation. However, the impact would be so much greater if they partnered with local churches or mission agencies to provide a more holistic response. By separating the humanitarian and compassionate dimensions of ministry from proclamation and other spiritual ministries, they are missing how God is using disasters and human displacement to strengthen His Church and draw hard-to-reach people to Himself.

A Different Worldview When Faced with Disaster, Suffering, and Marginalization

The historical struggle in modern Christian mission between the primacy of proclamation and a more holistic model, which also includes ministries of compassion and social justice, is rooted in Plato's dualistic understanding of reality—separating the physical (the material) from the spiritual (the immaterial). While the various Lausanne documents and the Micah Declaration have sought to integrate both dimensions, much of Christian mission still operates on this distinction. Many mission agencies focus on evangelism, church planting, discipleship, and only provide material assistance when absolutely necessary, such as in a major disaster. On one hand, Christian humanitarian agencies can operate independently of local churches and mission agencies, ensuring that there is no proselytism during the humanitarian aid that they provide or the community development work that they do.

On the other hand, mission agencies that do address proclamation, church planting, and ministries of compassion can usually separate these activities into different departments that operate independently.

The majority of man-made and natural disasters today are in the global south, where people have a different worldview from western Platonic dualism. Missionary and missiologist Paul Hiebert distinguishes between a modern scientific world view with its primary focus on the material and physical world, and a traditional and holistic religious worldview—with the spiritual and material worlds interwoven seamlessly (Hiebert, 2011). When people in the global south experience disasters and suffering, they are grateful for the help and aid that is provided, but because of their holistic worldview, they interpret their experience through a religious framework. Many times, their traditional religious worldviews do not adequately answer the deeper existential questions about suffering and God, and they are looking for alternatives and answers. Because of their choice to separate compassion and aid from proclamation, most Christian humanitarian agencies are unable or unwilling to respond to these deep felt needs.

The western Christian agencies that try to respond usually bring an evangelist who preaches a standardized gospel message focusing on sin, forgiveness, and repentance. Recent research on conversion among the poor in the global south shows that what attracts the majority of the poor is a God who is responsive, understands their suffering, and is with them—a God who identifies Himself as Immanuel. It was only later that they began to understand the issues of sin and forgiveness (Garrison, 2014; Hilderbrand, 2016; Iyadurai, 2015). Their faith is based on a lived reality of the living God revealed in Jesus Christ rather than on an intellectual kind of Christianity based on a platonic separation of the spiritual from the physical. For the non-westerner, spiritual experience is followed by understanding, while for the westerner, it is the reverse. Rather than presenting a God who is compassionate in the midst of people's suffering, the evangelists start

with human failure and a God who is judge, yet willing to forgive—a message that does not necessarily resonate with those who are suffering. Their focus is on God who is Saviour rather than on God who is Immanuel.

If western Christian humanitarian agencies choose to operate holistically, they face a two-fold challenge. First, an exclusive focus on the cognitive, the individual, and a logical systematization of theology in North American evangelical soteriology has resulted in what American sociologist James Davison Hunter at the University of Virginia refers to as the methodization and standardization of spirituality within the evangelical tradition. He states that evangelicalism built on a propensity for the "rationalization of spirituality" in 18th and 19th century Protestantism (Hunter, 1983, pp.74–75). Matthew Bates (2011) writes that this rationalization of spirituality is the result of the impact of the Enlightenment on not only the Christian faith but also on mission. This rationalization does not consider the influence of context on a people's perception and understanding of their spiritual issues or needs. It is in the midst of these needs that in their desperation God meets them.

This type of methodization and standardization of the gospel and spirituality limits how ministry can be done with people affected by disasters, trapped in poverty, or are marginalized by society. It limits the understanding of the Gospel (i.e., the gospel presented as forgiveness of sins rather than the Gospel as the coming of the Kingdom and reign of God, and the forgiveness of sins being the way to enter the Kingdom) and the way it can be communicated. If humanitarian agencies choose to be holistic in their approach, they need to understand that Christian spirituality in much of the global south is very different than that of western evangelicalism. They do not want to hear a standardized message but wish to encounter the living God and His love and concern in the midst of the struggles of daily life.

The second challenge is understanding the contexts and the political frameworks out of which humanitarian and mission

agencies operate. These contexts and frameworks are very different from those of the people they minister to in the majority world. Western evangelical and Protestant Christianity is very Constantinian, based on a Christianized culture and access to power and an abundance of resources, rather than based on models from the New Testament and the early church, which was often a persecuted minority. Christians in many parts of the majority world are a minority, where the dominant culture is not Christian or Christianized and the government is often not sympathetic to Christians. The question they grapple with is this: What does it mean to be followers of Christ and citizens of the Kingdom in the midst of powerful nations, just as the early Christians struggled to follow Christ in the context of a brutal and unyielding Roman Empire.

The two foundational pillars of western evangelical missions are "reaching the world for Christ" (evangelism and proclamation) and "transforming communities and society" (social justice). The assumption is that there is freedom to choose whom they worship and that they have a choice to determine what kind of society they want. In societies where Christians are minorities, and in many cases marginalized, they may not have the luxury of these options. However, the western models of how proclamation and social justice are to be done are programs or projects that require considerable resources and time-bound planning and implementation.

The models from the very early church are instructive for marginalized and minority communities on how to address the issues of social justice and proclamation. Church historian Peter Brown (2002) refers to the Christians in the Roman empire (300–600 A.D.) providing for the needs of the poor as a revolution that impacted the social imagination of the times. In the 4th and 5th centuries, as poverty increased in the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, the cities were unable to absorb the poor who were not citizens. Brown writes, "The existing structures of the city and the civic model that had been associated with them collapsed under

the sheer weight of a desolate human surplus, as the cities filled with persons who were palpably 'poor'" (p. 8). It was the Christians who responded to the needs of the poor. Brown writes about these Christians, "They were themselves, agents of change" (pp. 8–9).

This ministry of compassion and charity as demonstrated by the lay people and the church leadership in the Roman empire had a significant influence on the social value of the society. Old Testament scholar and theologian, Walter Brueggemann (2003) highlights the growing appreciation of the "legitimacy of the cry of the poor [that] created a social awareness that the powerful were obligated to provide justice and protection for the poor" (p. 30).

Church historian Alan Kreider (2016) writes about how the early church grew in the midst of the persecution and oppression. At times, it was so severe that they had to meet in secret. Yet, in the midst of that, Kreider writes: "Rumors that God was present in Christian gatherings may have also attracted outsiders to investigate Christianity" (p. 109; cf. Fox, 1996). What attracted pagans to Christianity was the reality of the living God, revealed in Jesus Christ and evident in the midst of Christian communities.

There are significant differences in the theological frameworks western humanitarian agencies operate from and the people affected by poverty and disasters. Western evangelicalism focuses on a triumphant God who has conquered sin and now enables His people to "end poverty" and "reach the world for Christ." A triumphalist theology rings hollow to people who are confronted daily with the reality of evil and human sin and are often times trapped by them. Instead, they intuitively understand the "in-between times" that we live in, when the Kingdom of God has come but is not yet manifested in all its fullness. They can relate to the darkness and disillusionment that the disciples experienced on the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter Sunday (Moltmann, 1974; Hall, 2003; Lewis, 2001). Humanitarian and mission agencies need to understand how to minister in such contexts.

Conclusion

Humanitarian agencies do have a place in the *missio Dei*. In His compassion, God shows grace and mercy to people who are suffering, and He does that through both Christian and secular agencies. Christian humanitarian agencies could have a significantly greater impact if they were to partner with local churches. This requires an understanding of how God is using both man-made and natural disasters to build and renew His Church and speak to hard-to-reach people and people groups. Most humanitarian agencies are western in their orientation and operations, even if they have national branches in the global south. If they choose to minister holistically, they need to engage in self-reflection on the theological, philosophical, and political frameworks from which they operate and realize that much of the rest of the world operates differently.

Reflection Questions

1. The chapter states that the local church can be a partner in helping refugees. What can a church do to help refugees feel at home in the new country?
2. Humanitarian agencies respond to the material and psychological needs of people who are displaced either due to conflicts or disasters. In what practical ways can these agencies respond to the spiritual needs of the people?
3. If you were a refugee who had been displaced from your home due to war and had lost everything, what would you ask from God? Why would you seek God in the first place?

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CHAPTER 2

THE GOSPEL AS GOOD NEWS FOR GLOBAL POVERTY:

A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF GOD'S KINGDOM JUSTICE

Beth M. Stovell

Introduction

Poverty has been an important question across the history of evangelicalism with rising importance in these times of global crises. Some evangelicals have struggled to align themselves against the reigning social gospel traditions (Suttle, 2011; Tseng & Furness, 2001, pp. 114–25; Nelson, 2009, pp. 442–56). Other evangelicals have located themselves within the broader history of evangelicalism, focusing on advocacy and care for the poor (Gasaway, 2014; Gushee, 2012). This tension among evangelicals has caused some to ask the question: Is the Gospel good news for the poor? Or, alternatively, in what way is the Gospel good news for the poor (Stovell, 2019)? This question is writ large, as we face the crisis of global poverty manifested in specific ways in diaspora communities across North America. This crisis particularly impacts children living in poverty, who are both disproportionally impacted and simultaneously under-researched in Canadian contexts.

This chapter blends two forms of study to address these core questions: biblical theology and poverty research. Section 1 is a study of biblical metaphors associated with God's kingship and Kingdom in the Old Testament and the significance for poverty. This section examines notions of spiritual, economic, and relational poverty in the biblical text and how this relates to God's

royal mission for His people to live out characteristics of God's kingship and Kingdom (Wright, 1996). Section 2 focuses on poverty engagement and holistic definitions of child poverty developed by the Canadian Poverty Institute. The chapter ends with an integration of these two sections, offering a picture of how God's Kingdom restores God's people to God, removes injustice, and reconciles God's people to one another in practical ways that impact the global crisis of poverty today.

Poverty and Kingship in the Old Testament

This segment overviews the concepts of poverty and kingship in the Old Testament. It discusses these related concepts in the Pentateuch (particularly in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy) and the Prophets (particularly in Ezekiel).

Poverty and Kingship in the Pentateuch

The Pentateuch provides the foundations for understanding conceptions of God's kingship and its impact on notions of poverty. The Pentateuch also provides a foundation for how Israelite society was encouraged to view poverty in its different dimensions.

Genesis: God as Creator King and the Impact of the Fall on Poverty

According to scholars like John Walton, Genesis 1–2 depicts God not only as the creator of all things, but also as the reigning king of all creation (Walton, 2009, pp. 87–92; Carroll R, 2003, pp. 882–87). Where poverty is by nature some kind of lack, God's good creation began when God established what God's wholeness was intended to be. Genesis shows how God established a relationship with humanity, where they were made in God's image, where they found wholeness in relationship with others (as demonstrated by God's judgment that Adam being alone was not good), and where humans were dependent on the earth for provision, alongside their dependence on God.

What we commonly refer to as the "Fall," when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in Genesis 3, broke these relational links and created a need for restoration of these relationships, which became the rest of Scripture's story. Several biblical theologians have noted the breakdown of three core relationships depicted in the Fall: (1) relationship of human beings to God; (2) relationship of human beings to one another; and (3) relationship of human beings to the earth. Christopher Wright explores these three aspects in terms of the theological angle (relationship to God), the social angle (relationship to human beings/Israel), and the economic angle (relationship to the land) (Wright, 2004, p. 17–20). Poverty impacts all three angles of this triangle: impacting spiritual relationships both for the oppressed and for the oppressors; impacting social relationships of person to person; and impacting economic relationships as persons relate to the land.

Exodus: God as Exodus King and Poverty

The Exodus event demonstrates God's power and authority as the great king and His concern for the cries of His people in distress. This event becomes a linchpin to the story of the Israelites that is told and re-told throughout their history. In the case of the event itself, the people of Israel lived among the poor and marginalized in Egypt. This provides a foundation for the centrality of the Exodus event in the Covenant Code in Exodus 22–23 and in Levitical and Deuteronomic laws. In Exodus 23, the Covenant Code's concern for the poor is conditioned by Israel's earlier experience in the Exodus story. Similarly, Leviticus and Deuteronomy point several times to the experience of the Exodus as the reason why the Israelites should treat the marginalized with love and care. As Lohfink explains,

> [In the Covenant Code], the framing and repeated prohibition not to oppress the stranger uses the word *lāhas* which is not traditional in law or wisdom admonition, but is used for the oppression of the Israelities in Egypt in Exod 3:9 and

> in the historical Creed in Deut 26:7. Furthermore, the same motivation is added to both prohibitions: "for you were strangers in the land of Egypt…." (Lohfink, 1991, p. 42).

Israel as a whole experienced what it was like to be slaves, sojourners, poor, and God released them. Therefore, they should treat the people in their midst who are slaves, sojourners, and poor with special attention. Poverty researchers often point out that a key element toward poverty awareness, prevention, and elimination is not simply alerting people to the situations of poverty in the world but finding ways to help people see that those who are impoverished are not a distant "other" but are like us (Cloke, 2006, pp. 447–56). This is the rhetorical effect that God's reminder about the Exodus experience is intended to have on the Israelites: the poor and marginalized are not "them"—this is not some distant "other" who the Israelites can neglect—the poor and marginalized are "us" because we were once like them. This notion of "us" is embedded not in an abstracted ethical statute but in the historical experience and narrative retelling of Israel's own identity story (Lohfink, 1991, pp. 41–42).

Leviticus and Deuteronomy: Statutes for the Poor and our Exodus God

The poverty laws described in Leviticus and Deuteronomy provide further exploration on the relationship between kingship and poverty. Leviticus 19 provides a link between the religious institutions, the government, and the poor by way of laws protecting the poor and marginalized in their midst. Whereas in modern culture, we often remove the spiritual-religious aspect from our discussion of the poor, Leviticus embeds the poor in the covenant relationship with God. This chapter describes laws around gleaning that are interwoven with how Israelites are to treat one another without oppression. Amid the protected groups are the poor, orphans, widows, and foreigners in the midst of Israel. Leviticus 19 speaks not only to economic and relational

care but also for justice in the court systems, pointing to Israel's own Exodus experience as the reason for their hearts responding to these laws.

Deuteronomy builds on Leviticus' themes with a stronger focus on God's role as king. Deuteronomy 14.28–29 returns to the fatherless, orphan, widow, and sojourners, along with the Levites, showing how to provide for them. The triad of "come, eat, and be filled" needs some unpacking. "Come" implies reconnection with the community (if people were distant), demonstrating a relational need, while "eat and be filled" suggests that the food provided would not be minimal but sufficient to the point of "filling."

Deuteronomy 15.1–3 continues the discussion of the poor by connecting poverty and debt: "But there will be no poor among you; for the LORD will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess." Thus, the removal of poverty is based on obeying all of what the Lord commands. As the prophets show us, the Israelites did not succeed in obeying God. No wonder, Micah and Amos rail with such fury against Israel's injustice: the great God King gave them means to *end* poverty, but they ruined it! Yet, Deuteronomy 15.7–11 moves from the ideal (no poor) to the practical (a world where the poor are always with us) and again shows that poverty is not simply about finances but about heart and relationship. It is not simply the case that someone should give to their poor brother, but their heart should be turned to this person. This is because poverty impacts relationships and it can lead to a spiritual situation (e.g., crying out to God about sin in Deut 15.9).

Poverty and Kingship in the Prophets

While an extensive explanation of poverty within prophetic literature is beyond the scope of this chapter, we will focus on Ezekiel 34 as an anchor point for the prophetic imagination of poverty and kingship. Ezekiel 34 provides a depiction of God as Shepherd-King in contrast to the actions of wicked shepherds

(likely Israelite kings). Ezekiel 34 links aspects of socio-economic poverty and relational poverty: the mistreatment of one another in terms of relational poverty leads to socio-economic poverty. As Ezekiel 34 shows, the injustice of socio-economic poverty often has roots in spiritual poverty (in other words, injustice is often linked to spiritual abuses). This is true in the depiction of the leaders' treatment of the people as they inflict injustice on the people at the socio-economic level, while creating disruption of their relational ties with one another, and disconnection with God on the spiritual level. Similarly, the treatment of the weak sheep by the powerful sheep shows similar dynamics of relational, spiritual, and socio-economic devolution. The contrast to Yahweh's kingship is striking. Not only does Yahweh remove injustice and restore justice on the socio-economic level, but He draws His people back to Himself—restoring the spiritual resources the people desperately need— and draws the people back into relationship with one another (Stovell, 2016, p. 200–230).

Toward a Biblical Theology of Kingdom as Good News for Global and Canadian Poverty

Exploring the role of God as king in relation to poverty in the Old Testament points us to the principle that in a biblical theology of Kingdom the good news for the poor is missional in nature. Missiologists have grasped this point, often aligning the *missio Dei*, the Kingdom of God, and a heart and mission for the poor (Wright, 2004, 2008, 2010). Facing poverty based on this model of a biblical theology of Kingdom highlights certain aspects of poverty when set alongside modern levels of poverty engagement. Alongside the three levels of poverty engagement and recent research n Canadian child poverty and poverty strategies in churches, this approach suggests three outcomes that interweave with these levels of engagement: restoration God's people to God, removal of injustice, and reconciliation of God's people to one another.

Developing a Biblical Model for Engagement

A biblical model for engagement with the issues intrinsic in poverty forces us to ask new questions with a set of ancient lenses as a starting point. I begin with a list of some of these questions. If Deuteronomy suggests that God's kingship gives us a place where no one is poor, how can we creatively make poverty guidelines that enact elements of Leviticus and Deuteronomy? How do we provide for the vulnerable, such that they "come, eat and are filled"? Furthermore, how do we address the pressing needs that we face in Canada around child poverty? How does the Church in Canada develop poverty policies that align with these values as a way of living out the *missio Dei*?

Three Levels of Poverty Engagement

Recent approaches to poverty have highlighted three levels of poverty engagement: poverty alleviation, poverty prevention, and poverty eradication (Scott, 2009). The first level of poverty engagement is alleviation. This is similar to Christian concepts of charity. These practices seek to alleviate the symptoms that poverty creates. This can include creative responses that lead to restoration, found in the work of organizations such as Compassion and World Vision.

Poverty prevention moves to a second level of action in relation to poverty. Poverty prevention seeks to prevent poverty through addressing the relational, spiritual, and economic needs of persons at risk of poverty before they reach the stage of poverty. This can mean addressing not only the symptoms of poverty but acknowledging the systems that lead to poverty. This means building an awareness of the poor in our midst and those who are struggling on the margins and who are approaching levels of poverty. Several organizations currently work toward creating plans to access the best strategies for prevention of poverty. For example, the Charis Project in Thailand rejected the usual strategies of creating orphanages to alleviate the *symptoms* of poverty in Thailand and instead aims to prevent the *causes* that create

the need for orphanages. Through this, they have been able to restore families to situations where they can keep their children rather than abandon them (http://thecharisproject.org).

Poverty eradication is the third level of poverty engagement. Poverty eradication seeks to eliminate poverty entirely, not only dealing with symptoms and causes but undoing the entire system that leads to poverty. Poverty eradication involves identifying the deep underlying roots that have broken the entire system that we live in. Such poverty eradication in Christian terms causes us to become warriors, like our Warrior King, against injustice. Jesus models to us resistance against unjust practices, speaking against the mistreatment of the poor. While Jesus did not overturn the Roman government, His treatment of the poor brought restoration and healing and led to social change. Echoing Deuteronomy 15, Jesus modeled a responsive heart and open hands, which should be a model for Christians in poverty eradication. Jesus' approach was more than simply social and economic, but also relational and spiritual. The Gospel needs to be a part of the good news to the poor, because the story of Jesus as king is very good news!

Canadian Poverty Institute: Definition of Child Poverty

When we shift from speaking of poverty globally to focusing on poverty in the Canadian context specifically, each of these levels of poverty engagement has a place in developing definitions and policies associated with Canadian situations of poverty. The Canadian Poverty Institute (CPI) works to create a hub for such poverty research in Canada. While the CPI has worked on many projects, we will focus on the CPI's work on definitions of child poverty.

In response to the awareness that "Canada has no comprehensive and widely accepted definition of poverty" and that obvious gaps exist in accessing child poverty, the CPI developed a "A Multi-Dimensional Definition of Child Poverty." Similar to the key elements of economic, relational, and spiritual aspects of

poverty described in the biblical theology above, the CPI acknowledged that "definitions of poverty in Canada have historically focused on economic concerns." However, what is needed is a "multi-dimensional guiding definition" that moves beyond only economic categories to categories associated with relationships and spirituality, as well as other categories facing children in poverty in Canada (Yembilah & Lamb, 2016, p. 4):

> Accordingly, we understand poverty to be about more than just a lack of adequate income and include in our discussions about poverty its economic, social and spiritual dimensions as well. *Economic poverty* exists where people lack access to sufficient material and financial resources to thrive. *Social poverty* exists where people are isolated and lack the formal and informal supports necessary to be resilient in times of crisis and change. *Spiritual poverty* exists where people lack meaning in their lives or connection to a spiritual tradition that sustains them. We understand these three dimensions to be inter-related and must be considered together in any discussion of poverty reduction strategies (Canadian Poverty Institute, October 2017, p. 2).

With this in mind, the CPI's definition used a rights-based perspective to develop this multi-dimensional definition of child poverty with the goal of informing practice in Canada. Central to this new definition of child poverty were five scenarios of child poverty: (1) *child self-perception poverty;* (2) *structural capital child poverty;* (3) *relationship capital child poverty;* (4) *standard of living child poverty;* and (5) *multi-dimensional absolute child poverty* (Yembilah & Lamb, 2017). While scenario 4 focused on the economic aspects of poverty (typical of previous child poverty policy), scenarios 1 and 2 focused on personal, social, and spiritual aspects of poverty that can culminate in the fifth scenario of multi-dimensional absolute child poverty, which shows all of scenarios 1–4 at play.

This understanding to Canadian child poverty offers a holistic approach that incorporates the key aspects of God's desire as king to care for those in poverty. This also resonates with the themes of the "orphan" and the "child" found in the Old Testament as particularly vulnerable persons needing particular attention from God and God's people.

Conclusion

Finally, what might this look like in light of our study of a biblical theology of the Kingdom in relationship to poverty in the Scriptures? I will conclude this chapter with three key realms where poverty exists based on the Scriptures and three key responses that convey the Gospel of the Scriptures to the poor: restoring God's people to God, removing injustice, and reconciling people to one another.

Restoring God's People to God

While the Gospel is not only about evangelism, nonetheless, the restoration of God's people to God is one of the essential means by which the spiritual aspects of poverty are remedied. Yet, we should be careful not to therefore locate *all* of the solutions to poverty on restoring people in their relationship with God or assume that economic poverty is the same as spiritual poverty. The poor are neither more holy nor more sinful than anyone else. Rather, it is more helpful to say that the experience of poverty has spiritual impact, alongside the other impacts of poverty. Jesus' approach to remedying this problem was an integrated approach that connected to a variety of aspects of people's lives. He saved their souls, physical lives, relational and social experiences, and addressed societal injustice. When we view the "good news" of the Gospel as primarily a message for the soul, we only go one step toward the holistic vision of how the good news functions for all people, those experiencing poverty included.

Yet, another spiritual aspect to poverty that is often overlooked—though repeated again and again in Scripture—is that the treatment of the poor by the non-poor has a potential impact

on their spiritual well-being. Far more frequently than discussing the spiritual well-being of the poor, Scripture speaks of the spiritual downfall of the rich when they resent, overlook, oppress, or mistreat the poor. A response to poverty based on kingship must be with open hands and hearts, not begrudgingly tight fists. Deuteronomy 15.9 speaks of any other response as a sin. Thus, responding to poverty must involve pricking people's conscience. As with God's reminder "you were slaves and sojourners," we must remind others that the person in poverty is not a distant "other" but one of us. Encouraging people to see the poverty of children may help with such pricking of hearts. Thus, the study of child poverty may help with this spiritual aspect.

Removing Injustice

Just as we should not bypass the soul in our considerations of poverty, we must not only seek for justice; we must also remove injustice. This removal is key to the holistic picture of God's good news. Such a removal can happen by preventing unjust practices that cause poverty and by caring justly for those on the margins of poverty. Poverty alleviation can move forward when unjust laws do not inhibit the ability to actually provide for those in need. Recent research has shown how some large NGOs at times siphon funds in ways that allow very little actual money to go to those most in need (Routley, 2015; Buss, 2009). Similarly, unjust political systems can create massive problems for poverty alleviation. As in Exodus 34, this is an issue for both leaders and individual community members. Poverty elimination can only happen when injustice is removed. As Christians, we live in the already-not-yet tension of working toward more just systems today, with the awareness that such systems are only an anticipation of the absolute justice of the Kingdom of God.

Reconciling People to One Another

Ezekiel 34 has demonstrated that it is not only the leaders' responsibility to build just systems but the responsibility of the

people to care for and not oppress the weak among them. This means that in order to be "good news" and preach the "good news" to the poor, we must seek not only spiritual or socio-economic fixes but also locate ourselves within our local communities as people who seek reconciliation and shalom. In their book, *An Other Kingdom*, Peter Block, Walter Brueggemann, and John McKnight have argued that one way of restoring justice and rejecting the pull of consumerism is to reconnect with our local communities (Block, Brueggemann, & McKnight, 2016). The message of the Gospel in Scripture provides a picture of wholeness and reconciliation that reconnects people to their God, justice, and their neighbour.

Reflection Questions

1. Based on this biblical picture of poverty, how might we provide for the vulnerable, such that they "come, eat and are filled"?
2. How do we address the pressing needs we face in Canada around child poverty?
3. How does the Church in Canada develop poverty policies that align with these values as a way of living out the *missio Dei*?

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CHAPTER 3

A MACARISM FOR THE DISPLACED PERSON

Kimberly Morrison

Introduction

Flourishing is the forced migrant
Who walks not in the ways of scientific naturalism or religion,
nor stands for surrendering internal locus of control to fate,
nor sits in voiceless victim-mentality.
But her delight is in her king,
and on His Kingdom vision she meditates day and night.
She shall be a well-loved heir of God's Kingdom,
engaged in the loving exchange of giving and forgiving,
as an astute political actor, making a place for others in the
world, she shall prosper.
Those without a true map are not so.
They are wanderers in a weary wasteland.
For the Lord knows the way of the righteous forced migrant,
but the way of those who oppress the vulnerable will perish.

The study of displaced persons tends to focus on the interests of key actors who shape the policy-making process such as local governments, NGOs, and especially the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (Loren B. et al., 2014; Kneebone, 2014; Miller, 2012). The forced migrant becomes the object of issue-driven and norm-oriented analysis. In contrast, this paper offers a *macarism* for the displaced person, elevating the forced migrant from an object to a subject. "A *macarism* is a pronouncement that a certain way of being in the world produces human flourishing" (Pennington, 2018, p. 42). Motifs from the lives of

Naomi and Ruth in dialogue with contemporary forced migrant research will support the thesis of this chapter that flourishing for the displaced person is a journey through disorientation, beyond alternative meaning maps, guided by Jesus' Kingdom vision. The whole work will be moderated by an ongoing dialogue with works of Charles Taylor (1989, 2007).

A Journey through Disorientation

Charles Taylor (1989), in his book *Sources of the Self*, suggests that to know who I am is to know where I stand; it is my frame for discriminating the good. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications I make. These provide the map within which I can make case-to-case analysis of the good. To lose the map is to lose the ability to know for an important range of questions.

Individuals in contexts of forced migration are extremely vulnerable to losing their personal maps. This social group represents "a broad range of displacement including refugee claimants, those with refugee status, people whose refugee claims have been rejected, trafficked persons and internally displaced persons" (Clark-Kazak, 2017, p. 12). The forced migrants are rendered "world-less," without a political space in which their actions may be meaningfully oriented (Arendt, 1951, p. 294).

Jovic studied people taking refuge along the Balkan route in 2018. He describes their journey this way: "exposed to systematic dehumanizing attitudes and practices... imprisoned, beaten, sexually abused, injured, we see their personality, or ego functions severely disrupted" (2018, p. 198). We define who we are by where we are speaking from––our history, geography, interrelations, and more crucially, the moral space and spiritual orientation within which our most defining relations are lived out (Taylor, 1989). Refugees at the Mole Camp stated that they "can't find the sense of life" (de Carvalho & Pinto, 2018, p. 249). This study explores the daily life and its psychological meaning in a young refugee camp in Molé, in the North of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

This disorientation is the result of an identity-crushing journey creating a radical uncertainty of where one stands.

Refugee camps are "an arrangement for policing, feeding and giving health care to a population that is offered refuge in order to shelter it from violent death arising from war and hunger" (Agier, 2008, p. 44). Every existence marker in a UNHCR camp has the UNHCR logo stamped on it—every packaged food item, every blanket, every medical supply, and every building. Inhabitants of the camp are thereby perpetually named "refugee" and are "permanently submerged in their present time and conditions" (de Carvalho & Pinto, 2018, p. 279). Former refugee Parens states, "In short, one's known, personalized world is left behind." (2018, p. 228). Daily routines in UNHCR camps are focused on one's current state as refugee. At the Mole Camp in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), refugees reported that life was paralyzed in the present (Jovic, 2018). An unremitting state of emptiness, flatness, futility, and purposelessness describe loss of horizon.

Identity is also formed based on who I am standing with. My stand on moral and spiritual issues is referenced to a defining community (Taylor, 1989). Simon Turner (2016) references refugee camps as places of "social dissolution, where people have their sociality remolded" (p. 139). Eisenbruch's 1984 research project found cultural bereavement arising from losing social structures, cultural values, and self-identity. If it is true that I define myself by where I am speaking from (what I stand for) and by who I am speaking with (my defining community), then I (who have endured repeated devastating loss) will experience difficulty in sustaining an account of myself.

A Journey Past Alternative Meaning Maps

Taylor (1989) suggests that maintaining a healthy account of the world and the self requires finding a map and discerning where you are located on that map. Refugees often experience a vulnerability that leaves them with radical uncertainty about the moral space they inhabit. Moral space is the background for the belief

that people are a fit object of respect, and that their lives and integrity are sacred. At the height of disorientation, refugees often encounter two dominant maps defining what it means to lead life well: scientific naturalism and religion.

Scientific Naturalism

Usually one's first encounter in a refugee camp is with a UNHCR worker, whose role is to assimilate you into UNHCR systems. Taylor (2007) suggests that due to the incredible success of modern natural science and technologies associated with it, people are led to believe that natural science can offer normative explanations for all of life. As a result, naturalists often seek to develop human sciences along the same scientific edge, reducing the study of humans to little more than physics or perhaps organic chemistry.

In Jovic's 2018 article, he comments on a typical paradigm for treating refugees with these words:

> One of the dominant models is the *biomedical model*, which defines mental problems of refugees as illnesses, and focuses on pathological mechanisms (most often at the level of the structure and functions of the brain), clinical representations (symptoms and signs of the illness), diagnoses, epidemiological studies, and the treatment of symptoms through (predominantly) pharmacological means (p. 189).

Refugees are subjected to interviews that apply descriptive methodology to determine a finding. In other words, descriptions of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as found in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* or the *International Classification of Diseases*, are compared to interpret data. Then, since PTSD is "conceptualized as an equivalent of all varieties of post-traumatic response," the refugee is so defined and medicated—if considered needful of it (Jovic, 2018, p. 189).

The practical end of this process is the reduction of the

person to a mechanism of behaviour in a world ordered by natural causes, with the person's identity formulated as a mental health patient (Hossack & Bentall, 1996; Stoppard, 2000; Tew, 2005; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). The instrumentalization of the refugee as a point of care absolutizes this naturalist approach to human beingness.

Religion

A second framework for mapping identity is religion. Baker states, "Studies indicate that community ideology, beliefs and value systems give meaning to traumatic events and promote adaptive functioning in everyday life, even under extreme conditions" (Baker, 1999, p. 941). Kinsie's studies with Cambodian forced migrants suggest that refugees interpreted their traumatic experience in congruence with Buddhist beliefs (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011, p. 576).

About 131,000 Tibetan refugees accumulated experiences of severe trauma (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011, p. 576). Yet, they were extremely low on scales of psychological distress (Sachs, et al., 2008). These Tibetans mark meaning related to at least three significant landmarks. First, in Kinsie's research (1988), the Dalai Lama was seen as the primary protective factor of the Tibetan refugees. Second, the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism define life as suffering due to attachment. Finally, the Dalai Lama defined the relationship of *karma* to suffering as follows: "the consequences of *karma* are definite; negative actions always bring about suffering" (Lama, 1994, p. 9). For the Buddhist Tibetan refugee, unbearable suffering is destiny arising from *karma*.

One Tibetan refugee stated, "If we see from Buddhist point of view, then we Tibetans are suffering because of our collective bad karmas which we have done. Otherwise there are no reasons why should we suffer so much in our life" (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011, p. 582). Another Tibetan refugee explained, "I perform various rituals regularly. By these rituals we accumulate good karmas and overcome difficulties in our life" (Hussain &

Bhushan, 2011, p. 583). The religious practices of the Tibetan Buddhists are a means to earn justification before divine retributive justice; thereby, being rewarded with good karma.

Comparative Analysis

These alternative maps have two primary overlaps. First, both place the displaced person in the foreground of the landscape, not as subject, but as an object being acted upon either by divine retribution or naturalist medicalization. This makes sense of the continued experience of the refugee in the UNHCR system as a non-agentic self, managed, advocated for, and researched. Second, the unintended destination of both maps is the annihilation of a robust and holistic account of the self.

A Journey Guided by Jesus' Kingdom Vision

A third way of engaging life, as a person experiencing displacement, is found in Jesus' manifesto for his Kingdom—the *Sermon on the Mount*. It illustrates Jesus' vision of human flourishing (Matt 5–7). The sermon provides an orienting space by describing evaluative Kingdom distinctives and gracious Kingdom rhythms that order our loves and map our beliefs.

Evaluative Kingdom Language

The language of the sermon has evaluative force and provides a shared vocabulary of suffering for the forced migrant community. It blesses peacemakers and those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake as children of God who will inherit the Kingdom. It acknowledges that the world is filled with evil and provides a daily liturgy of prayer for deliverance. This evaluative language connotes meanings that a neutral universe denies.

Mulanda Jimmy Juma (2018), leader of the Africa Peacebuilding Institute in South Africa, was born and raised in a Congolese refugee camp and repeatedly fled genocide and violence. He related that his flourishing as a refugee was based on two things: a clear understanding of the evaluative difference between the

kingdom of darkness and the Kingdom of light, and thankfulness that God had qualified him to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. The Kingdom of light also invited him to take a stand opposed to darkness and death.

The descriptive language of the scientific naturalist allows for no such evaluative distinctions. The naturalist describes human reaction to confronting the evils of war, genocide, torture, murder, and rape as PTSD and conjures methodologies to deal with brain deficits. Kingdom language offers evaluative terms for the good and gives space for lament, sorrow, and agonized screams in the night when that good is consumed by evil. When the sermon references the "persecuted prophets who went before," it signals that it is building on the Hebrew tradition of prophetic lament, acknowledging seasons of disorientation and loss of a place to stand. In this way, it makes room for voices like Jeremiah's: "Then I said, 'Ah, Lord God, how utterly you have deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, 'it will be well with you even while the sword is at the throat!" (Jer 4.10, NRSV).

Kingdom Rhythms are Gracious

Rhythms within the sermon are about the gracious exchange of giving and forgiving that infuses glory into every aspect of the mundane and the daily. Food, drink, clothing, shelter, sunshine, and rain are all defined as good gifts given to us by a Father in heaven (Matt 5.45; 6.25–34). These are granted to the just and the unjust; all of life comes to us purely as gift.

A relationship of reciprocal exchange is the sermon's primary theme. The Father's desire is that we become His children not only by birth but also by likeness. This concept is summarized in Matt 5.48, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (NRSV). The word translated "perfect" here is the Greek term *teleios*. It denotes the idea of a life aimed at blamelessness or wholeness rather than a life that is flawless (Pennington, 2018, p. 69–70). To be blameless is to live in alignment with Jesus' view of flourishing. It is a life of virtue.

Virtue is "the disposition to act in certain ways and to do so reliably and characteristically over time" (Treier, 2008, p. 92). When operative in our day-to-day life, virtue displaces languishing with flourishing. As Pennington states, "Mere circumstance or fortune is not determinative, but rather whether the agent orients his or her life virtuously" (2018, p. 36). Virtue is framed in evaluative language and aimed at being like the Father who gives and forgives freely. It infers that the child should be in the likeness of the Father.

The gracious exchange of forgiveness is summarized in Matt 6.9–16. A daily rite of passage for the flourishing person is the give-and-take of forgiveness. This Kingdom practice assumes blamelessness, not flawlessness. The basis of our forgiveness of others is the forgiveness we have received from the Father. A loving relationship with God and others is the primary defining ethic of Jesus' view of flourishing. This love extends even to the enemy and is rooted in our likeness to the Father (5.44–45).

The performative language of religion promotes a radically different exchange. Divine retributive justice gives back only what has been given. Nothing comes as gift; all must be earned. In contrast, participation in a virtuous Kingdom through relationship with a loving Father is not the reward but the evidence of spiritual rebirth through a purified life.

Maha Gosananda is a Thervada monk who was known as the "Gandhi of Cambodia." He became displaced when his family was annihilated by the Khmer Rouge. For Gosananda, the purpose of forgiveness is freedom from fear, to meet suffering with a kind heart and to extend mercy to the self (Sharpe, 2013). The entire directional force of forgiveness is the experience of benefits afforded the self by the self.

The sermon teaches us that true flourishing comes from above, by having a right relation to the Father through Jesus. Our true identity is found in being called children of a loving Father. The sermon is preached by Jesus, a displaced person, to exiles from Eden, declaring the reality of a coming, alternative Kingdom where flourishing abounds.

Motifs from Ancient and Contemporary Refugees

Naomi and Ruth are ancient women whose lives were deeply affected by forced migration (Ruth 1–4). Their stories have touch points with contemporary refugee research and assist us in perceiving how flourishing for the displaced person is a journey through disorientation, beyond alternative meaning maps, guided by God's Kingdom vision.

Naomi's Journey of Flourishing

In the Book of Ruth, Naomi begins her journey of flourishing through disorientation (with a low locus of control). Then she goes beyond her alternative meaning toward adopting God's Kingdom vision.

Naomi: Disorientation and Locus of Control

The kinetics of Naomi's original flight from Israel to Moab function around a famine that led to tragic circumstances (Ruth 1.1–5). In Moab, all of Naomi's sons and husband die; the three women (Naomi and her two daughters-in-law) are left with no visible means of economic support or social protection.

Due to the tragic consequences of Naomi's displacement, she began to feel that she was cursed by God. Her words of greeting to former neighbors are these: "... the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty ... the Almighty has brought calamity upon me" (Ruth 1.20–21, NRSV). Naomi's disorientation may have led to a lower internal locus of control (the perception that outside agents control one's life). Bariagaber's 2001 study of refugees in Eritrea revealed a direct correlation between active steps taken to reassert control over one's life and internal locus of control. Findings indicated that factors leading to lower internal focus of control are depression, less self-control, and a decreased belief that one's actions determine the type of one's life (Benassi, 1988; Lefcourt, 1982).

Despite Naomi's disorientation, God is already regenerating her flourishing. When Naomi heard that the Lord had visited

Israel and gave His people food, she "arose." This word represents the concept of rising up to take on power (Brown et al., 1996). The suggestion is that Naomi had fresh courage when she heard of God's activity. Houston contends that the concept of return is crucial in the Book of Ruth, saying that "the narrative begins a dynamic movement from death to life, from curse to blessing" (Houston, 2015, p. 85). Naomi's pilgrimage of repatriation, reflecting a faint whisper of hope, may have been motivated by little more than desire for personal comfort. She arrives in Israel still beleaguered and struggling. However, the strength of her faith towards God in "rising up" had no correlation to success. That was entirely dependent on the object of her faith—God.

Naomi: Alternative Meaning Maps

Naomi's faith step toward God was taken in the midst of profound disorientation. Taylor reminds us that when we take account of our life, we will often project who we will become relative to where we have come from (Taylor 1989). Naomi seems to consider her recent history as deficit of hope-filled meaning and chooses to relocate her identity. She asks that her name be changed from Naomi, meaning "along pleasant lines," to Mara, meaning "bitter" (Ruth 1.20).

When Naomi returns to Bethlehem, despite choosing a nihilistic-styled personal meaning system, she is now participating in the Kingdom marked by good gifts from a loving Father. Ruth, her daughter-in-law, is a profound gift from God. She labours in the fields to provide basic needs for Naomi (Ruth 2.2). Her industriousness is of her own initiative; Naomi remains passive. Another gift arrives when Ruth stumbles upon the field of Boaz, their close relative. He is the very individual who can support the return of the land to the family line of Elimelech, Naomi's husband (Ruth 2.3). Naomi had passively neglected contacting Boaz.

God's Kingdom Vision

As God showers Naomi with these mundane gifts that provide for her survival, a shift can be seen in her orientation. She

chooses active agency and an expectation of future good. She positions herself in response to God's gifts reciprocally—to both give and receive. Her concerns become exteriorized to Ruth's future and she schemes to secure a future for her (Ruth 3.1–4). When Naomi begins to receive life as gift, she becomes enabled to give gifts in return. Naomi reorients her account of self and of the world within the gracious Kingdom of God and finds a place to stand.

When identity becomes disoriented, many refugees exteriorize the need for a place to stand and refugee camps can become, according to Simon Turner (2016), " a hyper-politicized space where nothing is taken for granted and everything is contested" (p. 139). In the Agame Camp in Benin, Togolese refugees are characterized as engaging in confrontations with humanitarian organizations and are characterized as "insubordinate" (Lecadet, 2016, p. 187). In the Danish camps, Palestinian refugees refer to their lives as *Al-Nakba* ("the catastrophe"), referencing the original loss of place in 1947 (Kublitz, 2016, p. 29). Refugees ensconced in Kingdom meanings could play a huge role as political actors framing the ethos of the mundane and the contested as gift. This role functions not as a fatalistic monologue but as an operative narrative for a dialogue that supports the reciprocal exchange of gift among all political actors.

When Naomi chose to make gift the controlling narrative of her life, this had a ripple effect in the community and back to God. Hear the community say, "Blessed be the Lord who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him" (Ruth 4.14–15, NRSV). Naomi's restoration to flourishing began through a season of crushing disorientation, but in choosing God's Kingdom meanings and orienting her identity within its safe walls, Naomi was restored to flourishing.

Ruth's Journey of Flourishing

In the Book of Ruth, we also see Ruth go through her own journey of flourishing, beginning with the same context of disorientation. However, she proceeds with her journey by making place for others.

Ruth: Disorientation

Ruth, the Moabitess, becomes a forced migrant due to the untimely death of her husband. Her return to Israel with Naomi may be related to the socio-economic status of widows in the Ancient Near East, described this way: "Widows, abandoned wives, and other women deprived of male protection would often be particularly economically and socially vulnerable. They would thus be especially vulnerable to forced enslavement" (Matthews, Levinson, & Frymer-Kensky, 2004, p. 167). Ruth's situation made her vulnerable and her attachment to Naomi may represent her flight from possible slavery in her own country.

Ruth is determined to follow through on a covenant to make the God of Israel her own and leaves her homeland in order to rebuild her life in Israel (Ruth 1.16–17). She becomes a marginalized alien in her new social context.

Ruth: Making a Place for Others

Ruth's orienting meaning systems refuse self-identity as a victim. She mobilizes herself and determines to care for Naomi (Ruth 2.2, 3, 17–18, 23). Fresia's study of Mauritanian refugees suggests that, despite their past suffering, they can aspire for a hopeful future by embedding themselves in the "logic of the ordinary" (2014, p. 455). Re-establishing a sense of order, normalcy, and justice is dependent upon practices in the everyday, wherever one finds oneself. Ruth invested in virtuous practices that represented a living way of being (Ruth 2.4–16).

In her migrancy, Ruth became an astute political actor. She followed the advice of Naomi and—in acting according to local custom—she created a place to stand for herself and others (Ruth 3). Turton states,

> We must treat place, not as a stage for social activity but as a 'product' of it. Such an understanding of the link between people and place helps us to appreciate that displacement is not just about the loss of place, but also about the struggle to *make* a place in the world, where meaningful action and shared understanding is possible (2003, p. 278).

In this statement, Taylor's framework for establishing identity (finding a place to stand and a defining community with whom to stand) is actualized. An immediate sense of place can be achieved when forced migrants choose to make something of the world in which they find themselves. We must not stigmatize refugees by emphasizing the tragic loss of home, saying nothing of their role as social agents. To do this, as Bradley states, is to treat displaced persons as "a category of 'passive victims' who exist to be assisted, managed, regimented and controlled" (2014, p. 122). Ruth trusted in Yahweh and His social vision. She reframed her life according to the Kingdom of God and participated in virtuous practices that produced a sense of "place" and flourishing for herself and others.

Conclusion

The Word of God offers displaced persons a macarism—a pronouncement about a way of being in the world, as a refugee, that will produce flourishing and felicity. The lives of Naomi and Ruth bear witness to the nature of that way of being. Naomi's journey suggests that—in our darkest hour—we must trust that the faintest glimmer of faith, produced even from a low internal locus of control, can be used by God to recreate flourishing. As that hope grows, we have the opportunity to reorient our meanings to receive all of life as gift, spreading an ethos of reciprocal giving and receiving of forgiveness and love. Ruth's willingness to become a citizen of God's Kingdom and to orient herself to His map of flourishing—which included using the logic of the ordinary to provide a space for the other—invited an incredible

blessing in her life. She is a displaced person included in the lineage of Christ.

Reflection Questions

1. How might refugees be empowered toward a hopeful future?
2. How might individuals assisting displaced persons provide opportunity for them to assert control over their life as agentic selves?
3. What portions of the Sermon on the Mount help orient the identity of displaced persons?

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CHAPTER 4

THE CHURCH IN AN ERA OF RECORD

DISPLACED PEOPLES:

RE-FRAMING THE CONVERSATION
AWAY FROM THE NATION-STATE AND TOWARD
BEING THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Sam Chaise

Introduction

"Take your Bible and take your newspaper and read both. But interpret newspapers from your Bible" (Barth, 1963). This well-known quote from Karl Barth calls us to do two things: pay attention to what is happening in the world and interpret it through the lens of the biblical narrative.

In today's world, nearly one out of every 100 human beings has been displaced, forced to flee their home because of danger. Of these 71 million people, 26 million are defined as "refugees," since they have crossed a national border (UNHCR, 2019). The rest are displaced in their home country.

Churches have historically led our culture in sponsoring and welcoming refugees to Canada. Our country's private sponsorship program has, until recently, been unique in the world, and most of the people sponsored through this program over the last 40 years have been done so by churches. In recent years, Canadian culture has followed the lead of the Church in stepping up to sponsor refugees in larger numbers than previously.

However, more recently, the narrative relating to refugees has grown more complex. The image of Alan Kurdi (the young Syrian boy whose body washed up on the shore of the

Mediterranean Sea in 2015 and whose death galvanized public support for refugees) has been replaced by the optics of people walking into Canada across the border—seemingly illegally. What was a public swell of support for Canada to welcome Syrian refugees has morphed into a more complicated public discourse that has fragmented and polarized, with supporters of refugees on the one side, and those questioning the legitimacy of the people who are claiming asylum on the other.[1] The negative discourse may be related to a felt loss of control. When we were welcoming Syrian refugees, we had the opportunity to choose them, decide how many we would take, and control the timing of their access into Canada. However, with the recent arrival of asylum-seekers at our border, we have not felt in control and our response has been froth with fear and anger.

But who does the pronoun "we" (used in the previous sentence) represent? Nation-states have borders; the Church does not. When we think about refugees crossing "our" border, are we thinking as Canadians or as Christians?

Sadly, the narrative taking place in the Church is virtually the same narrative that is taking place in our society. We are not following Barth's advice—to interpret the world through the lens of Scripture. Instead, we, the Church, are interpreting the refugee reality through the lens of nation-states, borders, and international law.

Further, Christians who are supportive of welcoming refugees tend to have a less-than-robust theological platform on which to build their response. They mention that Jesus was a refugee, that the Old Testament Law enjoins welcome to the stranger, and that

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1   The term "asylum-seeker" is commonly used in Europe and the United States, though it is creeping into Canadian usage; the more common term in Canada has been "refugee claimant." There are different ways to use the term "refugee." Officially, someone is a refugee when the United Nations (UN) or a national government has declared them to be such. Before that, they are technically an asylum-seeker. However, every refugee began his or her journey as an asylum-seeker. More commonly, the term "refugee" is used to describe anyone who has fled danger and crossed a border, while those who have fled but stayed within their country are called "displaced."

the Church is meant to care for the vulnerable, but then run out of things to say. While these biblical themes are valid, they miss the larger redemptive arc of God's work that relates to His purpose for the nations of the earth. Rupen Das says that "the idea of migration has been widely ignored by theologians" (Das, 2017, p. 5) and that while much has been written on the diaspora, little has been written on the experience of displacement. Is it possible that "welcoming the stranger" is something that the Church needs for its own transformation into Christlikeness, as we inhabit God's blessing of the nations in the midst of displacement?

This chapter will trace the trajectory of God's redemptive work as it relates to the nations. We will argue that much of the Canadian Church has an identity crisis when it comes to the issue of refugees. We will briefly look at common objections that are raised when it comes to welcoming refugees, will think about some ways forward for the Church, and will conclude with a call to a new imagination for mission for the Canadian Church.

From Abraham to the Holy City: God is Blessing the Nations

In the beginning, God makes a good creation that embraces diversity in harmony. Humanity is made with difference, male and female, existing in collaborative and generative harmony. They are made in the image of the Trinitarian God, who is a community of unity in diversity: Father, Son, and Spirit. Creation is meant to be generative, creating more diversity and variety. Sadly, the first people seek knowledge independent of relationship, imaged in the eating of the fruit, and harmony is broken. In Genesis 4–11, we see story after story of descent into chaos and conflict, culminating in the story of the tower of Babel, in which one empire-building culture[2] seeks to accumulate power and prestige by using a new technology of bricks and tar in order to build a tower, presumably to touch the divine. Chaos and division result as different

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2   Compare Genesis 10.8–10 with 11.1. This links the tower of Babel to the empire of Nimrod.

languages disrupt community. At the end of Genesis 11, there are many nations on the earth, but they are alone, separate from one another, condemned to repeated cycles of empire-building and conflict.

In response, God calls one man, Abraham, to be the father of one particular nation, which is meant to be a sign of God's reign, living in a way so intriguing that others will want to join in, so that all of the nations of the earth will be blessed. The curse of Babel begins to be reversed in the vocation of Israel to bless the nations—the people-groups—of the earth. Eventually, God's people inhabit a land that is meant to be the place where God's reign is embodied; they are not meant to be like every other nation, but rather, they are to showcase a unique pattern of community that will bring blessing to the nations, as they seek to enter that pattern. Sadly, God's people wind up wanting to be like every other nation, with kings amassing power and wealth. This is not that dissimilar from what happened at Babel.

After the judgment of exile, there is a partial return to the Land but no return to the former glory. There is an existential vacuum created by their inability to recover their earlier paradigm of nationhood. Alternative future storylines are generated, held by groups such as the Sadducees and Pharisees, competing with each other to find a new way forward for the nation. The Pharisees were highly concerned with purity, defining who was "in" and "out" of God's people. It is worth noting that this is the group that had the most conflict with Jesus, and that utterly failed to recognize the Messiah who walked among them.

Into this set of storylines that are competing to re-form the nation's identity, a baby is born in Bethlehem. Jesus inaugurates God's reign in a new way, and establishes a new people of God, the Church. This new people of God has two key differences compared to the Old Testament version: first, they will have God living inside of them, changing them from the inside out (which happens at Pentecost), and second, they will include all of the nations of the earth in their diversity. Instead of the Old

Testament image of the nations streaming into Jerusalem, the New Testament disperses God's people to the "ends of the earth" (Acts 1.8) in order to bless the nations and embrace them into God's reign. This intent becomes clear when the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost explicitly reverses the curse of Babel, so that now the diversity of languages is *meaningful* and reconciling instead of being disruptive of community. Such diversity of language is being used to communicate the good news of the God who has entered the story in order to re-direct it.

At the end of time, God's community, imaged by the Holy City, will descend to a renewed planet earth, and God will make His home among His people. The kings of the earth will bring "their splendour" into the Holy City (Rev 1.24) and the nations will bring in their "glory and honour" (Rev 21.26). The descent of God's community onto the new earth does not erase the splendour of the old earth. Rather, the splendour, glory, and honour of the nations are brought into the Holy City and become a part of it. The tower of Babel has no ontological reality, but God's intent to bless the nations does. The splendour generated by each culture in human history is not erased but integrated into the final pattern of God's community.

Clearly, God has an agenda for the nations. Different ethnicities and people-groups are not a random happenstance irrelevant to God's redemptive purpose. Rather, each ethnicity in its distinctiveness produces splendour, as each fulfills its creational and redemptive mandate, embodying the *imago Dei* in distinctive ways. God is beyond our knowing, so it makes sense that the fulness of God's image cannot be represented by a solo individual or even a solo culture, but rather requires the multiplicity of individuals, cultures, and nations producing a delightful generative richness, reminding us of the Trinity.

The trajectory of the biblical narrative leads away from difference that disrupts and toward diversity and difference that are rich and beautiful. We do not return to the simplicity of the first people in the Garden; we journey toward the joyful and

generative complexity of multicultural and intercultural community in the Holy City.

This story of God's redemption is what we, as Christians, live in. Clearly, something distinctive, creational, and redemptive happens when we engage in intercultural relationship, celebrating the difference and diversity that exists as it is situated within the story of God's work, instead of using the difference and diversity to create borders that allow for Babel-like empire-building. This is the narrative in which we need to immerse ourselves as we think of newcomers to Canada in general, and refugees in specific.

An Identity Crisis: Thinking as Canadians Instead of Thinking as Christians

Too often, when Canadian Christians engage social issues, they do so primarily as Canadians, instead of primarily as participants in the redemptive story outlined above. But Jesus did not become incarnate, live, die, rise again, and ascend to the Father, in order to make us slightly more moral Canadians! Jesus' work allowed for the enactment of the Kingdom of God, and the Church is meant to be a "peculiar people" (1 Pet 2.9, KJV) who are a sign and foretaste of this Kingdom. This means that our primary theory of social change is not to get government or other publics to act. Governments and publics have roles to play, and as citizens of a country, we can advocate to them and participate in them, but our primary approach *as the Church* is not to mimic other special interest groups in an attempt to get government or others to act or spend in certain ways. Governments are not the primary actors in enacting the reign of God. Rather, God is. As is God's Church. We are the hands, feet, and voice of Jesus. Showing up as the Church is different from showing up as a bunch of Canadians who are Christians. The Church is being the Church when it looks a bit like Jesus.

Looking like Jesus means at least two things when it comes to refugees.

Time Spent with People Who Are Different from Us

First, Jesus spent time with people who were different from Him: legalistic religious folks, ostracized prostitutes, tax collectors who had sold out to the Roman oppressors, revolutionary zealots, and more. To "welcome the stranger" has been an important part of Christian practice and hospitality because it is what Jesus did. Miroslav Volf argues that one of the most intractable problems in the world today is exclusion of the "other," and that the Church holds three key theological themes that push it to embrace the "other": "the mutuality of self-giving love in the Trinity; the outstretched arms of Christ on the cross for the 'godless'; and the open arms of the 'father' receiving the 'prodigal'" (Volf, 1996, p. 29).

If we did what Jesus did, the dining rooms of Canadian Christians and the fellowship halls of Canadian churches would be full of people different from the typical churchgoer, including newcomers to Canada in general and refugees in specific. This is hard to do because relating to difference is hard. Mary Jo Leddy calls this the "other face" of God, in contrast to the "familiar face," to which we are accustomed (Leddy, 2012, p. 5). It is unfamiliar, but God is still there, seeking to meet us.

Mission Embedded in Blessing the Nations

Second, since Jesus' mission was embedded within the larger redemptive arc of blessing the nations, the mission of the Church of Jesus is *also* to bless the nations. If the Church "shows up" as the Church, it will welcome the stranger, not primarily as an act of a strong person caring for a weak person, but as an act of blessing, knowing that this is a way that the blessing of God gets shared and multiplied, and that this is how the Church itself is transformed. It will welcome the stranger and bless the nations. It will welcome a diversity of people-groups and ethnicities and will seek to befriend them, knowing that this is how the Church itself is transformed as it participates in the blessing of God.

The critical question is this: Are we here primarily to be good citizens of Canada who happen to be Christian, or are we here to

be citizens of God's multiethnic Kingdom who seek to bless the nations and who happen to live in Canada? Answering this question one way will lead to debates about borders and security; answering it the other way will lead to initiatives that welcome newcomers, accompany refugees, and build intercultural relationships—all to the glory of God. Whatever passport someone is carrying or whether they are carrying a passport at all is irrelevant to the Church. "Passport" is not a theological category.

"But What About?": Responding to Common Objections

Discussions about refugee claimants in Canada often surface common objections. This is a theological chapter; these objections are rarely theological but nonetheless merit a brief response.

Here is the first objection: We do not want to reward people for breaking the law. This is usually raised in the context of people walking across the border between official ports-of-entry. However, international treaties (to which Canada is a signatory) state that if someone claims asylum, the method by which they entered the country is overlooked: what was initially "illegal" becomes merely "irregular." This is because the international community has chosen to prioritize life-saving over border-guarding. In other words, Jews who escaped Nazi Germany "illegally" were not sent back into Germany, and Rwandans who fled the 1994 genocide "illegally" were not compelled to return to Rwanda while the genocide continued. If we adopt a theological frame, we might even ask whether God views international borders the same way we do.

Another objection commonly raised is that not all of the refugee claimants are genuine refugees. This may well be the case. That is why we need to find out whether they are. Canada has a world-class refugee hearing process, which will determine who the genuine refugees are. We cannot know who has a genuine refugee claim and who does not, without taking them through the determination process. It is not the Church's job to make the

determination. In the end, whether refugee claimants are in Canada for a short time or for the rest of their lives, the Church's job is to bless the nations and welcome the stranger.

Another objection sometimes raised is that refugee claimants are "jumping the queue," as if they are getting in line ahead of people who are lining up the proper way. The response to this is that there is not one queue but three; namely: government-sponsored, privately-sponsored, and refugee claimants. These different categories have different queues and different processes.

A final objection sometimes heard is that Canadian society does not have the financial resources to welcome all of the people who are arriving here. Given that we are one of the richest countries on the planet, with the average middle-class Canadian being in the top five percent of the global population when it comes to income ("Average Salary in Canada," 2019), this objection is false and has more to do with our unwillingness to spend resources on the stranger versus spending them on ourselves. This is not a paper on public policy but on theology, and a theological approach would indicate that financial resources belong to God, are meant to be stewarded for His glory, and should be used to support those most vulnerable. Even if the state is not spending its resources on the stranger, the Church can.

What Can We Do?

Let us begin by remembering who the "we" is: the Church. We need to engage in practices that form in us a sense of our identity as the people of God, instead of being formed primarily by the political and social discourses of our country.

Second, let us cultivate a missional imagination that envisions a world where no matter where each one of those 71 million people is right now, God's people can be with that person in accompaniment and support. We may not be able to change every geopolitical reality, but we can be with people whose lives have been broken by systemic and corporate sin.

Finally, let us find ways to be at the forefront of welcoming

refugees of all types (whether sponsored or claimant). To see the UNHCR's affirmations for faith leaders on welcoming the stranger, see the Appendix of this chapter. Churches in cities where refugees congregate can establish partnerships with refugee-serving agencies (especially since so many of those agencies are Christian). In smaller cities that have no specialized refugee-serving agencies, churches can establish connection with organizations that support refugees (and newcomers), whether it is a program at the local YMCA, an initiative at the public library, or a program run by a local non-profit. In most mid-sized or larger cities in Canada, if the Church is present in the relational networks of its context, it would likely meet newcomers and refugees.

Conclusion

Today, nearly one out of every 100 people whom God has made and whom God loves has been forced to flee from home. In light of that, what is God asking of His Church?

Reflection Questions

1. As you think about refugees (or other social issues), do you find yourself primarily using the lens and perspective of the Scriptures, or using the perspectives and categories that society is using?
2. Think about the emotions you feel when you see or hear stories of asylum-seekers coming to Canada. How are those emotions influencing your thinking? To what extent are those emotions aligned with the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22–23)?
3. If you have no one in your life who has been forcibly displaced (recently or long ago), how might you connect with a displaced person and hear his or her story?

Appendix

United Nations High Commission On Refugees

WELCOMING THE STRANGER: AFFIRMATIONS FOR FAITH LEADERS[3]

A core value of my faith is to welcome the stranger, the refugee, the internally displaced, the other. I shall treat him or her as I would like to be treated. I will challenge others, even leaders in my faith community, to do the same. Together with faith leaders, faith-based organizations and communities of conscience around the world, I affirm:

I will welcome the stranger.

My faith teaches that compassion, mercy, love and hospitality are for everyone: the native born and the foreign born, the member of my community and the newcomer.

I will remember and remind members of my community that we are all considered "strangers" somewhere, that we should treat the stranger to our community as we would like to be treated, and challenge intolerance.

I will remember and remind others in my community that no one leaves his or her homeland without a reason: some flee because of persecution, violence or exploitation; others due to natural disaster; yet others out of love to provide better lives for their families.

I recognize that all persons are entitled to dignity and respect as human beings. All those in my country, including the stranger, are subject to its laws, and none should be subject to hostility or discrimination.

I acknowledge that welcoming the stranger sometimes takes

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3   This set of affirmations was created in 2013 by a coalition of leading faith-based humanitarian organizations and academic institutions, including HIAS, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Jesuit Refugee Service, Lutheran World Federation, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, Religions for Peace, University of Vienna Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology, World Council of Churches, World Evangelical Alliance, and World Vision International.

courage, but the joys and the hopes of doing so outweigh the risks and the challenges. I will support others who exercise courage in welcoming the stranger.

I will offer the stranger hospitality, for this brings blessings upon the community, upon my family, upon the stranger and upon me.

I will respect and honor the reality that the stranger may be of a different faith or hold beliefs different from mine or other members of my community.

I will respect the right of the stranger to practice his or her own faith freely. I will seek to create space where he or she can freely worship.

I will speak of my own faith without demeaning or ridiculing the faith of others.

I will build bridges between the stranger and myself. Through my example, I will encourage others to do the same.

I will make an effort not only to welcome the stranger, but also to listen to him or her deeply, and to promote understanding and welcome in my community.

I will speak out for social justice for the stranger, just as I do for other members of my community.

Where I see hostility towards the stranger in my community, whether through words or deeds, I will not ignore it, but will instead endeavor to establish a dialogue and facilitate peace.

I will not keep silent when I see others, even leaders in my faith community, speaking ill of strangers, judging them without coming to know them, or when I see them being excluded, wronged or oppressed.

I will encourage my faith community to work with other faith communities and faith-based organizations to find better ways to assist the stranger.

I will welcome the stranger.

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CHAPTER 5

THE APOSTROPHE IN CHRISTIAN MISSION

Terry G. Smith

Introduction

What makes Christian mission truly Christian? Specifically, within the humanitarian aid and development sector of Christian mission, is there anything that distinguishes a Christian response from a secular response? Can there be a Christian response that is different from a Christian's response? Does the apostrophe (') matter? And if there is a difference, how could it inform and guide our service in a broken world? I believe we would do well to understand what truly makes Christian mission, well, Christian.

In November 2018, I travelled to Ethiopia as part of a board delegation of a well-established Canadian coalition of churches and church-based agencies known as the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB). The shared mission is to work together to end global hunger. The agenda in Ethiopia included sites visits, documentary reviews, and interviews with community leaders, social activists, program beneficiaries, and project implementation teams.

The breadth of engagement of the CFGB member agencies was impressive. Water-shed restoration programs were helping reverse the devastation caused by climate change. Irrigation-based, integrated development projects were enabling silt gardens to flourish in the middle of the desert. Economic empowerment programs for women were bearing fruit, including microloan schemes, women's cooperatives, children's nutrition, and educational programs. We observed conservation farming training and

community peace-building campaigns. The long-term impact was both evident and inspiring. One could not help but feel that community transformation was happening.

There was strong evidence of sustainable transformation both at an individual and local community level. Households were lifting themselves out of poverty and restoring their dignity through life-giving resources (from training and education to tangible inputs for agriculture and livelihoods). Economic growth was apparent in rural areas. Nutrition rates were increasing. Sustainable farming techniques were being implemented and reversing the impact of climate change.

While in Ethiopia, I sought to understand the motivation of the work being undertaken. Was this indeed "A Christian Response to Hunger," as the CFGB's tagline states, and if so, what qualifies it as Christian? Is it enough that the original funding for the development programs came from Christians in Canada who choose to identify with the denominational agencies that form the partnership? Do the implementing local project staff need to be Christ-followers? Is it imperative that development work be accompanied by a direct connection to the public affirmation of Christian faith or the sharing of the Gospel?

Is there anything uniquely "Christian" about Christian humanitarian aid that sets it apart from other forms of community development? Or would a simple apostrophe (') be helpful in clarifying the agent of transformation? Is "a Christian's response to hunger" an accurate description, if the aid was being given by people who self-identify as Christians but may not necessarily perceive their work as being informed by their Christian faith and practice?

Currently, the relief and development sector is experiencing both significant professionalism (Emmrich & Kleinschmidt, 2017) and heightened standardization, yet conversely, is under intense scrutiny for various forms of malpractice from financial mismanagement and sexual abuse (Brass, Robinson, & Schnable, 2018).

Biblical Understanding of Christian Mission

The question of Christian identity is pertinent. While a strictly binary relation between these two possibilities (Christian versus Christian's response) is not likely, there are several key indicators which can help shape a biblical understanding of Christian mission. The tripartite engagement involving the biblical text, the faith community or church, and the particular context of mission can be understood by three interlocking circles (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Tripartite Engagement in Christian Mission
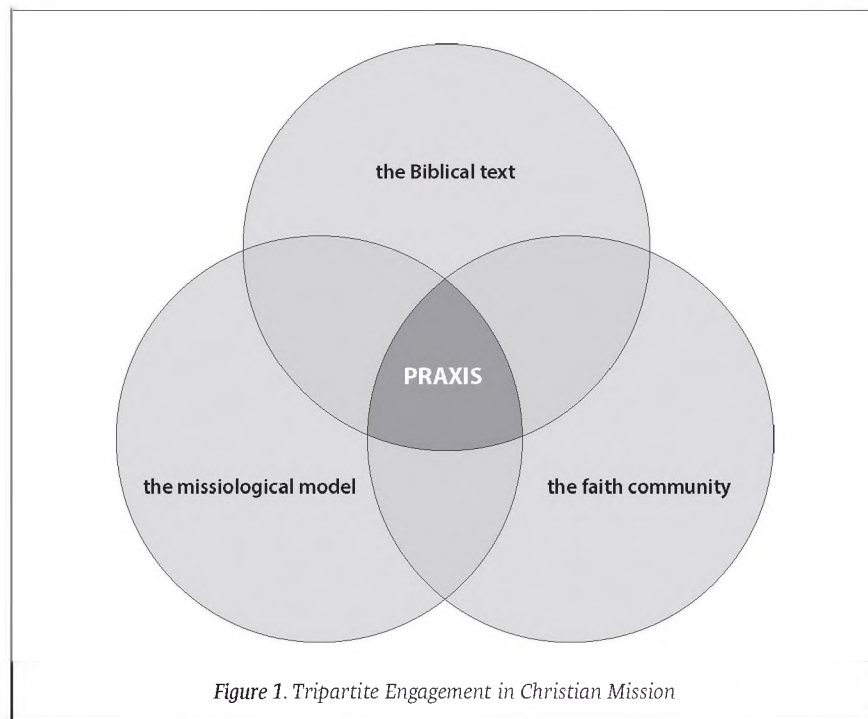
Anderson, in *The Theology of Christian Mission* (1961, p. 13), described this interaction of understanding as a praxeological interconnection between the Biblical text, the missiological model, and the faith community. Building on Anselm's classic definition of theology (faith-seeking understanding), Anderson (1970) sees a Christian theology of mission as, "[the field of Christian study] concerned with the basic presuppositions and underlying principles which determined, from the standpoint of

Christian faith, the motives and methods, strategy and goals of the Christian world mission" (p. 117).

It involves the practitioners, situated within faith communities, in a praxeological engagement with God's mission in the world. It also requires a commitment to Scriptures, in order to ascertain God's intentions, purposes, and perspective, allowing Scriptures not only to provide the motivation and information but also to shape and guide the practitioners' understanding of mission practice.

The concept of praxis is a helpful way to understand the interface between action and reflection. This framework is not intended to restrict itself to reflection of and for itself. According to Orlando Costas (1971), missiology is "…fundamentally a praxeological phenomenon. It is a critical reflection that takes place in the praxis of mission and occurs in the concrete missionary situation as part of the churches' missionary obedience to and participation in God's mission, and is itself actualized in that situation.…Its object is always the world" (pp. 8–9).

Praxis emerges as a fruit of a theology of mission that is translated into action; that mission action takes place within a particular context. The three circles are in a continuous state of dialogue and interaction. One's reflection on the biblical text engages in interpretation for a specific place at a specific time, which in turn leads to a new and fresh examination of Scripture, along with new missional insights and action. Similarly, the dynamic nature of the geopolitical context, within which our missional presence is expressed, shapes the relationship among and between partners.

At the 1966 Berlin World Congress on Evangelism, John Stott (1975) introduced a key theme of the mission agenda by entitling his sermons "Mission in Christ's Way." He called the attendees to shift their attention from the classic passage of Matthew 28.18–20, commonly referred to as the Great Commission, to the less frequently studied text of John 20.21b, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." In this passage, there is a model of following the example of Jesus Christ under the direction and

power of the Holy Spirit. Mission theology requires not only orthodoxy, concerned with the integrity of the Gospel, but also orthopraxis, a concern for the way in which our missionary practice is carried out. Christian mission is faithful to the Scriptures and relevant within, and respectful of, local contexts. Jesus' model ("as the Father has sent me"), calls the church not only to faithful understanding but also to faithful engagement and action ("I am sending you").

Johannes Verkuyl (1978) wrote, "Missiology may never become a substitute for action and participation. God calls for participants and volunteers in his mission. If study does not lead to participation, missiology has lost its humble calling. Any good missiology is also a *missiologia viatorum*—pilgrim missiology" (p. 18). He helps us see that theology of mission must emerge in a biblically informed and contextually appropriate action. This connection between reflection and action is at the very heart of the theological inquiry. However, if our action does not transform reflection, whatever great ideas or concepts emerge may be rendered irrelevant.

Mission exists because God is a missionary God and He sends His people, the Church, to be a blessing to all of humanity. There is the human side of mission, as demonstrated in the mobilization of the Church, fundraising, organizational leadership, management, an engagement with other congregations in God's global enterprise. But mission begins with God's initiative, to which the Church responds. If Christian mission is God's mission, all mission activity must be done in an attitude of humility and dependence on God. He is the centre of mission activity and we serve Him. It also puts all mission work on equal footing. The global Church of God stands together in partnerships of mutuality. If the human dimension of the missionary task overshadows and undermines the fact of God's mission in the world, mission is reduced to a human activity with little redemptive power.

God's Word and our understanding of His Kingdom principles should both define and critique our practice and ministry,

and specifically, our understanding of partnership in mission. The Church's engagement in a divine purpose should ultimately indwell the Church. Churches that experience spiritual vitality are those that are able to understand both their local context and the global mission needs of the world. The words of the Lausanne Covenant, found in paragraph one, summarize this truth:

> We affirm our belief in the one-eternal God, Creator and Lord of the world, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who governs all things according to the purpose of his will. He has been calling out from the world a people for himself, and sending his people back into the world to be his servants and his witnesses, for the extension of his kingdom, the building up of Christ's body, and the glory of his name. We confess with shame that we have often denied our calling and failed in our mission, by becoming conformed to the world or by withdrawing from it. Yet we rejoice that even when borne by earthen vessels the gospel is still a precious treasure. To the task of making that treasure known in the power of the Holy Spirit we desire to dedicate ourselves anew (Lausanne, 1974).

Criteria for Christian Mission

What then, distinguishes a Christian's mission from a Christian mission? Is there a fundamental difference between a Christ-follower's engagement in God's mission in a broken world (where Christian is the subject) and a Christian engagement (where Christian is an adjective, qualifying the manner of our engagement)? I would like to posit four criteria for Christian mission.

Christian Mission Brings Shalom

First, Christian mission is framed in a biblical understanding of shalom (Yoder, 1987). It points positively to things being as they should be when they are not yet that way. While it attends to the social and economic breakdown in society and engages in constructive means of healing, it draws the practitioner into a

holistic understanding of transformation, which dismantles structures of evil and seeks to bring about right relations with God, within His creation and within social structures. Its concern is not only with the proclamation of a Kingdom "not of this world" (John 18.36) but with helping make people new and structures life-giving.

I have witnessed a shalom-building Christian response in the engagement of the Church and mission agencies in the Kivu region of the DRC. At unprecedented rates, women have been victims of sexual violence, as rape has become a weapon of war (Maedl, 2011, pp. 128-147). In some churches, over 90 percent of the girls and women 13 years and older have been raped. In the social context of ostracism and rejection, the Church has been building shalom by positively creating spaces of inclusion, healing, psychosocial and vocational assistance, while addressing the moral breakdown of civil society, which has led to this situation. The measure of shalom is not only peace and prosperity but also justice. Steve Sanderson (2019), Deputy Director of BMS World Mission describes it in these poignant words: "The presence of Spirit-filled believers on the ground in these encounters is actually part of the Kingdom hope which goes beyond short-term distribution (of aid) or even beyond the high quality, long-term development interventions."

Christian Mission Dignifies the Beneficiary

Second, Christian mission dignifies the beneficiary, who is created in God's image (*imago Dei*). The Church, as God's new humanity, is being renewed in the *imago Dei* (Col 3.10; Rom 8.29). Stan Grenz stated that the New Testament theme of a new humanity formed in the image of Christ is the final fulfillment of God's intent for humankind seen in Genesis 1.26–28 (2019, p. 662). The mission of the Church is the restoration of the creation design of God that humankind would participate with God in the *missio Dei* by creating image bearers, extending God's presence to the ends of the earth, and mediating His reign over all the earth. For Grenz, the

missional Church is the harbinger of the divine image, being on mission in the world, as it proclaims, reconciles, sanctifies, and unifies the world to God. In healing, reconciling, redeeming, forgiving, bringing salvation and restoration, the Church finds its mandate widened from a liturgical function to a kerygmatic and diaconal role. In the words of Lesslie Newbigin (1987), the Church is both the agent and the locus of mission. It rehearses and enacts God's mission as restorers of the *imago Dei* at its very essence. "It is not that the church has a mission and the Spirit helps us in fulfilling it. It is rather that the Spirit is the active missionary, and the church (where it is faithful) is the place where the Spirit is enabled to complete the Spirit's work" (p. 20).

Christian Mission Is Embodied by the Whole Church

Third, Christian mission is embodied or embraced by the whole community of Christ-followers (the Church) within a specific context and for the sake of the whole world. Luke 4.18–19 contains Christ's mission mandate: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to *proclaim* good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim *liberty* to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to *set at liberty those* who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." As we embody Christ in the world, "Christian mission then is the total task God has set the church for the salvation of the world, but always related to specific context of evil, despair and lostness.... Mission is the church sent into the world, to love, to serve, to preach, to teach, to heal, to liberate" *(Bosch, 1992, p. 412)*. In an era when individualism and human achievement are prevalent, and indeed, markedly so in the humanitarian aid and development sector, and when privatizing not only our beliefs but also our service is rampant, we would do well to remember that, as Christians, we participate in a social dynamic of witness. In the words of David Fitch *(2019)*, "Evangelicals want to make the Kingdom a private personal relationship with Jesus the King, protestant liberals want to make the Kingdom about God's work in the world in which individuals

are sent as good Christians to work for it. But either way we miss how the Kingdom becomes visible and flourishes when two or more people (a community) submit to his reign in a space and time and thereby open space for his reign and authority to break in." The typical focus of the promise of Matthew 18.20 ("For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them") is on the gathering of the Church in worship. But the Christ of the Church is also the Christ of mission and it is His mission that we embody as a gathering community.

Christian Mission Is Doxological in Motivation

Finally, the motivation for Christian mission and the entire enterprise of responding to a world in crisis is, in the words of Lesslie Newbigin *(1989)*, doxological. "Mission is an acted-out doxology. That is its deepest secret. Its purpose is that God may be glorified" *(p. 127)*. The driving force of mission is not to alleviate human suffering nor to rectify its manifestations (hunger, poverty, injustice, violence, ecological disasters) but to *proclaim* the glory of God.

Through our humanitarian service and in the announcement of the good news of the *Gospel*, God reveals *His* glory through the Church. This is not an attempt to dissuade our engagement in a world in chaos but rather to bring clarity to our deepest motivation. While one could easily focus the inquiry on individual and organizational accomplishments in the relief and development sector, which seeks to bring hope in human flourishing as families and communities are lifted out of poverty and set on a path of wholeness, this is not the end goal. Such accomplishments, however noble, are not the final outcome. Whatever we undertake, whether in word or deed, as part of God's mission in a broken world is "acted-out doxology." This is our motivation and our deepest desire in Christian mission.

This inquiry has asked how our Christian identity (with Christian being the adjective) shapes and enlightens our mission engagement. Is it enough that the mission enterprise, specifically those projects that seek to bring humanitarian aid within the relief and

development sector, be undertaken by self-identifying Christians (hence, the subject of the activity)? God is the principle actor in mission. As His missionary people, we are His instruments.

The title of this chapter reminds us that as witnesses of God's transforming deeds, through the power of the Holy Spirit, no apostrophe is required in Christian mission. The work of mission remains His. Nevertheless, we are called to faithfulness in a context of global crises, seeking to be shalom-makers. Christian identity is important as we engage in mission, and all the more, within the complex sector of humanitarian aid.

A strictly binary alternative (A or B) between the two possibilities of a Christian mission and a Christian's mission (with an apostrophe) is unhelpful. While God is indeed the subject of mission, Christians engage in witness in word and deed in a broken world. Guided by Him, we pursue faithfulness as God's people in mission and help shape a biblical understanding of Christian mission. No apostrophe needed!

Concluding Prayer

We conclude this chapter with a portion of a prayer *attributed to Bishop Ken Untener and delivered at a homily given by Cardinal John Dearden in November 1979:* "It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us" ("A Future Not Our Own").

Reflection Questions

1.   Clearly, discerning the motivation for humanitarian engagement varies widely from person to person and from agency to agency. Can you describe some indicators that help elucidate organizational motivation? What are some helpful resources that you might recommend to development practitioners?

2.   How can God's Word and your understanding of His

Kingdom principles help inform your understanding of praxis in mission?

3. Can you tell a story of a time in your missional engagement when you saw God at work in shalom-building, not because of your engagement but in spite of it?

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Part 2

MISSION TO THE GLOBALLY DISPLACED

IN CANADA

CHAPTER 6

MISSION ON OUR DOORSTEP: RESPONDING TO THE YAZIDI CRISIS IN TORONTO

Minho Song

Introduction

On August 15, 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) ordered everyone in the Yazidi village of Kocho in northern Iraq to gather at a local school. Men were given a mere three hours to convert to Islam or face death. When they refused, all were shot to death. Women and children were rounded up and bused to Mosul, to be sold as properties. Within hours, this ethnic village of 1,400 Yazidis became a ghost town. Young women became sex slaves and older boys were indoctrinated and trained to fight for ISIS, eventually turning their guns against their own people (Desbois & Nastasie, 2018). Nadia Murad saw her mother and brothers killed before her eyes. She was taken to Mosul, where she was beaten, raped, and sold as a sex slave many times over. In 2018, she received the Nobel Peace Prize for her work to stop sexual violence against women. Nadia documented her ordeal and her resolve to bring to justice those who committed heinous crimes against her people in her book *The Last Girl: My Story of Captivity, and My Fight against the Islamic State* (Murad, 2017).

Today, ISIS has lost control over all the territories it once claimed, including the Yazidi towns and villages. These places are now destroyed, and the Yazidi men are buried in mass graves. As many as 6,500 Yazidi women and children are still missing, while those in safe hands still suffer from having nightmares in their

sleep. At the Nobel Peace Prize Lecture, Nadia pleaded with the international community for help in freeing the captured women and to bring closure to this terrible situation:

> It is inconceivable that the conscience of the leaders of 195 countries around the world is not mobilized to liberate these girls. What if they were a commercial deal, an oil field or a shipment of weapons? Most certainly, no efforts would be spared to liberate them…. Thank you very much for this honour, but the fact remains that the only prize in the world that can restore our dignity is justice and the prosecution of criminals (Murad, 2018).

Those Yazidis who survived the atrocities are now living disjointed lives. They live in refugee camps in northern Iraq or as refugees in other countries. Very few have moved back to their home villages.

How can churches can respond to the needs of the Yazidi refugees living in Canada and ultimately bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to them?

Religion and the Persecution of Yazidis

Yazidis number around 700,000 worldwide. Their history goes back 5,000 years; they live around northern Iraq as well as Syria, Turkey, Armenia, and Iran; they are part of the Kurdish ethnic grouping. They speak Kurmanji, one of three Kurdish dialects. They are well-known for their ancient religious tradition, despite various attempts to convert them to Islam by outside forces. Yazidism is a monotheistic belief system with a God called *Xwede*. Since *Xwede* is transcendent, he is manifest in three different individuals: (1) an angel called *Tawusi Melek*, also known as the Peacock Angel; (2) a young man called Sultan Ezi who was a Umayyad caliph; and (3) a religious figure and founder of Yazidim, Sheikh Adi. In the hymn of the Symbol of Faith called *Sehda Dini*, this triad is adored and given allegiance:

> The testimony of my faith is One God,
> Sultan Sheikh 'Adi is my king,
> Sultan Ezi (Yezid) is my king,
> Tawusk Melek is (the object of) my declaration and my faith.
> God willing, we are Yezidis
> Followers of the name of Sultan Ezid.
> God be praised, we are content with our religion and our community
> (Ackkyildiz, 2010, pp. 71–72).

Yazidis believe that since God *(Xwede)* does not get involved in human affairs, he relegated his power to seven angels to manage the affairs of the earth. Of the seven, it is the most powerful angel *Tawuse Melek* who governs the affairs of the earth and who solemnly represents God:

> In Yezidi belief, Tawuse Melek is the mediator angel between God and the Yezidi people who leads directly to God, who is independent but not in opposition to God. At the same time, he is God's alter ego, united with him, whole and inseparable. He is the manifestation of the creator, but not the creator itself. He is the enlightening of mankind. Thus, Yezidis pray to God through his banners in the form of a peacock (Ackkyildiz, 2010, p. 73).

So, for Yazidis, Tawuse Melek becomes the focal point. They worship and pray to Tawuse Melek, just as Christians pray to Jesus in times of trouble. Muslims have accused the Yazidis as "devil worshippers," because in some Yazidi traditions *Tawuse Melek* is associated with Satan and Yazidis appear to be worshipping Satan. However, Yazidis do not consider Satan to be evil. According to some Yazidi traditions, Satan is not a fallen angel, while according to some other traditions, Satan was a fallen angel but was forgiven and redeemed (Guest, 2010, p. 31; Ackkyildiz, 2010, pp. 73–80). Regardless of the traditions, the

conclusion is that Satan is not a source of malice for Yazidis. While Yazidism claims to be an ancient Mesopotamian religion, its reform and development are traced to the time of Sheihk 'Adi and his followers:

> Yezidism is a monotheistic religion, founded in the twelfth century and based on the teaching of the Sufi Shaykh 'Adi. Originally it was a Sufi order known as the *'Adawiyya.* However, the death of Shaykh' Adi was followed by a period of syncretism between Islam and ancient Iranian religions, so that there developed a kind of synthesis of belief, which distanced itself definitely from Islamic orthodoxy. From these origins, the Yezidi doctrine gradually became a religion in its own right (Ackkyildiz, 2009, p. 303).

Sheikh 'Adi ibn Musafir (1073–1162) was an Arab born in Lebanon. He met Sufi mystics and studied with them in Baghdad. When he became a master, he took his disciples to the Kurdish mountains and set up his own order, where he became "renowned in piety, austerity and miraculous power … and a stream of pilgrims came to see him, some even from Morocco" (Guest, 2010, p. 17). After 'Adi died, his followers eventually completed Yezidism, as we know it today. 'Adi is revered as the main prophet and one of the three through whom God manifests himself. His burial ground in Lalish became the holy site for Yezidism. Every year, devout Yazidis make pilgrimage to the holy site in Lalish, bringing their young for baptism and receiving prayers from religious leaders.

In the eyes of extremist Muslims, Yazidis are infidels *(kuffar)* or unbelievers worthy of killing. It is not surprising that, when ISIS had the ambition to set up its own state, Yazidis became their first target. Throughout history, Yazidis faced numerous genocide attempts but they found ways to survive. Enduring persecution, confiscation, kidnapping, and outright attacks have been part of the Yazidi way of life. There were seventy-three genocide attempts

before the Sinjar massacre in 2014 (Murad, 2017, p. 8). Mount Sinjar has been a place of refuge from their attackers, especially those caves in the deep mountain.

Yazidis live in large and extended families where uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, and cousins are often just as important as immediate family members. They are also endogamous, not permitting people to marry outside their religion. Once they do, they are no longer considered Yazidis. Conversion into Yazidism is not permitted. One is born a Yazidi and dies a Yazidi. Since Yazidi identity is so closely tied to the holy site of their religion (i.e., Lalish where the holy temple and the burial site of Sheikh Adi are located), it becomes a problem when people move far away from them. The further away they move from the holy site, the less committed they are, it appears, toward their Yazidi identity. For example, the practice of endogamy is not strictly reinforced among the Yazidis living in Armenia.

The Yazidi Community in Toronto

About ten years ago, well before the onset of the ISIS atrocities, one Yazidi family came as refugees to Toronto, eventually settling in Richmond Hill, a suburb just north of Toronto. More recently, when ISIS drove Yazidis out of their villages, some of them made their way to Canada as refugees.[1] Encouraged by the Yazidi family already living in Richmond Hill, other Yazidi families chose to settle in Richmond Hill. Today, there are about forty Yazidi refugee families living in Richmond Hill.

In preparation for this chapter, I visited several Yazidi families in Richmond Hill. They have been in Canada for about a year. I have chosen not to reveal their identities.

In the first house that I visited, I was rather surprised to see that the *entire* family was together: the husband, wife, and their children. I quickly learned that the wife and one of the children

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1   In 2017, the Canadian government decided to accept 1,200 Yazidi refugees by the end of that year ("Canada to Bring in 1,200 Primarily Yazidi Refugees," 2017). They live in Richmond Hill (Toronto), London, Winnipeg, Calgary, and Vancouver.

had been captured by ISIS while the husband was away. For two years, he did not know their whereabouts. One day, he saw the photo of his wife on sale on social media. Frantically, he came up with US$ 10,000 and bought his family back.

In another house that I visited, the wife had not heard from her husband since the ISIS attack four years ago. She fears that her husband could be dead, but nothing is certain. She complained of having nightmares every night. In her dreams, she sees her husband being taken away by ISIS. She, too, was sold as sex slave many times.

A woman showed me a collage of pictures. These were pictures of happier times. But now, she has no idea where her husband is. She was kidnapped, sold over four times, each time being violated by a different man. She showed me scars on her wrist, the evidence of failed suicide attempts. She was worried about her sister who is still in the refugee camp in Kurdish Iraq, which is very cold and damp in winter. One night, a boy in the refugee camp was burned to death inside his tent while trying to heat up the air.

The families that I visited had this in common: the women were sexually assaulted by ISIS and were suffering from trauma. Not knowing whether their husbands are dead or alive, their lives are on hold. It is as if the clock stopped moving, as of August 2014. The pictures of their loved ones are hung on the wall, waiting for a closure. These women need treatment from mental health professionals.[2] In short, their lives appear to be fragmented and scattered in three separate places: (1) in their hometown in northern Iraq, where ISIS came and killed their men and abducted their women and children. The fond memories of home have been replaced by the sound of gunfire and mass graves; (2) in the refugee camps in Duhok or Zakho in Iraqi Kurdistan, where their extended family members are. They are in daily contact via

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2   One Yazidi woman, after 18 months in ISIS captivity, still suffers from an extreme form of PTSD called psychogenic non-epileptic seizures (PNES) ("Christina Frangou," December, 2018).

internet and cell phones. They hear about the harsh conditions of the refugee camps and they continue to worry about them; (3) in Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada, where they are now. They need to adjust to a new life in Canada, but they find it very difficult. For someone who has never been to school in her entire life, going to a bank or even using an ATM can be a serious challenge. They need to learn the English language and also get a job.

But the most difficult thing for the Yazidi refugees is simply waiting, not knowing whether their missing family members are dead or alive. There is simply no closure for them.

Responding to the Yazidis around Us

When a request came from a mission agency for volunteers to help with Yazidi refugees, several of our church members at Young Nak Korean Presbyterian Church of Toronto came forward. For the past few months, they have been bringing food, clothing, and other items to the refugee families. At first, any meaningful conversation with them was not possible because the Yazidi women did not speak English at all. But gradually, lines of communication were opened, as their children began to learn English at school and translated for their mothers. It is encouraging that these women are responding to our hospitality and building relationships of trust.

At some point, however, we will need to ask ourselves about how to *really* help these Yazidi refugees beyond hospitality. How do we help this community that is in deep mourning to get back on their feet? How do we begin to share the message of hope in Jesus Christ? We realize that this is a group of people whose basic dignity as human beings was ruthlessly damaged by ISIS. As we desire to introduce a new life in Jesus Christ, we must keep in mind at least two mitigating factors. First, as religious minorities living side by side in northern Iraq, Christians, Jews, and Yazidis have had a history of helping one another against Muslim persecutions. In the process, they share a mutual respect for one another's religion and do not try to convert one another. This is perhaps why

the Yazidis in Richmond Hill easily welcomed our help, even bringing their children to our church for a Christmas event. Second, given the fact that many Yazidi men paid the ultimate price for their faith, choosing death over conversion to Islam, would they easily give up their religion just because we have shown them hospitality in the new land? Also, would they give up their religion, which is so intertwined with their ethnic identity? Moreover, Jesus is a name already well known in Yazidi tradition. In worship of *Xwede*, Yazidis also confess that Jesus is God's creation:

> (You) are the ruler of the entire world
> You have created Jesus and Mary,
> You have created us (the Yezidis) from the loins of Adam
> (You) are god of all gods....
> (Asantrian, 2003, p. 6)

If we are not careful and do evangelism rather hastily, we may end up simply introducing the Jesus they already know, Jesus God created along with Mary, not the Jesus who is God incarnate. Here, syncretism is a possibility.

In light of these concerns, I propose three necessary steps toward sharing the Gospel with the Yazidi refugees in Canada; namely: (1) understand (as much as possible) their culture and worldview; (2) extend support for their family reunion; and (3) present the Gospel in a way that they understand.

Understanding their Culture and Worldview

Worldview is like a lens through which people look at the world. When we see the visible aspects of a culture, we are tempted to conclude that we understand that culture, when in reality we may just be looking at the tip of an iceberg. Beneath what is visible, there is an unknown reality waiting to be grasped called the worldview. The world of Yazidis belongs to one of tribal or small-scale oral societies, where individuals are valued "in group-based or intimate interpersonal relationships rather than through

formal roles and institutions" (Hiebert, 2008, p. 110). In such a society, there is a strong emphasis on "unity, blending, fuzziness, and mystery while in a modern society (like ours) the emphasis tends to be on self-reliance, personal achievement, individual choice, and inalienable individual rights" (Hiebert, 2008, p. 110). Therefore, we must regard the Yazidis living in Richmond Hill as a tribal group, not as urbanized, individual families. We must slow down and try to understand their tribal worldview, rather than try to understand them through our modern worldview. In approaching people of tribal worldview, relationships are very important. We must be intentional about becoming their friends and even become their "family members," so that we can help them integrate to the Canadian society faster. Rather than merely doing errands for them, we may consider becoming their "aunts" and "cousins." This will result in building trust.

Coming from a rural setting in northern Iraq, life in an urban city in Canada is challenging for Yazidi refugees. They made a huge leap not only from an agricultural or a semi-nomadic life to an urban life, but also from a community-based life to a nuclear family life. Yazidis are comfortable in a large group. They prefer to live as a large family. It is common for married siblings and parents to live together. It is often the case where cousins, nieces, and nephews are part of the family. By learning more about the Yazidi worldview and their culture, we will become better neighbours to them. Because belonging to a large family is particularly important for Yazidis, almost all Yazidi families live close to one another in Richmond Hill, often in walking distance.

In ministering to the Yazidi refugees, it is crucial to remember that they are essentially a displaced people. They used to have a direct connection with their land, and they made a living from it. But they have lost the land. Most importantly, they have lost their community. Rupen Das and Brent Hamoud speak of the need to belong for refugees and displaced people. This need runs much more deeply than the needs of shelter, clothing, and food. It is a need to belong to one's own land and also to one's own

community. They raise the question, "What does it mean for human beings not to belong?" (Rupen & Hamoud, 2017, p. 9). Churches have the potential to offer the kind of community relationships and identity that they left behind in northern Iraq.

Extending Support for their Family Reunion

The Yazidi refugees have many immediate concerns, such as learning the English language and transitioning to urban living. However, deep down inside, their pressing concerns have to do with the reunification of their family members. Can we be their voices? Church members need to become their advocates. As good Samaritans, we need to accompany them to agencies and authorities who can help them with reunification. Exploring the possibilities of private sponsorship may be another option. As mentioned earlier, every refugee in Canada is in touch with their family member back in the refugee camp via internet or cell phone, so that they cannot ignore or forget the plight of their family members.

Being in solidarity with them, it is hoped that the Yazidi refugees will see us as true friends, and that we are doing this because we truly care for them as fellow human beings. We also need to clearly convey the message to them that our sense of justice has also been deeply violated by what ISIS has done, and that we condemn this crime against their humanity. We must help those women who were captured by ISIS, physically beaten, psychologically abused, sexually assaulted, and now suffering from trauma. Their dignity as human beings has been terribly violated. Within our power, we need to work toward healing and justice for the victims. Unfortunately, there is no program in place to address the needs of the long-term effects of the atrocities experienced by the Yazidi survivors and their communities (Jaff, 2018, pp. 223–224).

Presenting the Gospel in an Understandable Way

So far, we mentioned about welcoming and meeting their basic needs (through hospitality), becoming part of their extended family (by meeting their need to belong, in light of their tribal

worldview), and addressing their deeper concerns (like the reunification with their family members and healing). Assuming that trust has been built, we can now invite them to consider Jesus Christ as Lord.

A simple comparison between the two religious claims of Christianity and Yazidism is helpful, if we want to build spiritual bridges with the Yazidis:

Christianity	Yazidism
God—transcendent & immanent (who speaks and intervenes in our lives), Creator	Xwede—transcendent (who does not get involved in human affairs), Creator
Jesus Christ—God incarnate, Great Shepherd, Mediator, the coming Judge Holy Spirit—God who indwells the believer to provide guidance & counsel	Tawuse Melek—angel, representative of God, created, gets involved in human affairs
Future—hope, righteousness, judgment	Future—transmigration

Table 1. Differences between Christianity and Yazidism in Theology and Eschatology

In sharing the Gospel with Yazidis, we need to be aware of how they learn and transmit knowledge. They are oral learners. They are not comfortable in reading books or listening to a lecture. Instead, they enjoy storytelling. This is how the Yazidi faith has come down. We, too, should follow a similar pattern.

In the process of presenting the biblical truth, it is inevitable that we compare the Yazidi account of creation with that of the Bible. The difference between the character and attributes of the Yazidi God *Xwede* and those of the biblical God needs to be shown. Ultimately, the incarnation of *Tawuse Melek* needs to be examined against the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

We should anticipate truth encounter at some point, without which syncretism will be the inevitable result. Yazidis do not consider Jesus Christ to be God incarnate but merely a creature

like any other angel. We must also be prepared to discuss about life after death, in light of the fact that Yazidis believe in transmigration (reincarnation).

With love and respect, we need to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Yazidis in its fulness. Given that the Yazidis suffered so much because of their religion, we must respect their religious freedom. We must never force beliefs on them. Conversion belongs to the Holy Spirit, not to human will. We need to articulate the Gospel clearly that Jesus Christ is God incarnate and that He died for every Yazidi.

Conclusion

What ISIS has done to the Yazidi people is a crime against humanity and must be condemned. Those responsible should be brought to justice. No one should suffer on the basis of religion and no one should be forced to convert to another religion. If any good may come out of this tragedy, it is that God may be working to bring Yazidis to Himself. In the past several years, it is remarkable that many Syrian and Iraqi refugees have been coming to Jesus Christ. God is at work despite human sin and tragedy. Therefore, we must present the Gospel to the Yazidis, being convinced that "God is working through the church, the community of God's people, to bring about his redemptive work among refugees" (Alkhouri, 2018, p. 163).

Because the Yazidi religion is so central to their identity, we need to start imagining what it will look like for a Yazidi to follow Jesus Christ and yet call oneself a Yazidi. After all, "redeeming the culture" involves removing those elements that do not honour God and establishing Jesus as Lord in that culture. I long to see many Yazidis invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9).

Reflection Questions

1. How would you motivate your church members to take interest in refugees in your city?
2. Why is it important to learn about the background of the

refugees whom you want to work with? What kind of things would you try to find out?

3. What would you do if the refugees only welcomed your material help and hospitality but not the Gospel?

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CHAPTER 7

LOVING THE STRANGER:

GOD'S BIBLICAL MANDATE TOWARD THE REFUGEES AND A CHINESE-CANADIAN CHURCH'S QUEST TO SPONSOR DISPLACED SYRIAN FAMILIES

Narry F. Santos and Samuel Chan

Introduction

The Bible is replete with commands to love the stranger, sojourner, or refugee—especially in relation to God's mandate to Old Testament Israel to "love the stranger (Deut 10.19a), just as God "loves the strangers" (Deut 10.18b), for the reason that God's people "were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Deut 10.19b). This chapter seeks to explore this mandate toward strangers or refugees in two parts.

In the first part, the paper will lay out the realities of the sojourners' lives and their precariously vulnerable situations in the Old Testament, along with how God has provided help for them throughout the Bible. Such help for strangers is specified in the various responsibilities that God commanded to Israel in the Old Testament (and the reasons for these responsibilities), and to the followers of Jesus in the New Testament, including the command to be hospitable (i.e., to love the strangers). Thus, this investigation will unpack the legal protection and provision that God has given for the marginalized sojourners in various domains of life.

The second part of this chapter will present the practical outworking of this mandate to love the stranger through the quest of a Chinese-Canadian church (Richmond Hill Christian Community Church) in sponsoring to Canada seven Syrian refugee families who were vulnerably displaced in Lebanon. This

second part narrates the long and involved process that the church leadership and the whole congregation went through to bring these families to Canada, and their journey to intentionally partner with other churches and to collaborate with mission agencies both in Canada and abroad. This story reinforces the main contention that churches can be proactively involved in going the extra mile to love the stranger.

Before proceeding with the main portion of this chapter, it is important for us to first define and describe this practice in the context of the nomadic life of the ancient Mediterranean world.

Definition and Description of Hospitality

Hospitality is the entertainment of a stranger or sojourner as a guest (Koov, 1962, p. 564). It is also the practice of receiving and extending friendship to strangers (Branch, 1990, p. 614). In the ancient world, hospitality was focused on the alien or stranger in need. This practice meant graciously receiving an alienated person into one's land, home, or community and providing directly for that person's needs (Duke, 1996, p. 359). Thus, hospitality is a work of mercy and expression of love for the needy stranger.

In the nomadic societies of antiquity, hospitality was considered as "one of the most highly praised virtues" (Malherbe, 1993, p. 292). It was a sacred duty and social obligation that was more stringently practiced than many written laws (Stein, 1982, p. 105) in the Mediterranean world that regarded the stranger as divinely protected. Greeks and Romans viewed hospitality as an important social custom. Zeus was regarded as the friend of strangers (2 Macc 6.2) and was their protector (Homer, *Odyssey* 14.283–84). Among the Greeks, hospitality was a mark of culture. Hospitality was required of all people; only a fool would neglect strangers.

The hospitality code at that time could be summarized in four phases; namely: (1) initial invitation; (2) screening; (3) provision and protection; and (4) departure (Ryken, Wilhoit, &

Longman, 1998, pp. 403–404). In the first phase of initial invitation, the outsiders were generally seen as suspect and had to be approached cautiously, but for a community not to approach them with a ready invitation would be dishonorable and could result in violence. It was customary for travelers approaching a town or city to wait in an open place, such as the well or city gate for preliminary invitation to be extended (Gen 19.1–2; 24.23-25, 31–33; Exod 2.20; 1 Kgs 17.10; 2 Kgs 4.8–10; Job 31.32; Acts 16.13–15). The failure of the community to approach the strangers and issue an invitation before nightfall to dine and lodge in an established household was a serious breach of honor, signifying an insult toward the strangers and an indication of the local people's bad character (Judg 19.15, 18, 20).

In the second phase of screening, strangers had to be assessed in some way to discern their intentions (Josh 2.2–3; Gen 19.4–5; 42.7). In the New Testament, a traveling teacher might be asked to speak (Acts 13.15). A letter of recommendation might be presented but was not always accepted (Rom 16.3–16; 1 Thess 5.12–13; 2 and 3 John). The stranger would either be asked to leave (Mark 5.17) or would be advanced to the next step and received as a guest.

In the third phase of provision and protection, the host assumed the responsibilities of providing food, water, and lodging for the guests and their animals (Gen 24.23–25; 26.30; 33.1–22, 54; 43.16, 24). Acceptance of strangers was signified by the washing of the guests' feet (Gen 18.4; 19.2; 24.32; neglected in Luke 7:36–50) and by providing a meal. In order not to insult the guests and dishonor the host, the meal must be the best the host could provide (e.g., calf; curds; milk). It was also the duty of the host to provide the guest protection from harm (Gen 23.7–9; Josh 2.1–6; 2 Kgs 6.22–23).

In the fourth and last phase of departure, the guests could customarily expect to stay in one household for no more than two nights (*Didache* 11.5). It would be rude and dishonorable for a guest to prolong the stay unless the host clearly extended the invitation. The goal of this final phase of hospitality was to have

the guest depart in peace without having disrupted the social harmony of the household or community (Gen 26.26-31). A generous host would send guests off well fed and supplied for their journey (*Didache* 11.6, 12).

In summary, the stranger had the right to expect hospitable treatment. As Stein keenly notes, "A visitor had no need even to thank his host, since he was only receiving what was due him.... A murderer would find protection in the tent of his host even if the host were the victim's own son" (1982, p. 105).

Realities of Vulnerability of Strangers and God's Instructions on Hospitality

Let us now take a look at the realities of the situation of strangers and sojourners, and how God has provided help for them throughout the Bible. Such help is specified in the various responsibilities that God commanded to Israel in the Old Testament (along with the reason for the responsibilities) and to the followers of Jesus in the New Testament, including the command to be hospitable.

Realities about the Sojourners' Life

The sojourners in the Bible live in a double-edged awareness. The first awareness is their sense of an identity that has been lost or forfeited. In moving to Israel, the sojourners have left their kinship network, which has been their source of family-centeredness and honor. Their sense of lost or forfeited identity is caused by the loss of kinship support and presence. Such loss results in vulnerability, lack of security, and significantly diminished status as a people.

The second awareness for sojourners is the obvious realization or consciousness of being homeless and strangers in their current environment. Separation from their homeland produces an acute sense of catastrophic strangeness. Pilch and Malina (1993) argue, "Expulsion from the land is a catastrophe because it necessarily seems to mean the destruction of tradition and the families who live by it (e.g., Ps 137)" (p. 72). This catastrophe in expulsion brought to the fore the sense of estrangement,

uprootedness, and displacement that brings confusion to their current identity and future purpose.

Thus, many of the sojourners were dependent on Israelites for work, provision, and protection. They commonly served as day laborers dependent on menial work (Deut 24.14). Although a few of them experienced some level of success and social integration, these aliens were an exception to the general rule (Lev 25.47). Sojourners could expect little in their dislocated lives because of their low status in the foreign land. As a result, they could resonate with Ruth's utterly surprised question in reply to Boaz's expressed compassion for her: "Why have I found such favour in your sight, that you should take notice of me, when I am a foreigner?" (Ruth 2.10, RSV)

Responsibilities toward the Sojourners

The sojourners' awareness of vulnerability, lack of secure status, loss of identity, dislocation, and homelessness has been addressed by God in the Old Testament through the repeated portrayal of the sojourners as special recipients of God's favor, protection, and benevolent action. This favored status is evident in the civil laws of the Pentateuch.

This sampling from the Mosaic Law reinforces the favor toward sojourners: (1) "You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien" (Exod 22.21a, RSV); (2) "You shall not oppress a resident alien" (Exod 23.9a, RSV); (3) "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien" (Lev 19.9–10a, RSV; cf. 23.22; Deut 24.19–22); and (4) "When an alien resides with you in the land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself" (Lev 19.33–34a, RSV). The ethos in being God's people is to care for those who are in dire need, marginalized in life, and at great risk.

God's favor upon sojourners, along with widows and orphans

(who are also vulnerable and unprotected), is reflected in the Psalms and the Prophets. We offer a sampling from these Old Testament books: (1) "The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow." (Ps 146.9a, RSV); (2) "Do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor." (Zech 7.10a, RSV); and (3) "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against…those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien" (Mal 3.5, RSV).

In the economy of God, defrauding and depriving sojourners of justice is a major offense. The prophets thundered against the Israelites (whether the princes or the people of the land) who did not accept the responsibility of caring for disadvantaged sojourners (Jer 22.3; Ezek 22.7, 29).

In summary, God has provided legal protection and provision for the marginalized sojourners in five different domains, namely: (1) individual families (through the Sabbath rest); (2) the community (through the gleaning law); (3) the workplace (through the regular payment of wages); (4) religious centers (through the collection of the triennial tithe); and (5) the city gates with elders (through fairness in legal matters).

Reason for the Responsibilities toward the Sojourners

Expressions of the legal responsibility to not mistreat or oppress the sojourners (Exod 22.21a; 23.9a) and to love them (Lev 19.34b; Deut 10.19a), are accompanied by the reason for this response of compassion and justice: "For you were aliens in the land of Egypt" (Exod 22.21b; 23.9b; Lev 19.34c; Deut 10.19b). As former sojourners themselves, they must not forget what it was like to be strangers and aliens (which was part of their history as a nation). Such a reason reminds them not to repeat the ruthless acts and attitudes of the Egyptians against them during their slavery. Similarly, the call for them to treat the sojourners with justice and special consideration is to be motivated by their identification with the vulnerable position of the sojourners, which has been such a

formative part of their own experience as the people of God.

In other words, God's people are to keep in mind that their own identity is anchored on the reality of their being sojourners themselves. Thus, the psalmist prays this way: "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry.... For I am your passing guest, an alien, like all my forebears." (Ps 39.12, RSV) Even King David's prayer makes this affirmation: "For we are aliens and transients before you, as were all our ancestors." (1 Chr 29.15, RSV)

Hospitality toward the Sojourners

The call to "love the stranger" in the Old Testament is echoed in the New Testament through the command to show philoxenia ("hospitality" or literally phileo ["love"] of xenos ["foreigner, stranger"]), which means to "show hospitality to strangers" (or "entertain strangers [AV] or "show hospitality" [NEB]). This command is explicitly given in the following passages: (1) "Extend hospitality to strangers" (Rom 12.13b, RSV); (2) "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers" (Heb 13.2a, RSV); and (3) "Be hospitable to one another without complaining" (1 Pet 4.9, RSV).

Hospitality has the sense of pursuing friendliness and love for strangers, and the readiness to befriend and lodge traveling strangers and believers fleeing persecution. In New Testament times, travel was dangerous, and inns were scary, scarce, and expensive. So, the idea of opening the home was a practical and strategic ministry to travelers (3 John 5–8; Luke 14.12–14). This command was so critical that it was required that church leaders be examples of hospitality as a way of life (1 Tim 3.2; Titus 1.8; cf. 1 Tim 5.10). Showing hospitality was a bold step for church leaders because there were risks in opening their homes to people whom they did not know and who might be seen as a threat to household security and safety.

The instruction to be hospitable was important for various reasons: (1) love was directly connected with hospitality (Rom 12.9-13; Heb 13.1f; 1 Pet. 4.8f); (2) hospitality was essential for the propagation of the Gospel—itinerant missionaries knew that

they would be received by fellow Christians and would be helped along the way. The host was even regarded as a "fellow worker in the truth" (3 John 5–8) with the men he entertained; (3) the possibility of angelic visitation (Heb 13.2), as in the Old Testament (Gen 18.1f; 19.1f; Jdg 6.11; 13.2f); (4) being hospitable was a command to be done without grumbling (1 Pet 4.9) in the context of using one's gift in serving God and others; (5) Christians shared the same status of resident aliens and exiles (1 Pet 1.1; 2.4–10); and (6) offering hospitality to one another was an act of welcome extended to Jesus (John 13.20; cf. Matt 25.31–46).

In the discourse on the final judgment spelled out in Matthew 25, hospitality toward strangers (Matt 25.35, 38, 43) is among the acts of kindness that make up the criteria for judgment (i.e., giving food to the hungry; providing drink to the thirsty; inviting a stranger; clothing the poor; looking after the sick; and visiting the prisoner). Hospitality is to be extended not just to the strangers, but also to the poor (Luke 14.13; cf. Isa 58.7) and even the enemies of God's people (cf. 2 Kgs 6.22-23).

However, the treatment of foreigners or strangers in both Jewish and Greco-Roman circles varied greatly. Both cultures had come to enjoin and legislate hospitality to visiting and resident aliens, but hostilities and prejudices often remained, especially where a history of warfare or religious incompatibility had separated people. When we turn to the Bible, we see clearly the commendation and importance given to actions of hospitality to strangers (cf. Heb 13.2–3).[1]

Quest of a Chinese-Canadian Church to Sponsor Displaced Syrian Families

Having unpacked the legal protection and provision that God has given in the Scriptures for marginalized sojourners in various domains of life, we will now present the practical outworking of this mandate to love the stranger through the quest of a

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1   For helpful materials on hospitality, see J. Koenig, 1985, and C. Pohl, 1999.

Chinese-Canadian church (Richmond Hill Christian Community Church) in sponsoring to Canada seven Syrian refugee families who were vulnerably displaced in Lebanon. Here is their story.

Overview of Richmond Hill Christian Community Church (RHCCC)

RHCCC is a multi-cultural, multi-generational and multi-lingual (3M) church. It was established formally in 1985 as a church plant of the Toronto Chinese Community Church. It is a purpose-driven church for the unchurched and committed people, balancing the five purposes of consecration, celebration, cultivation, care, and communication. There are four congregations —the Cantonese, Mandarin, English, and the Young Life Development (children and youth)— uniting and serving together under one Board with one vision, mission, and purpose.

RHCCC has been active in world mission since its inception. It seeks to become a missional and global church, by employing the P.E.A.C.E.[2] Plan model of mission. The foundation of the P.E.A.C.E. Plan is a healthy purpose-driven church, which mobilizes the church toward the transformation of personal lives (or personal Peace), the blessing of local neighbourhoods (or local Peace) and global communities (or global Peace).

The Church's Journey in Sponsoring to Canada Seven Syrian Families

The RHCCC leaders took notice of the refugee crisis in 2013-2014 through the ministry of Samaritan's Purse, a "nondenominational evangelical Christian organization... (that) provides aid to hurting people – victims of war, disease, disaster, poverty, famine, and persecution." ("What is Samaritan's Purse?", 2019, April). The

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2   The PEACE Plan is a mission strategy developed by Dr. Rick Warren, who contends that there are five current global "giants"; namely: (1) spiritual blindness or lostness; (2) self-serving leadership; (3) poverty; (4) diseases; and (5) illiteracy. Warren proposes the following strategies (the acronym of which is P.E.A.C.E.) to address the five giants: (1) Promote reconciliation or plant churches; (2) Equip servant leaders; (3) Assist the poor; (4) Care for the sick; and (5) Educate the next generation.

church started supporting this ministry by giving a sizable donation for refugee relief in Iraq and Syria.

In 2014, Rev. Dr. Sam Chan, Senior Pastor of RHCCC, attended a mission workshop led by Rev. Dr. Minho Song and Rev. John Chung, the Senior Pastor and Missions Pastor, respectively, of the Young Nak Presbyterian Church in Toronto. The two workshop speakers discussed the ministry of *Mission at our Doorstep*, which serves a number of new immigrants from South East Asia and helps them to establish their own places of worship. When Pastor Sam showed a video of the ministry to his church board and staff at the annual retreat that year, the leadership decided to investigate involvement in this kind of ministry.

The ownership for this vision was passed to the RHCCC's mission working group called "The Peace Committee." As the global refugee crisis received more urgent international attention in 2015, the church held a PEACE retreat in August and discerned if God was leading RHCCC to sponsor refugees as one way of showing love for God and other people. The leadership decided to form a sub-committee to research various avenues of sponsorship and to consult with Lifeline Syria, a not-for-profit organization committed "to assist sponsor groups to welcome and resettle Syrian refuges as permanent residents in the Greater Toronto Area" ("About our work," 2019, April).

In October 2015, RHCCC consulted Christie Refugee Welcome Centre (CRWC), a Toronto-based ministry that "has provided emergency shelter and a warm welcome for refugee families from all ethnic, racial, or religious backgrounds" ("About overview," 2019 April). CRWC informed the church leaders of the different ways to sponsor refugees (through the Canadian government, private groups or agencies working together, or private sponsorship). CRWC agreed to work with RHCC and to help the church in this sponsorship process.

The Peace sub-committee formally informed the church board regarding about its sponsorship research, including the estimated cost of about $30,00 for each family. The Board tasked the

sub-committee to inquire from other churches already sponsoring refugees. In addition, Pastor Sam began to share this sponsorship project with the congregation, which responded with full support.

Pastor John Chung, who became the director of Canada Mosaic Christian Alliance, introduced Pastor Sam to Pastor Ihsan of the Holy Spirit Church in Toronto. Pastor Ihsan, who was a former refugee from Syria, started this church to minister to the Syrian newcomers. He shared about the Holy Spirit Church in Lebanon and about how it served Syrian displaced refugees. Many of these refugees lived with the hope of being sponsored or moved in some manner to European countries.

Moreover, Partners International Canada (a Christian charity that builds partnerships between Canadians and indigenous Christian ministries) had organized a short-term trip for a RHCCC team to visit Joseph Najam, whom the church has been supporting as missionary for many years in Lebanon. While in Lebanon, the team had the opportunity to visit the Holy Spirit Church and the refugee camp. Team members saw firsthand the distress and dire needs of the Syrian refugees.

This process of discernment resulted in the development of a sponsorship plan. The Holy Spirit Church in Lebanon would recommend the Christian and non-Christian families that RHCCC would sponsor. The church would commit not just to sponsor the refugees but to also help them to settle in Canada through the ministry of Pastor Ihsan and his young Syrian church in Toronto. RHCCC began to support Rev Ihsan and his church with the prayer that mission at their doorstep would become a reality for the Syrian people in Canada.

In 2016, the church decided to sponsor three families. In response, the church in Lebanon recommended seven families from whom to choose. When the RHCCC church leadership received these recommendations, it felt led by God's Spirit to sponsor all seven families. Thus, the whole church embarked on raising a Benevolence Fund to collect donations at its regular weekend worship services.

RHCCC started its sponsorship application in January 2017 with the full endorsement of its board and congregation. The CRWC assisted the church throughout its application process, while the church began equipping the congregation to welcome the newcomers. The church conducted "Prepare to Welcome" workshops about the Syrian culture and what insights other churches had learned in reaching out to Syrians in Canada.

The church also formed a "Syrian Newcomers Support Framework," which consisted of two sets of communities from the congregation. The first group was the "Functional Support Communities" composed of church members who participated in the prayer network and helped meet the refugees' need for housing, health care, food, clothing, transportation, education, government application, professional advice, and employment. The second was the "Hosting Communities," consisting of seven host groups tasked to provide care for the newcomers. The "Hosting Communities" were made up of four fellowships from the Cantonese congregation, two from the English, and one from the Mandarin. These groups also received training on issues of protecting the vulnerable adults and helping them to grow in their spiritual journey.

The seven families arrived in Toronto at different times in 2018—the first family in March and the last family in September. The church continues to learn how to serve and love these new families in hospitable and life-giving ways.

Three Major Church Lessons Learned

RHCCC learned three major lessons in its refugee-sponsorship quest. The first lesson was: A service project has the potential to morph into a discipleship learning process for a church. The church learned to trust God deeply and to collaborate intentionally with like-minded groups, so that the partners could work together to seek to fulfill the Great Commandment and Great Commission in tangible ways.

The second lesson was: It takes much humility, wisdom, and

patience to serve newly arrived refugees. Relationships had to be established and maintained with the seven Syrian families, the local Syrian church in Toronto, the church in Lebanon, different Canadian mission agencies. Communication and working relationships within RHCCC were also critically important. The church had to learn how to hurdle cultural and language barriers and adjust expectations in order to communicate love to the seven families. In relation to the like-minded partnerships, the church was grateful to Pastor Ihsan and his church core leaders who patiently worked with RHCCC to help the families integrate into the Syrian church. The families appreciated the church gesture to have local Christians of their own culture walk with them, as they started a new life in Canada.

The third and final lesson was: Sponsoring multiple refugee families requires a congregation to unite and serve together organizationally. RHCCC mobilized four fellowships and three congregational groups to form seven hosting communities to take care of each family. Seven function groups were also formed to meet government requirements. The church took the challenge to provide for all the of families' needs. The board, pastors, and members joined in one accord to serve Christ and the people he loves. As a result, the whole church has matured and grown stronger, because of its mission amid crisis.

Reflection Questions
1. How are Christians to view and treat refugees, economic workers, and immigrants to Canada, in light of this chapter's survey on the mandate and motivation from God regarding hospitality?
2. What factors do you think help or hinder in welcoming the strangers and sojourners in our midst?
3. What is your biggest takeaway from the quest of RHCCC in sponsoring to Canada seven Syrian refugee families in Lebanon?

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A HIDDEN POPULATION ON THE CHURCH'S DOORSTEP:

A CASE STUDY ON JOURNEY HOME COMMUNITY

James Grunau

Introduction

While the notion of diaspora includes many sub-population groups, there is likely no other group that has become more controversial, raised more global awareness, or been more politicized than that of refugees. It would be safe to say that the refugee crisis is on a growing trajectory. Unfortunately, there is much misunderstanding of the concept of "refugee," so it is important to be aware of the actual definition. The UN 1951 Refugee Convention is the key legal document that was created after World War II (WWII) and then ratified again in 1967 with some alterations to better reflect the world landscape since WWII:

> A refugee, according to the Convention, is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion…. The core principle is non-refoulement, which asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom. This is now considered a rule of customary international law (UN 1951 Refugee Convention, 1951).

Unlike most subsets of diaspora, refugees have not chosen to migrate; they have been forcibly displaced. Forcible displacement creates an additional set of challenges for this population group and has a significant impact on the healthy integration of refugees into their host country. It may cause multiple stops along the refugee highway, uncertain legal status for undetermined periods of time, and fragile mental health conditions.

The UN reports the current global refugee population at 20.4 million with an additional 3.5 million asylum seekers whose cases are pending. This does not include the 41.4 million internally displaced people who have not left the borders of their home country. Every day, 37,000 people are forced to flee their homes due to war and persecution (UNHCR, 2019).

The focus of this case study will be refugees and, in particular, asylum seekers in the Canadian context.

The Canadian Context

In realization that the number of refugees represents approximately two-thirds of the population of Canada, we can pose questions about the official Canadian response. Canada has provided three different pathways for refugees to access Canadian protection. Each year, the Canadian government sets a quota for how many government-assisted refugees (GARs) it will sponsor and will accept for Permanent Residency. In addition, Canada has provided an opportunity for the public to sponsor refugees under its privately-sponsored refugee program (PSRs) and sets an annual target for this group. All of these sponsored refugees have had their refugee status determined *outside* of Canada and land as Permanent Residents.

The third pathway is that of asylum seekers or refugee claimants (RCs), as they are referred to in Canada. These are people who are fleeing persecution, are able to make their own way to Canada, and arrive here claiming refugee protection. Because Canada is a signatory to the UN Convention on Refugees, temporary protection is granted once the refugee crosses the Canadian border and then an opportunity is given to present their case to

the Immigration and Refugee Board to determine if they have indeed suffered persecution, as defined by the UN Convention. Thus, their status is determined *inside* of Canada and, if the determination is positive, they are given the opportunity to apply for Permanent Residency.

With the global refugee numbers in mind, what are the Canadian statistics for these three groups? This data is important for all those interested in Canadian diaspora patterns. For 2017, Canada's target for GARs was approximately 7,500, for PSRs it was 16,000 (CCR, 2017), and a further 50,390 people arrive in Canada as refugee claimants.[1] This last group more than doubled the combined "sponsored" refugee total number. Almost five percent of the Canadian refugee claimant total, comprising 2,335 people, arrived in the province of British Columbia, with the majority settling in the Metro Vancouver area. In 2018, the total number of refugees increased for Canada, while holding steady for the Metro Vancouver region. The refugee population, with the majority of these being refugee claimants, makes up a significant proportion of the Canadian immigration total, which was approximately 300,000 for 2017. It is the RC population group on which the case study will now focus more specifically.

A Ministry is Born

It was in the fall of 2004 that I enrolled in a course on Christian Global Development at Regent College, Vancouver, BC. The course required the writing of a case study, so I chose the topic of refugees in Metro Vancouver. Learning that there was support in the form of programs and resources available for sponsored refugees but little in the way of an organized response to refugee claimants, I brought this huge unmet need to my church home group. At that time, the number of arrivals of RCs was not vastly different from the levels in 2018 referenced above.

As the group was confronted with this reality, the members

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1   See the chart on the Total Asylum Claimants processed by the CBSA and IRCC, January–December 2017, 2018

began to think, pray, and talk about the need and the opportunity. A couple in the group offered their rental house in Surrey for ministry and soon this band of volunteers was caring for two refugee claimant families from Afghanistan and Mexico, learning refugee resettlement while practicing it. The group organized a non-profit ministry in late 2005, named the newly-formed organization, and Journey Home Community Association (JHC) was launched. From the beginning, the ministry operated from a Christian perspective, as the group recognized that resettlement must be holistic in nature. The mission statement reads, "Inspired by God's love, Journey Home Community welcomes refugees into community by offering housing, settlement support and relational care" (Journey). Support is offered unconditionally, even as God offers His love unconditionally, and is best carried out in a community environment where mutual relationships are established and spiritual care can be provided, alongside and as part of all the other assistance offered.

Growth and Opportunity

Fast forward to 2019, and JHC continues to operate with the same mandate but with increased resources compared to the days of those organic and humble beginnings. With a current staff of eight, two refugee houses with live-in core hosts, multiple transition housing units in connection with the provincial housing corporation and a host of volunteers and partner churches, JHC has stayed true to its mission of welcoming newly-arrived refugee claimants, focusing on families with children. During these past fourteen years, the ministry has been able to care for some 700 refugee claimants from approximately 45 different nations. There have been quality relationships established, healthy integration of many into local communities, numbers of refugees coming to faith and being baptized, and multiple lives transformed. However, 700 seems like a small number compared to the thousands and thousands who have arrived in Metro Vancouver during that same time period.

In the fall of 2015, the global refugee crisis took on a new

urgency in public opinion in the Western World, including North America. The picture of the body of young Alan Kurdi, washing up on a Turkish beach, became the catalyst for an increasing response to the Syrian refugee crisis and, by association, the global crisis. Canada responded with an offer to fast track and receive tens of thousands of Syrian refugees in a relatively short period of time. There was an outpouring of goodwill and both the government and private-sponsorship programs kicked into high gear. JHC also felt the effects of this outpouring in a positive way, as people began to call and offer assistance for Syrian refugees. However, there was one critical problem. Journey Home's mandate did not include sponsored refugees and there were very few Syrian refugee claimants who were arriving and looking for assistance.

It was at this point that JHC began to think about how to best leverage the abundant support for the cause of refugee claimants. While the Syrian situation was overwhelming and was garnering world attention, refugee-serving agencies and ministries knew that, as large as the Syrian crisis was, it was not the only refugee crisis and it was critical to not forget the other regions of the world that were experiencing overwhelming need. Even while sponsored refugees were being processed and arrangements were being made for their arrival in Canada, refugee claimants were also continuing to arrive in Metro Vancouver and they required the attention of JHC.

Over the years, JHC had developed a program of matching refugee families with caring volunteers who could journey alongside them. JHC had also attempted to alert local churches to the possibility of adopting or supporting a refugee claimant family as part of their local ministry but, while there were occasional successes, this possibility had never grown into a full-fledged part of the ministry. However, it seemed that perhaps the openness of the Canadian public to refugee support in the fall of 2015 might signal the opportune time to launch a new initiative. The staff at JHC began to plan a more structured approach to a "local church-JHC-refugee claimant" partnership and, as a result, the Refugee

Claimant Sponsorship Program was born. It was established as a kind of mirror image of the Canadian private-sponsorship program but to avoid confusion was later renamed Communities of Welcome for Refugee Claimants.

The premise was that if Canadians, and especially churched Canadians, were willing to sponsor refugees from abroad and support them for a year under the private sponsorship program, might they also be interested in assisting newly-arrived refugee claimant families who were already here in Canada and in Vancouver? The second premise was that the local church is a ready-made community in which newcomers are made to feel welcomed and can engage in mutually beneficial relationships of support. The third premise is that the Gospel is good news and good news is experienced in many different ways and at many different levels. Thus, care is in and of itself good news and may or may not result in someone's conversion or even attendance at a church. It was important that this program of "sponsoring" a refugee not be seen as a church growth project but rather a demonstration of God's unconditional love. JHC decided to put the idea to the test. The staff developed a training program complete with manual, a plan for how a local refugee team would best operate, a budget to assist the local church to anticipate costs, and arrangements for ongoing coaching after the initial training day.

The idea was that the program could have two different tracks, from which a local church could choose. A church with less capacity could choose the option of assisting a refugee claimant family that was ready to move out of JHC's Welcome Houses, having gone through the initial first stages and months of settlement under the guidance of the JHC staff. The hope, though, was that many churches would choose the second track of assisting a newly-arrived family, which JHC would not have the capacity to assist. Thus, the second track can extend the reach of the ministry to include families that would not otherwise have had the chance of being involved with a supportive community.

JHC saw the possibility of a new approach to expansion,

instead of just adding more staff and more refugee houses. Why not multiply itself through the local church and other community groups, by offering training and coaching to volunteer teams that could in turn provide housing, settlement support, and relational care in the same way that JHC was providing? The staff remembered the roots of the organization and how JHC began as a group of volunteers offering this kind of assistance. So, they asked the question: Why could we not train other volunteers to do exactly the same thing?

An initial pilot project was started with Tenth Church in Vancouver. Motivation for involvement was the Tenth Church's vision to be "a place where people of all different backgrounds can discover Christ, a community of spiritual transformation that seeks social justice for all" (Tenth). With this particular focus on the good news that included a social justice component, the community at Tenth began asking questions about how they could become involved in meeting the needs of refugees in Metro Vancouver. The Tenth Church had been previously involved with JHC on a few specific projects: they had provided Christmas food hampers to refugee families, a pastor made a room in his home available for emergency housing, and a number of congregants were volunteering at Journey Home. To their leadership, it seemed natural to open up conversation with JHC about partnership. In particular, the leadership of the Tenth Church was attracted to the ministry's model of welcome and the emphasis on relationships and mutuality. This aligned well with their own missional value to be a community that is "learning an approach to mission that helps without hurting, shares without creating dependency, and loves all sorts of people selflessly" (Tenth). After meeting together, the organizations determined quickly that it would be good to work together.

Two training events were planned in order to launch the partnership and tap into the significant energy of the congregation. Each event was a full-day workshop that allowed for a presentation of the relevant issues. The workshop modules included

the following topics: An Introduction to the Refugee Community, Canada's Refugee Protection System, Experiencing the Refugee Journey, Building Healthy and Supportive Relationships, and Forming Teams to Provide Resettlement Support. Just over fifty individuals responded by registering for these two training days and were equipped with information and tools to form a refugee support team. Of those trained, approximately twelve individuals indicated the desire to join the support team. Led by a local mission ministry assistant, this team organized and determined a plan for locating and developing temporary housing. Then, JHC and the church began the settlement journey by meeting a homeless family and conducting an intake interview. This journey started with one family and has now expanded to welcoming and supporting five additional families.

There are currently six churches partnering with JHC in this program with the goal of adding additional churches in 2019. JHC contemplates the impact that could be realized if 20, 50, or 100 church and community groups would catch the vision and seize the opportunity. This level of involvement with refugee claimants is going beyond a kind of surface hospitality to engagement at a much deeper and more involved level. A quick online search shows that some groups are using the term "radical hospitality" to indicate something more profound than just a casual hello, a quick conversation, or a "one-off" invitation to host a newcomer.

From its inception, JHC has clearly communicated to individuals and church groups that coming alongside or assisting refugee claimants is not to be seen as a church growth project. No one wants to be treated as a project or become a target for conversion. Care for anyone, whether a new refugee or an old friend, needs to be offered with no strings attached and no hidden agenda. This is a particularly difficult issue for many evangelical churches. The spiritual dimension has been given much higher priority than other aspects of life and often caring for a person's emotional, social, or physical needs is only seen as a means to an end, that of

spiritual conversion. Offering support and help for any felt need *is* an end in itself. It is the in-breaking of the Kingdom where wrongs are put right one opportunity at a time. Jesus demonstrated this approach in His own ministry, whether by deed or through His teaching. We notice that there is no mention of the declaration aspect of the Gospel in Matthew 25 where Jesus offers a list of ways in which His followers serve the least of these and the basis on which they (the disciples) will be judged. The emphasis is on attending to the critical needs of people. JHC has discovered that while these needs are given attention, there is ample opportunity for conversation and prayer in the context of holistic support.

Good News in Action

Perhaps, two additional stories from JHC will serve to illustrate the ways in which good news has been offered and to demonstrate the kind of people with influence who arrive in Canadian cities as refugee claimants. Names have been changed and some details omitted to protect the identity and security of the individuals represented.

Ten years ago, an extended family from a mid-Asian country came to JHC for some assistance. This large family was new to the city and was living in a very small apartment suite. I was able to arrange for two housing units in the building where I live; thus, a long-standing friendship began. The husband and father, Abdul, was previously involved in humanitarian service in his country and then in the diplomatic corps, representing his nation in the West. Realizing that it would not be safe for him and his family to return to their country, they arrived in Canada to make a refugee claim. They received refugee status and began to build a new life in Metro Vancouver. He and I have had many opportunities for long conversation and reading the Bible together.

With a thirst to learn, he achieved a master's degree and was granted citizenship but could not shake the sense of his responsibility to the nation of his birth. He now goes back for short-term periods to help his nation in the move to find a more moderate

way in the contemporary world and to address issues of inter-generational violent conflict and systematic radicalization. He is seeking ways to modernize the education system and build employment opportunities for youth in his country of origin.

In the early days of JHC, Maria arrived as a single mother with her three children from her home country. Fragile and vulnerable, she received the "good news" from Journey Home in the form of a furnished apartment suite and the promise of support and care. The family also received a children's Bible, so Maria began to read the stories to her children. She came to the staff of JHC and asked if they could connect her to a priest, because she was not able to answer the questions of her children. They pointed her to a Spanish-speaking church, where she came to faith in Jesus and was baptized, along with her two oldest children. Maria's life was transformed and she became an outgoing person, willing to share her faith and allowing it to affect her life. Recognizing that the refugee claim she had submitted was not an honest reflection of her life situation, she made the changes to have it become an accurate portrayal of her reality.

The church she was attending was experiencing some difficulty, so she moved to another church, which had an active Spanish ministry under the leadership of a dynamic couple originally from her home country. Eventually, this couple was required to return to their home, where they later began church planting in the western part of the nation. Maria's refugee claim was rejected; as a result, she wanted to return home as well, rather than go through a lengthy appeal with an uncertain outcome. The JHC staff suggested that, instead of going back to her place of origin to face the challenges that had prompted her to flee, she think about joining the Spanish couple in their mission and have a fresh start.

She agreed to think and pray about it and decided to join the couple. Arrangements were made to return, and I accompanied the family to the Vancouver airport, which is one of the difficult tasks of JHC staff members. As she and her children began their

new life in ministry, she also found basic employment. After a couple of years, I received an email from the church planter, stating that Maria was now teaching a "discovering Jesus" class to her co-workers. Several years later, I visited Maria's family and their church and was introduced to Maria's co-workers who were now involved in the church ministries. Maria had come full circle in her life's journey and God had redeemed those events to bring her into relationship with Himself.

Conclusion

Truly God determines the times and places where people should live, so that people "would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him" (Acts 17.26–27, NIV) even if it takes a long refugee journey to do so. God has given the Church in Canada immense opportunity to reach out to refugee claimants who are coming to our nation by the tens of thousands each year and to share His love with them in multiple ways. They come with tremendous assets, much courage, and with a longing to belong. Many come with deep wounds, having faced much trauma and experience of persecution. This is the time to go beyond offering a surface experience of hospitality and provide a deep and lasting measure of hope in both declaring and demonstrating the love of God in Jesus in a holistic approach, welcoming them all into our communities. That kind of care and support will become a transformative experience for both the receiver and the giver.

Reflection Questions

1. Can you identify characters in the Bible who were forcibly displaced and fit the modern definition of refugee?
2. How should followers of Jesus understand national or earthly kingdom borders in light of the Kingdom of God?
3. What would it look like to share the good news with a vulnerable newly-arrived refugee?

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APPLYING RESEARCH ON IMMIGRATION
TO MINISTRY PRACTICE

Mark D. Chapman and James W. Watson

Introduction

This chapter is a case study of how the Tyndale Intercultural Ministry (TIM) Centre has disseminated its research on religion and immigration to practitioners and has helped practitioners apply this research to their own ministry contexts, even as it applies this research to its own work. It addresses the issue of how small organizations with limited resources can increase their positive impact on immigrants through strategic partnerships and close collaboration with the people they are trying to help.[1] The chapter also demonstrates that research can help a service organization be more effective in its action by making decisions based on specific data rather than the opinions of its leaders or what has been effective in other locations. More specifically, this case study shows that the TIM Centre has been effective in networking and in developing training programs, website resources, and seminars that address issues of religion and immigration in a way that positively contributed to the ministries of its partners and to the lives of their participants. The TIM Centre has also effectively leveraged that experience to engage the students and faculty of the seminary in which it is embedded. The authors hope that the work of the TIM Centre will encourage other grass

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1 This participant-centred approach to research is a distinctive of community-based research, which is the approach to research most commonly used by the TIM Centre (Halseth, Markey, Ryser, & Manson, 2016; Janzen, Reimer, Chapman, & Ochocka, 2017; Stringer, 2007)

roots research involving multiple partners with the objective of strengthening intercultural ministries in Canada.

Context

The TIM Centre is housed in a university, but the quasi-independent structure of its organization encourages an entrepreneurial approach to its activities. It is primarily self-funding and relies on its networks and partners to make opportunities available. It has no full-time employees and even those individuals paid through the TIM Centre are often seconded from other organizations. This is an explicit strategy in order to operate on a relatively small budget and to respond quickly to identified needs. It understands itself as a "learning organization," which explains why research has become such an important part of its operation.

As the TIM Centre concentrated its work on the diaspora church, the research issues it was dealing with increasingly related to issues of immigration. With the exception of the First Nations, Canada is a nation of immigrants and Toronto is the major gateway city. About a quarter of a million immigrants enter Canada each year and immigration accounts for two thirds of Canada's population growth (Connor, 2014; Simmons & Bourne, 2013). Projected demographic scenarios suggest that, by 2031, 46% of all Canadians aged 15 and older will be foreign-born or have at least one parent who is foreign born, which is an increase from 39% in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2010). Over a third of all Canadian immigrants lived in Toronto in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2013) and more than two thirds of Toronto residents were either born outside of Canada or have one parent who was born outside of Canada (Heisz, 2006).

The TIM Centre's research is a practical example of collaborative approaches to mobilizing individuals and organizations for the purpose of integrating immigrants into Canadian society. This chapter provides an overview of several similar research projects, which facilitate that mandate (Janzen, Chapman, &

Watson, 2012; Janzen, Stobbe, Chapman, & Watson, 2016; Reimer, Chapman, Janzen, Watson, & Wilkinson, 2016; Chapman & Watson, 2017; Centre for Community Based Research, 2017). These projects concentrated on the needs of immigrants that were adapting to living in a new country, as compared to those who had fully acculturated.

Overview of Methodology

This chapter is based on four separate community-based research projects, participant observation of TIM Centre activities since 2008, and interviews with TIM Centre personnel. These included: Welcoming Churches: Responding to the Immigrant Reality in Canada (Janzen, Dilder, & Araujo, 2010; Janzen et al., 2012), the Role of Churches in Immigrant Settlement and Integration (Centre for Community Based Research, 2015; Janzen et al., 2016; Reimer et al., 2016), the Faith and Settlement Partnerships project (Centre for Community Based Research, 2017; Chapman & Heron, 2017), and the New Canadian Church Planting Project (Chapman & Watson, 2017; Tyndale Intercultural Ministry Centre, 2017).[2] There are some general methodological similarities between all four research projects. They all have in common the use of a community-based approach to research (See Ochocka, Moorlag, & Janzen, 2010; Ochocka & Janzen, 2014 for a description of this methodology), which facilitated a diverse partnership of researchers that included academics and practitioners, attention to issues of immigration, and the goal to provide tangible benefit to the participants of the research.

Welcoming Churches

The Welcoming Churches project was collaborative community-based research carried out by World Vision, the TIM Centre, the Centre for Community Based Research, and other partners. The study had a twofold purpose: (1) to explore how and to what

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2   See the individual project reports for specifics of the methodology.

extent Canadian churches were welcoming and integrating recent immigrants in their church life; and (2) to determine strategies and structures that would facilitate the active participation of recent immigrants within Canadian churches.

Research Conducted

The TIM Centre suggested resources for the literature review, participated in the dialogue about question development for the national survey and the key informant interviews, and conducted one focus group in Hamilton and five in Toronto. This was the TIM Centre's first experience with primary research. However, the way it became involved in the research followed a long-established pattern of the TIM Centre developing networks with like-minded individuals and organizations for collaborative purposes.

Through those connections, an initial research grant application was prepared with the support of the Centre for Community Based Research with a focus on Toronto; however, when that first application was declined, a partner of the TIM Centre reached out to World Vision. World Vision asked that it be expanded to a multi-city project.

Research Disseminated

The Welcoming Churches research showed that many churches were active in helping immigrants and trying to be welcoming. However, integration into the church and efforts to accommodate immigrant needs were lacking. The report concluded that for churches to be effective at welcoming immigrants, they needed a vision for engagement, partnership with supporting organizations, a plan to get there, and some reflection on current practices.

Research Applied

The research team produced a variety of information sharing products. A 55-page full report and a 12-page summary (note: all the reports can be found on Centre for Community Based

Research, 2010) provided the overview of the project, methods, and findings. Each focus group site produced a short summary. Finally, a resource toolkit and a congregational assessment tool were produced and disseminated across Canada by World Vision in a series of seminars.

The TIM Centre put these resources on its UReachToronto. com website, motivated by the conviction that welcoming and integration were important issues and our tools would be helpful for other parties (see for example, Janzen, Dilder, & Araujo, 2010). During the research, the TIM Centre developed a collaborative relationship with Peoples Church (a large Toronto congregation), which became a site for research, a conversation partner, a funder, and a collaborator. Both organizations noted that one of the areas that contributed to poor integration of immigrants was the lack of theological and ministry education among their leaders. However, these individuals were typically short of time and financial resources. The TIM Centre was also having similar conversations with the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (CBOQ) and Greenhills Christian Fellowship (GCF), a Filipino church plant in the Toronto area. Thus, the TIM Centre, initially in cooperation with the CBOQ and GCF, and eventually with the collaboration of Peoples Church, started a small, inexpensive diploma program. This program provided both accessible theological education and a pathway for people who completed the program to move to more advanced education at Tyndale Seminary.

Role of Churches in Immigrant Settlement and Integration
After the successful collaboration on the Welcoming Churches project, another research project was envisioned to offer insight into the contributions made by churches in the settlement sector. The Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR) coordinated a funding application to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The TIM Centre pioneered the first publicly funded partnership between a university and a church involved in social services for immigrants with an organization

called MITACS (Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems). This project maintained CCBR and the TIM Centre as research partners but added ten new research partners, including universities/seminaries and mission agencies as well as denominational and interdenominational organizations.

Research Conducted

TIM Centre suggested resources for the literature review, participated in the dialogue about question development for the national survey, key informant interviews, and focus groups. There were 20 participants in the Toronto-area focus groups and two case studies were conducted with Toronto churches. One of the case studies was Peoples Church and the other was a small inner-city church attended largely by immigrants from China.

Research Disseminated

During the research, social media was used to provide updates on the process and invite engagement. With the expanded research partnership, the research findings had broader dissemination via the educational institutions and agencies involved in the project. Research reports were available via UReachToronto.com and promoted through events hosted by the TIM Centre. Two peer-reviewed journal articles were published in journals, addressing different academic fields (Janzen et al., 2016; Reimer et al., 2016). This research and other similar research contributed to a conversation with a like-minded centre at Ambrose University in Calgary, the Jaffray Centre. This eventually led to a memorandum of agreement between the two centres, cooperative projects, and further dissemination of the TIM Centre research.

Research Applied

The reports were made available for review by churches to aid in their strategic planning. A user-friendly guide to various forms of engagement with immigrants and refugees was developed for use by local churches (Centre for Community Based Research &

Tyndale Intercultural Ministry Centre, 2015). The guide was promoted through social media, an online video, and a PowerPoint deck. The TIM Centre promoted these materials at an event specifically designed to introduce the material and at other events the TIM Centre attended, where the material was relevant.

Denominational staff and interdenominational agencies engaged as research partners were encouraged to use the reports and guide as awareness-raising and educational tools within the various networks that they represented (Watson and Janzen, under review). The ability to contribute to the design of these resources, opportunity to review the quality, and the lack of cost were all incentives for use and distribution by these organizations. As the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) and Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) were research partners and represented the most extensive interdenominational networks within Canada, these efforts contributed to broad exposure.

Faith Communities and the Settlement Sector
The third research project was Faith and Settlement Partnerships: Setting Immigrants and Canada Up for Success. This was a two-year SSHRC-funded project with both research and knowledge mobilization components. The objective of the project was to collaboratively study partnerships among faith-based and government-funded settlement organizations. This was done to determine how these partnerships can lead to positive settlement outcomes for newcomers and benefit Canadian society. The TIM Centre aimed to help its partners develop collaboration with each other and with the settlement sector. This project was led by the CCBR and involved a wide variety of faith communities and settlement-sector organizations (for details see Centre for Community Based Research, 2017).

Research Conducted
The TIM Centre was involved in the design stage of the research, provided some input into the survey research, and conducted a

case study of itself for this project. While TIM Centre has had little direct contact with the government-funded settlement sector, it has facilitated this contact for its partners and has had input or has participated with them in their working relationships with the settlement sector. The resulting report used a narrative format to understand how the case's vision, structures, and processes contributed to its ability to support its partners in their relationship with the settlement sector (Janzen & Wiebe, 2011; Patton, 2015).

Research Disseminated

The research report has contributed to conversations about how the TIM Centre can better serve organizations engaged in settlement services and discussions of potential future research to meet settlement needs, such as bi-vocational ministry and the challenges of settlement for children of immigrants. The TIM Centre held a research dissemination event and a journal article has been published (Janzen, Brnjas, Cresswell, & Chapman, 2019).

Research Applied

The final reports were posted on UReachToronto.com for wider distribution. Lesson learned about the relationship between the faith community and government-funded settlement sector was communicated to the TIM Centre's larger constituency. Organizations directly involved (e.g., The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda) have reviewed findings and considered opportunities to benefit from this knowledge.

New Canadian Church Planter Research Project

The TIM Centre noticed a disconnect between established Canadian Christian organizations and new Canadian church planters. In 2010, it started the New Canadian Church Planting Project to connect new Canadian church planters to each other, to denominational and church planting organization leaders, and to facilitate training for the contemporary Canadian context. The

TIM Centre was the organizing and directing partner for this initiative. It has been funded variously over the years by a government initiative to hire students, church planting organizations, and Peoples Church.

Research Conducted

The starting point was the recognition of a desire among both new Canadian church planters and denominational staff leaders that provide resources for church planting to have better mutual understanding and more satisfying working relationships. The desired objectives of coming together as mutual learners, along with the desired outcomes of mutual understanding, resource sharing, contextually-appropriate intercultural ministry, participant involvement in interpretive activities, and new ministry initiatives, fit within the parameters of a community-based research project.

Over the course of regular meetings between November 2011 and January 2019, the research team collected, analyzed, and reported on data derived from the meetings. Meetings had some similarities, but each was intentionally designed to address specific felt needs and to respond to what had been learned from previous meetings. The gatherings were highly relational in nature rather than a replication of formal research committee structures. The research team had a protocol for recording the conversations at table groups to provide a form of focus-group experience and to track the diverse inputs of participants.

Research Disseminated

Gatherings were held periodically to discuss the initial findings and this too contributed to the research data. Awareness of the findings was promoted through social media and at events where research team members presented on issues of migration, church planting, diaspora mission, etc.. Research team members with teaching responsibilities incorporated selected findings into the instructional content. A peer-reviewed journal article was

published to both explain the process as well as promote this form of interaction and share findings (Chapman & Watson, 2017).

Research Applied

The process itself was an unfolding application of the research findings. What was learned through the table conversations was intentionally used to shape future experiences. Key findings were identified, which the TIM Centre could begin to address through training, resource provision, and networking. The application of this research is still actively being expanded. With regards to addressing needs of new Canadian church planters, a webpage of resources on UReachToronto.com was developed and a coordinator appointed to maintain and develop the network. This individual is building the network and seeking opportunities to provide resources and partner with other organizations. Another outcome is the development of an online intercultural assessment tool with coaching and further training built on the work of Milton Bennett and Darla Deardorff (for details see Cousins, 2014; Tang, 2014).

What Can Be Learned from the TIM Centre Experience?

An examination of these four research projects in the previous section illustrates the TIM Centre's role as a catalyst for the exploration of church and immigrant relationships. This current section briefly summarizes what has been learned about the TIM Centre's work of disseminating and applying research. It uses the discussion to examine where TIM Centre has been effective in practitioner support and where it could benefit from further development. Finally, it identifies some lessons from the TIM Centre experience.

Disseminating Research

The TIM Centre research aims to serve its constituency. The constituency are active participants in its research. For these constituents, engaging partners (like the TIM Centre) that have

educational, training, or resourcing mandates, creates incentives and opportunity for dissemination of the research. For example, the research process and the promotion of the research through events results in opportunities for network building which, in turn, disseminates the research further. The organizational structure of the TIM Centre itself also contributes to research dissemination. The "centre-within-a-university" approach provides immediate access to expertise and engaging instructors who are currently engaging in teaching and promotes the use of the generated knowledge both in the classroom and in their extended networks. Furthermore, the TIM Centre is well positioned to be a platform to research how the immigrant community views and evaluates the programs offered to help it.[3] UReachToronto and journal articles further contribute to research dissemination.

Applying Research

The TIM Centre does not just want to see its research made available. The primary objective is to see it put to practical use for the benefit of its constituents. Research has provided a rationale for engaging in a specific approach to training and guidance regarding training priorities within the courses and seminars offered. Additionally, the training goal of the TIM Centre provides an outlet for application of the research findings. Its role of disseminating and applying research to the work of practitioners has contributed to some tangible benefits to immigrants and those who work with them. Successes, such as the development of training programs, website resources, and additional new connections, are moderated by areas of needed development (e.g., resourcing the ever-changing flow of new immigrant pastors and the need to operate in multiple cultural contexts and languages).

What is learned while engaging in training of immigrants also feeds into further research. For example, the current TIM

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3   An example of this is an article the TIM Centre wrote for the popular Canadian Christian magazine *Faith Today* which looked at what the diaspora church in Canada would like to say to the established church (Lo, Chapman, & Cousins, 2017).

Centre project of teaching intercultural competence to immigrant pastors arose, in part, out of an observed need, while providing courses to these same pastors. Seminars and public forums are not as formal as training programs but play a similar role in the sense that they are both generated by research and influence future research. The TIM Centre has learned that a community-oriented organization is positioned to generate interest in research by getting its constituency involved in the research development process, soliciting them as participants, and getting their response to interpretative findings.

The TIM Centre research has also been a driver of its actions and values. The community-based research approach has challenged the teams involved in research to be attentive to other issues that may arise in the process. For example, the large discrepancy in needs between established Canadian and new immigrant church planters was a surprising finding and led to the development of seminars and training specifically for this constituency.

The TIM Centre has been effective in leveraging its networks, so that it can get involved in and fund research relevant to its core purposes. The concern about the global diaspora in the Greater Toronto Area and our recent research knowledge about the importance of integrating diversity into the activities and leadership of ministry organizations has contributed to a strategy of recruitment of staff and volunteers who are personally familiar with the life experiences of immigrants within their families and churches. This has not only developed out of the lived experience of the TIM Centre but has also reflected learning produced from the research activities. We have shown that having a vision for diversity is inadequate without an enabling structure and a process to make it happen.

Where the TIM Centre Can Develop

This case study highlighted a few areas where TIM Centre can become more effective. One of the realities of the TIM Centre's geographical context is that its constituency lives constantly in

a state of flux. For that reason, sustained cycles of networking, research, and resourcing are necessary to assure that current actions and teaching match the needs and experiences of the current constituency. This is a particularly an acute need on its UReachToronto.com website, which must be regularly updated with fresh material and provided with sustainable, long-term funding.

Cultural diversity also affects the TIM Centre effectiveness. The great diversity of language and cultural groups in the Toronto Area requires continuing learning and experimentation to determine approaches of engagement. Differences in language and cultural expectations are barriers to communication; thus, service must be negotiated in an ongoing basis. The TIM Centre has responded to this by developing close relationships with local churches and providing resources to address this need. However, the TIM Centre would benefit from the development of further expertise in house. For example, currently all research is conducted primarily in English—even though that is not the first language of many people from our constituency.

Lessons for Other Organizations

The TIM Centre is a unique and contextually-rooted organization. Nonetheless, there are some learnings from its experience that can be applied to other contexts. The "shoe-string" approach is replicable in other contexts. The deliberate development of vision, relationships, and effective partnerships can contribute to ongoing efforts in other locations despite limited funding possibilities. We would emphasize that having a consistent long-term director, even if part-time, has been important for relational consistency, even when working on a reduced budget. We also note that the TIM Centre's income from collaborative partnerships has exceeded its internal budget in order to facilitate research.

Productive partnerships also contribute to the TIM Centre research effectiveness. Organizations need to find partners with

expertise (CCBR), insight (planters and denominational leaders), reach (CCC and EFC), or the ability to directly apply resources (professors and denominational staff). It is important that each group appreciates what the others contribute to the common goals. There is a need to identify and celebrate complementary strengths and develop ways of working that produce mutual benefits. Community-based approaches to research provide incentive for researchers (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilization), activists (community mobilization), and practitioners (access to networks and resources) to work collaboratively. A centre that combines research and resource provision via networking can generate multiple benefits from the same project. Effective small organizations can choose to invest their resources and energy into projects that have multiple outcomes and that feed directly into their organizational goals.

Effective leaders must be flexible to take advantage of opportunities as they arise but must have a strong sense of organizational vision, so that their activities are not diluted to the point that the organization cannot provide benefit to its constituency or support all its activities. Organizations must have a highly relevant focus (in this case diaspora mission) combined with an appreciation for holistic ministry and a collaborative approach. One way that the TIM Centre has done this is by identifying the cumulative benefits of a cyclical approach to research. Each research project expands and develops the others. This means that subsequent research projects require less work and yet provide more benefit to the TIM Centre constituency. It is an expanding and overlapping spiral that draws on the research of the past to provide more detailed data for the actions of the future.

Conclusion

This case study has examined four research projects conducted by the TIM Centre to illustrate how a small organization with limited resources can leverage strategic partnerships to provide tangible benefits to multiple partners and constituents. To

summarize what has been learned from this study, this conclusion reviews how research has been a means for the TIM Centre to enact its vision.

Research is one means that the TIM Centre uses to enact its vision of acting "as a catalyst to mobilize the intercultural Christian faith community towards intentional and effective engagement in local and global missions." The TIM Centre was already oriented toward the needs of its constituency, but community-based research gave it the theory, tools, and language to be more effective and more intentional with that engagement. The work is accomplished through partnerships with like-minded organizations and individuals, so that collectively their time and resources can better meet the needs of the people whom they serve. This chapter has shown that the TIM Centre's research has had a productive dialectical relationship through its teaching, website, resources, seminars, and networking. It has also shown that while its opportunistic and ad hoc approach keeps it nimble, this has also affected its ability to sustain research long-term. Lack of full-time staff, limited physical resources, and the need to constantly raise funds for its activities have meant that its "hoped-for" actions are regularly reduced in scope. The TIM Centre, notwithstanding its challenges, is an effective model for how a small organization with limited resources, can fill a training, research, and networking niche within a community to productively support the work of a large number of individuals and organizations.

Reflection Questions

1. How might your organization make decisions in a way that involves individuals affected by those decisions?
2. How might partnerships improve your organization's effectiveness?
3. What role does research play in your decision-making?

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Part 3

EMERGING CHALLENGES IN MISSION

C H A P T E R   1 0

COMING OUT:

A MULTILAYERED CONTEXTUAL APPROACH TO MISSION TO THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY IN THE EAST ASIAN CANADIAN CHRISTIAN CONTEXT

Xenia Ling-Yee Chan

Introduction

The social context for this chapter is the LGBTQ+ identifying individuals with whom I have journeyed; my hope is to see the church be a glimpse of the good news for them. As I have walked with them, I have had the privilege to hear their stories. Some of them will be shared here (though in some places names have been changed). This chapter will exegete the cultural dynamics at play and will conclude with a way forward via an appropriation of John 4.1-43.[1]

How Many Cultures? Stories and Common Language: A Note on Language

In this chapter, I have opted to use the language of LGBTQ+ (as opposed to SSA [Same-Sex Attracted]), and the experiences mentioned here are primarily those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer (LGBQ) within the second-generation East-Asian-Canadian context.[2]

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1   For a copy of the exegesis of John 4.1 43. e-mail the author at xenia.chan@live.ca.

2   There are those who use same-sex attracted (SSA) interchangeably with LGBTQ+. But the majority, especially those who are a bit older (those who are older than their mid-thirties), who remember the popularity of conversion therapy, shy away from the SSA language (Hill, 2018). Others who hope to bridge the gap between the LGBTQ+ community and the church have chosen to use LGBTQ+ language (Belgau, 2014). Older generations of LGBTQ+ view "queer" as a derogatory term, while the younger generation

Which Culture Again?

There is a common misperception that the LGBTQ+ "problem" is "out there," and not within our church walls. Andrew Marin's book, *Us Versus Us,* provides remarkable insight into the American church with regards to the LGBTQ+ community. It is significant that 86 percent of the American LGBTQ+ community identifies as having grown up in the American church (Catholic and Protestant) (Marin, 2016, p. 6). Of these, 61 percent have Protestant upbringings (p. 13). Notably, 54 percent of the LGBTQ+ community within the American church will leave the church, which is double the amount the general American population who leaves the church (p. 34).

There are no available statistics for the Canadian church context, but undoubtedly there are LGBQ+ folks in our midst. Some will be "out," while others are still "in the closet." In 2014, the Canadian Community Health Survey (2015) found that 1.7 percent of Canadians ages 18–59 identified as gay or lesbian, and 1.3 percent of Canadians ages 18–59 identified as bisexual. Individuals who self-identified as LGB tend to be younger, with 40 percent bisexual-identifying and 54 percent gay and lesbian-identifying individuals "reporting that they were between the ages of 18 and 34" (Simpson, 2016). Almost 78 percent of LGB Canadians live in Canada's largest cities; half of all same-sex couples live in Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, and Ottawa-Gatineau ("Same-sex couples in Canada," 2016). Extrapolating this data to the church populace in Canada, this means that at least 3 percent of those in our churches may identify as LGB. Put another way, in a congregation of 120 people, at least three or four of the congregants will likely identify as LGB. If Canadian church statistics mirror American ones, then it is likely that there are far more LGBTQ+ people in local congregations than 3 percent, and disproportionately they will be youth and young adults (or at least they will be more forthcoming about identifying as LGBTQ+ than the older generation).

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has reclaimed that term and use it as an identifier. I have opted to use LGBTQ+ language to acknowledge the pain that SSA language often brings (Beeching, 2018, p. 177).

Brief Exploration of Frameworks and Ideologies

There are several ideologies that currently dominate our social sphere. "I just need to be true to myself" is perhaps one of the greatest myths of our day.[3] Arising from what Charles Taylor (2007) calls the "culture of authenticity," one of the greatest faux pas is to be subjected to an "arbitrary" moral code imposed externally (p. 475). This leads to a form of moral relativism, as each determines for oneself what is right, and each must be given that right of determination. The only thing that cannot be tolerated is intolerance. Consumerism is perhaps part and parcel of this, and Stanley Hauerwas (1981) proposes that this, combined with the unrelenting seeking of personal fulfillment creates a vision of a good life that puts self-fulfillment at the fore (p. 12). This consumerism (or rather, the liberal/capitalist matrix) has so permeated every part of our lives that even Christians submit their ethics to it. Jonathan Grant (2015) writes that the modern authentic self is also deeply romantic, focusing on feeling, sensuality, and intuition as the "deepest and most important parts of human identity" (p. 30). This not only leads to a prioritization of intimate relationship as the place "where [one] can most fully express and actualize [oneself]," but also leads to the conclusion that to be fully human is to engage in sexual activity (pp. 30–31).

Further, this was tied into an understanding of primary religious experience, that this actualization would lead "[individuals] to an apprehension of where they stood in relation to whatever they may consider to be the divine" (p. 33). Jacques Ellul (1975) puts it another way: sex in the 1960's was used to transgress the social order, but in actuality ended up normalizing sex in a way that named it as an "instrument of strife, a struggle for freedom" (pp. 76–77). While sex had been intended as a means of destroying the sacred, it instead became a god. One other moral change pertinent to this conversation

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3 By myth, I mean the stories that undergird our understanding of ourselves.

solidified in the 1960's: the idea that sex is an intrinsic good (a la Sigmund Freud) (Grant, 2015, p. 37). Michel Foucault (1978) rightly points out that modern Western constructs of sexuality are exactly that: modern and Western (pp. 70-71). Before Freud (and the Kinsey Reports), the different sexual identities did not exist; certainly, same-sex attraction and behaviour was present (i.e. ancient Greece) (pp. 130–131, 151). Foucault thus proposes that sexual identity is socially constructed (pp. 155–156). And indeed, with Alfred Kinsey's reports on sexuality (published in 1948 and 1953), "'homosexual' came to describe a kind of person, not a behaviour" (Hartley, 2018, p. 6). The subsequent panic that arose speaks to how powerful these myths had become in the imagination of our culture.

There are several themes which can be addressed, especially in the East-Asian immigrant context. These are: the Confucian hierarchy of the family; the dynamic of honour and shame; and lastly, the Americanisation of the Canadian diaspora churches. The roots of Confucianism run deep, even within these diaspora churches (Yong, 2014, p. 76). Looming large in our conversation is the hierarchy of the family and the moral concept of filial piety, especially the procreation of male heirs (Chan, 2014, p. 77). The dynamic of honour and shame locates itself in familial harmony. Individuals are not only expected to conform, but to do so is virtuous, particularly to the patriarch; to contradict is shaming to the collective. The tensions between the first and second generations are well-documented and do not need to be expounded on here, but it is worth drawing attention to the East-West clash within individuals how this tension creates difficulty in the search for identity. Lastly, the Americanisation of the East Asian diaspora church cannot be ignored. Many who emigrate to Canada do so with the American dream in mind—to make a better life for themselves and their families (Lee, 2010, p. 105). On one hand, they form ethnic-specific churches to find refuge, "secure social networks, confer status (otherwise difficult to come by for immigrants), and to strengthen ethnic, cultural,

and linguistic bonds and ties" (Yong, 2014, p. 118). On the "other," Amos Yong (2014) writes,

> Asian-American Evangelicals [and Asian-Canadians] have traditionally understood their Christian conversion to involve either a turning away from their Asian cultural roots or a minimising of such aspects of their identity. That Christian conversion actually involves Americanisation... Many Asian-Americans [and Asian-Canadians] thus tend to view their Asian historical and cultural legacies in binary terms: food, dress and music might be retained... but literary, philosophical and religious ideas are to be cautiously approached (at best) since they are probably representative of "the world" and thus antithetical to the gospel (p. 115).

This is demonstrated in the diaspora church's unfiltered consumption of American neo-reformed theology. For example, within the Korean- and Chinese-Canadian context, it is likely that the most recent theological piece a second-generation individual has read is from *The Gospel Coalition* (USA) or *Desiring God*. This also means that this generation has adopted (in some places, wholesale) an American Gospel *as the Gospel*. All these themes have had multiple ramifications for the treatment of the LGBTQ+ population within East-Asian diaspora churches.

LGBTQ+ Culture?

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines sexual orientation as the following: first, "an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic and/or sexual attractions to men, women or both sexes," and second, "a person's sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors and membership in a community of others who share those attractions" (Hartley, 2018, p. 1). Being part of the LGBTQ+ community does not solely revolve around sexual activity. This identity carries its own history, customs, and arts within the LGBTQ+ community's unique social

institutions (Lee, 2014). When we reduce the conversation to solely revolve around an individual's attractions, desires, lust, and sexual activity, we have missed the mark in being able to contextualize the gospel to this population.[4]

Considering how many LGBTQ+ people have emerged from the church, at face value the antagonism that community has toward the church seems odd: that is, until history is considered. In our churches, LGBTQ+ people are often viewed through the lens of the evangelical culture and are "othered": they are the enemy. The 1950s featured witch hunts,[5] and careers and lives were damaged. In some cases, some people took their own lives. Gay bars emerged as the only places that could provide sexual minorities with "a measure of freedom, safety and support" (Hartley, 2018, p. 8). The 1960s saw the shift towards change specifically in the case of George Klippert, the last to be convicted for having homosexual relations (Belshaw, 2012). Homosexuality was made legal in 1969, and by the early 1970s,[6] the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) no longer viewed homosexuality as a form of mental illness. The Stonewall Riots in the United States fanned the flames in Canada, and the LGBTQ+ community began to organize campaigns for rights.

The 1980s, however, was met with the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which was "sneered at as the gay plague," though the gay community was not the only demographic affected by HIV/AIDS (Belshaw, 2012). It was during this time that both the LGBTQ+ community's efforts in lobbying for rights and the anti-gay lobby's efforts

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4   These are absolutely still important. *Cf.* S. L. Jones, "Same-sex science, *First Things*, February 2012, accessed February 20, 2019, https://goo.gl/dyLtJd; J. Brownson; D. Gushee; W. V. Wal-Gritter; W. Hill; E. Tushnet; D. Bennett; S. Allberry; P. Sprinkle; K. DeYoung; C. Yuan; J. Lee; T. Collins; and E. Shaw for a fuller conversation.

5   In the RCMP and in the military, "fruit machines," a device that measured pupil dilation in response to homo-erotic images, were used to "find" homosexuals (Belshaw & Light, 2012).

6   In the US, interestingly, the 1970s were also a time where LGBTQ+ people sought refuge in their Christian faith, albeit one that affirmed same-sex sexual activity. Cast out of their churches, they would congregate instead in gay bars, but were unfortunately often a target for violence. Prior to the Pulse shooting in 2016, the largest massacre of LGBTQ+ people occurred at a church service held in a gay bar in 1973. Thirty-two people were killed.

against them increased. In the US, the Religious Right consistently connected AIDS with God's judgment and wrath, and had little compassion for those who were suffering (Hartley, 2018, p. 21). On the LGBTQ+ side, having been cast out by their biological and church families, legally-recognised relationships became a matter of utmost importance: assets could be transferred to their chosen families and loved ones could be visited in the hospital. Grant Hartley (2018) proposes that it was during this period that the LGBTQ+ communal identity was "crystallized; LGBTQ+ people became united in their striving for survival…the development of (and desexualisation of) queer culture based on shared commitments and history, were taken to heart, and remain important in queer culture today" (p. 23).

By the mid-1990s in America, nearly a generation—almost 160,000 gay and bisexual men—died of HIV/AIDS. Christianity became "synonymous with hatred and oppression" to the LGBTQ+ community, due to feelings of rejection and antagonism from the Religious Right (Rosenfeld, 2018; Hartley, 2018, p. 23). After Toronto's Stonewall (1981),[7] sexual orientation "became increasingly difficult for the mainstream media and political establishment to ignore" (Block, 2015, para. 19).

Hartley (2018) proposes LGBTQ+ culture is an American export; the celebration of Pride worldwide on the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots perhaps attests to this theory. But how does this analysis relate to our churches? More and more I am convinced that the emergence of the LGBTQ+ culture is one of the fruits of Christendom. A key indicator for me is how much church language remains in the LGBTQ+ culture today. The narrative of belonging to a chosen family eerily echoes Jesus telling His disciples who His family is—not necessarily His biological family, but those who do the will of the Father (Mark 3.31–35). Youth are told that when they come out, "it gets better;" there is freedom

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7 The Toronto police conducted raids at four bathhouses on February 5, 1981, and nearly 300 men were arrested. It was, by all accounts, violent, deliberately demeaning and shaming (G. Slaughter, June 23, 2016).

and liberation, and that things were never meant to be kept in the dark. These expressions align with the classic conversion story in Christian evangelical circles. Even the narrative of persecution is similar: pursuing what is "right" can potentially result in being disowned. In the past and in some places in the world, it has also meant death and violence. This creates a sense of martyrdom and these martyrs are granted sainthood. A second indicator of Christendom's contribution to the emergence of LGBTQ+ culture is how much the church values heterosexuality. This is seen in the (thankfully diminished) prevalence of conversion therapy (Paris, 2011, pp. 37–54; Noel and Joycey, 2018) as well as the emphasis placed on traditional marriage that results in little room in the church for single people.

Turning a bit closer to home, this shared history impacts those with whom I have worked.[8] Min-Soo Kang comments that, when individuals consider coming out, the shared narrative of persecution still holds. As a Korean-Canadian man who grew up in the Korean-Canadian church, he had never seen anyone be *overtly* homophobic, but the implied script of consequences should he come out contributed to his perception that there might be real pain and suffering in his future. And, "gay people might feel the threat because they've inherited the pain of other people" (Appendix I).[9] On the other hand, second-generation Asian-Canadians are more likely to have had a bad experience coming out to their parents (in comparison to their European-descent peers) (Ou-yang, 2017). J. offers:

> I've heard of Asian queer Christians being outed by one parent to another or being told that they're in the camp of the devil. They've had exorcisms done to them, sent to conversion therapy. Or the family trash talks about the individual.

8   On a side note, Gay Asians Toronto (GAT) has existed since 1979, and one of the founders, Richard Fung, has been a prominent filmmaker, documenting the history of the community. GAT dissolved in the early 2000s.

9   For access to the appendices, e-mail the author at xenia.chan@live.ca.

> In one case, one woman was written out of her parents' will.
> I also know someone who was disowned briefly. She spent a
> few days at friends' houses.... her mom told her to not come
> back. When she did return home, it was not because she was
> invited back, but that she wasn't stopped from coming back
> (Appendix II).

East-Asian Canadian LGBQ face the added burden of not only navigating a bicultural identity, but also the third dimension of sexual orientation, as the East-Asian paradigm of family excludes and alienates them. Men especially face the burden of having to tell their parents that they will not be able to continue the family line (or at least not in the traditional way). The whole family must come to terms with the idea that their hopes and dreams of success will (likely) no longer be a reality. Others choose not to come out at all, prioritizing their communal honour over their individual shame (Appendix III; Takeuchi, 2016). Alternately, it becomes an issue of quiet shame, where only immediate family members know about it and it is not spoken of publicly. Family members of the LGBTQ+ individual face difficult questions like, "Do I choose my child or do I choose my community?" and "How much face and virtue will we lose?"

Facing their first-generation parents (and their peers) is not the only problem that the second-generation East-Asian Canadian LGBQ+ individuals have. They also hold onto an American theology that has not been properly contextualized to the East-Asian-Canadian framework and they often understand the topic of sexuality through the polarized lens of American culture. Its influence can be seen in the importation of purity culture and its impact on dating decorum, customs, and rituals within the second-generation Chinese-Canadian context. J. recounts coming out to her church youth worker:

> It was awful coming out at my Chinese church. There was
> this impetus: not being able to be married, not having

> someone to live with. I could have community and friends but... I just figured that at some point being queer *and* Christian would resolve at some point. And I was fully committed to being single at this point. I came out to a counsellor, and the first thing she said to me was that 'most gay people marry straight people anyway!' The subtext was that 'you will get married.' And in my head, I thought, 'Wow, as someone who has no investment in this, you have such a quick reply.' This response was so devastating that I didn't come back out for a year" (Appendix II).

Compounding this is a problem of conflating good with "doing." Being successful in the public eye is yet another way that the American dream manifests itself: the success of having a golden child. The three friends whom I sat down with were all heavily involved as lay leaders in the church. Speaking from his experience in ministering to this population, Kang says that this is a common occurrence: "walking the good Christian walk and hiding behind good performance" (Appendix I). The hiddenness, isolation, the social and family pressures, and the shame all serve to build tensions which present challenges for the LGBQ individual, their families, and their faith journeys (Appendix IV; Chu, 2015). In contrast, the LGBTQ+ narrative, as shaped by modern Western constructs, welcomes them "home."

"Where Do We Go from Here?": An Appropriation of John 4.1-42

As a good friend often says, "We (the church) are about the business of hope!" and this is precisely how I would like to end. As I have provided an in-depth look at the various cultures, I now turn to the Scriptures and submit where we might go forward, appropriating sections of John 4, where Jesus gives us an example of how to respond to the "other," as He interacts with the Samaritan woman.

Going through Samaria

In John 4.4, Jesus says that He "had to" go through Samaria, the hated enemies of the Jews. He is not in His ethnic comfort zone, nor does He hold any social capital in a foreign land. However, He longs for the Samaritans to also know Him. In the same way, Jesus loves the LGBTQ+ community. They, too, are made in the image of God, and He longs to see them restored to Him. Earlier, I mentioned the idea that some Christians have that HIV/AIDS is the wrath of God upon this community. Wrath of God aside,[10] this notion asks us to celebrate and revel in the deaths and suffering of people whom Jesus loves. As a member of the church, I know that I need to ask the LGBTQ+ community for forgiveness and for the ways in which the church has hurt them. Are we willing to repent of our actions and of our perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community, so that we can see what Jesus is up to? Following that, is there a "Samaria" in your neighbourhood, or a "Samaritan" you are called to love? As we consider going to our own Samaria, where are the places our hearts are still hardened?

Taking Time

Jesus takes His time in interacting with the Samaritan woman. It is clear that He knows everything there is to know about her, and yet, that is not where He starts the conversation. Instead, while He may have started the conversation, He is content to let her lead. He listens to her and allows trust to build, on her terms. What would it look like for us to stop only "tolerating one another" and choosing to engage via faithful presence (which is to say: listening, walking *with*, asking questions, building trust, and allowing for mutual transformation by the Spirit) (Fitch, 2016, pp. 70–71; Fitch & Holsclaw, 2013, p. 120)? Additionally, given

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10 I do not mean to be blithe. The wrath of God is an important theological concept that I do not have space for here. In sum, it is my belief that despite whatever we might believe about God's wrath, we can be confident that He is a God who dearly loves His creation and is not desiring for any to perish, but that all are restored in relationship with Him (2 Pet 3.9).

the amount of trauma[11] the LGBTQ+ community has endured, in what ways can we open up space for their stories to be processed and heard? What would it look like for us to journey together, rather than seeing it as a problem to be solved?

Responding to Shame

There is enough trust for the Samaritan woman to be open about her life situation. Jesus directs her attention briefly to her sins but spends the majority of the second interaction on *who He is*. In the same way, how might we direct our LGBTQ+ friends' attention to Jesus, to show them that He loves them and cares for them, to allow Him to speak to them about their brokenness, and not take that place ourselves, and to open up space for them to encounter Jesus? Conversely, do we trust that Jesus is capable of handling all of who we are? Can we entrust our shame to Him?

Not our Ancestors, but the Father

The Samaritan woman's heritage is now linked to the Father, and it is the Father's honour that covers her shame. In the same way, when we were adopted by God, it is the Father who determines what is honourable and determines who we are. As East Asians, we know how to do community well in many respects, and we understand our collective identity. How might we extend family to those who are not our blood? How might we extend the honour that we have been given to those who have been shamed?

Neither the Mountain nor Jerusalem

In the complexity of cultures, we can be consumed by different ideologies. As Jesus says, the place of worship is neither what the Samaritans thought it was, nor will it any longer be where the Jews then worshipped. Instead, we are to worship the Father in spirit and truth, through the personhood of Jesus. What rival gods have we accidentally or intentionally worshipped (sex,

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11 I very much understand this as communal trauma (in some cases, as inflicted upon by the church), and not that their sexuality arises from being traumatized.

consumerism, the American Dream, success)? Can we turn back instead to the divine gaze (*metanoia*), allowing Jesus to determine who we are and what we are to be about?

Come and See

By her questions in John 4.29, the woman likely does not have a full idea of who Jesus is. And yet, her evangelistic fervor is evident. Her experience with Jesus has set her free from her shame, and she is using her testimony to tell others about Jesus. How can we pray and believe that we *and* those we love might experience the same? How can we invite our LGBQ brothers and sisters to lead us into reaching the LGBTQ+ community and walk alongside them as they step forward?[12]

Adopting an Asking Posture

The disciples, upon their return, were afraid to ask questions, and they missed out hearing what had just happened prior to their return. Instead, they tried to compensate by making Jesus eat. When we are unsure of something, do we trust that we can ask Jesus, or do we rely on our own strength, knowledge, and default responses? Can we humbly engage with what the Lord is doing? Can we wait in our confusion or uncertainty for the answer that Jesus will eventually provide?

Conclusion

I do not have any cut-and-dry answers, and perhaps that is a reassuring thing. But I do have this final thing to offer. I have learned, in the words of Fumitaka Matsuoka (1995), the "holy insecurity" of being second-generation means "to receive the gift of courage to live in the midst of an unresolved and often ambiguous state of life" (p. 62). For in the deepest places of insecurity, an opportunity emerges: to find security in the only One who can

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12 Anecdotally I have heard that many, many LGBTQ+ people are coming to faith. I unfortunately do not have data to back this up. However, in my own ministry, I have seen five LGBTQ+ people come to faith in the past four years

give it to us anyway. As we are invited into "holy insecurity," may we choose even more to look to Jesus, who offers us a way forward through His life with us.

Reflection Questions

1. How is your heart postured towards the LGBTQ+ community? Towards the conservative evangelical communities? What new things are you taking away from your reading of this chapter?
2. What rival gods have you worshipped, and where is Jesus leading you to repentance? What tangible action will you take as your turn toward the Divine gaze?
3. How can you—by the Spirit's leading—bring honour to those around you who have been shamed? How can you invite others into the honour-bringing process?

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C H A P T E R   1 1

BIBLE TRANSLATION IN CHALLENGING SITUATIONS[1]

P. David Jeffery

Introduction

In August 2018, the New Testament in the Keliko language was dedicated in a joyful celebration in a small town in northern Uganda (Steele, 2018, p. 1). The number of speakers of the Keliko language is not large, perhaps only around 23,000 (Simons & Fennig, 2018). But at least two things made this translation unique. The first was that it was the 1,000th translation that had been produced with assistance from Wycliffe Bible Translators and SIL International. By any measuring stick, that is a tremendous accomplishment for organizations that only started their ministry in 1935. The other remarkable aspect of the Keliko translation project is the incredible determination demonstrated by the translation team in the face of extremely difficult circumstances (SIL Global Communication, 2018, p.1). The homeland of the Keliko people is in what is now South Sudan. But due to regular outbreaks of warfare in the last 30 years, most of the Keliko were forced to flee and became refugees in neighbouring Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This unrest interrupted early efforts at translation, but in 1998 a team of translators was able to restart the project. When the New Testament was almost complete, yet another outbreak of fighting forced the translation team to relocate to Uganda. But finally, the Keliko are able to read God's word in their own language.

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1   An expanded version of this paper is available at https://www.canil.ca/academics/electronic-working-papers/

The Keliko translation project is an example of success in the face of an extremely challenging situation. Ideally, Bible translation should be a community-owned endeavour, founded on a deep desire by local believers for God's word in their own language. When translators are able to work in the language community homeland, it allows for regular review and checking, and builds enthusiasm among speakers as portions of Scripture are circulated. Yet, as a result of crises such as warfare, opposition by antagonistic governments, persecution from non-Christian religions, and many other challenging situations, believers have been forced to go into hiding or to leave their home areas and become refugees in other countries. In the face of such challenges, many Bible translation teams have been forced to relocate to safer locations, while adopting strategies to stay connected to the language homeland. Such translation projects have been referred to as **displaced language translation projects**.

Many historically significant Bible translation projects have taken place outside the home area of the speakers of the language. In most cases, this was to avoid persecution by religious authorities or oppressive governments in the homeland. In the sixteenth century, William Tyndale translated the Bible into English while in exile in Europe (Edwards, 1976). In 1887, a team of four Korean believers and two expatriate missionaries completed the first Korean translation from a location in China, from where copies were smuggled into Korea (Hong, 2017, p. 1).

In this paper I will present several modern case studies of displaced language translation projects, discuss the advantages and difficulties inherent in such projects, and make suggestions for future translation projects in challenging situations. In each case, the projects I will be discussing are partnerships of local speakers of the language and members of Wycliffe Bible Translators/SIL International. Single quotes indicate when pseudonyms are being used for language community names or project staff.

Crises, Challenging Situations, and Other Complications

The optimal location for Bible translation teams to work is in the language community homeland, in an area where the prestige dialect is spoken. Translation teams are often a blend of national mother tongue translators [MTTs] and expatriate translation advisors [ETs]. Where safety concerns or travel restrictions make it impossible for the expatriate team members to live in the language community home area, they need to find ways to regularly work with national colleagues. In some cases, regular visits by ETs to the home area are feasible. Where ETs are restricted to living in regional or national capitals, MTTs can travel to meet with their expatriate team members. In some locations, ETs live in neighbouring countries, in areas where MTT team members can cross over to work together. More recently, technology such as Skype has made it possible for ETs based overseas to connect directly with MTTs still living in the homeland. Still other projects have been organized in a completely different part of the world, where one or more speakers of the language who have emigrated to a new country become the MTTs. Different situations will lead to different solutions.

Although displaced language projects have been operating for decades in many parts of the world, a list of "best practices" for such projects has never been drawn up. Janet Persson contributed the following thoughts based on her experiences in Africa:

> I think my main advice would be - make sure you understand clearly and fully the situation with which you are dealing. Every situation is different and needs different solutions. What will work for one country and one project will not work in another. Beyond that, the same principles and standards should surely apply as in a project that is not displaced.... In a displaced situation what has to be modified and adapted are the particular processes and methods employed in reaching the goals.... Adaptability is the key, and imagination (Janet Persson, personal communication, February 5, 2019).

We now move to consider different crises to see how translation teams have managed amid these challenging situations.

Natural Disasters

Naturally occurring crises such as earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, etc. are the focus of efforts of many mission organizations. While incredibly disruptive to normal life, such crises do not tend to interfere greatly with the progress of a Bible translation program. Of course, such work will be temporarily suspended in order to assist with relief efforts that are underway, but once normal life has been restored, the translation can generally proceed.

A notable example of a translation project being interrupted by a natural disaster is the Arop language project in Papua New Guinea (Nystrom & Nystrom, 2012). A team of MTTs. along with an ET family, worked together for 10 years on the translation. Then in July 1998, a tsunami struck the main Arop village, killing almost one-third of the Arop people. The survivors moved inland to re-establish a new village in a safe location, and two years later the team was ready to resume translation. However, during the time that translation work was suspended, the team had devised a "cluster project" strategy, an inclusive approach that allowed not only for work to resume on Arop but also for translation to begin in ten other languages in the area. A remarkable turn of events!

Fighting, Warfare, and Unrest

A far more serious concern for Bible translation efforts are outbreaks of fighting or unrest in the language community home area. Such tensions may force some or all of the translation team to relocate to a safer location. In some cases, the entire community is forced to flee. When facing unrest in the home area, translation teams have adopted different strategies to continue their work. The Keliko story at the beginning of this chapter is an example of how reorganizing in a neighbouring country can allow a translation team to successfully complete its translation goals.

Floyd and Bean (2007) relate how unrest in the home area of the Wanca Quechua people of Peru made it necessary for Floyd and his family to move to Lima, the capital (p. 1). The MTTs would come on regular visits to work with Floyd and over a number of years the New Testament was completed. Brace (2006) describes efforts to maintain translation projects in the DRC, despite prolonged outbreaks of fighting. These efforts focused on training MTTs to a more independent status. As a result, Brace reports, "Of the 12 prewar projects, 10 are still functioning today, with considerable progress made" (p. 1). Yoder (2007) describes efforts to maintain literacy programs in east Africa during times of unrest. Focusing on the crucial importance of training and building community capacity, Yoder reviews several key components of literacy programs and discusses ways of accomplishing each aspect in stressed contexts. Yoder notes: "In Africa, church-based literacy programs have had particular relevance during traumatic times. War victims often find encouragement, strength, comfort, and hope in their church life, particularly through Scriptures and their hymnody" (p. 9).

The 'Rengaki' people, population 150,000 (Simons & Fennig, 2018) live in a country that has suffered through many years of internal warfare between the central government and several armed groups. Fighting in the Rengaki home area led to many internally displaced people and others who fled across the border to refugee camps in a neighbouring country. The Rengaki translation project began in 1991 when church leaders assisted an ET family to move into a refugee camp. The ETs began learning Rengaki and working on literacy materials until cross-border fighting forced the camp to relocate further inland. The ET family then moved to a nearby major city, while continuing to make regular trips to meet with MTTs. A few years later,' 'Mike' (one of the MTTs) completed a master's degree in linguistics and translation. The New Testament was published (in three alphabets) between 2009 to 2011. Old Testament translation is ongoing.

The Rengaki team found maintaining support from church

leaders in the Rengaki home country to be an ongoing challenge. A significant milestone for cooperation was the 2007 read through of the entire New Testament by a group of church leaders. At this time, the leaders were able to put their "seal of approval" on the translation. Distribution of Rengaki Scriptures has been affected by significant changes to the central government's approach to education of minority communities. An alphabet that was once illegal is now permitted for use in literacy and in the school system.

Antagonistic Governments

Countries that are ruled by political systems antagonistic to Christianity, such as those that are overtly atheistic, may lead to environments that make typical translation projects difficult or impossible. Generally, in such situations, MTTs are able to stay in the home area and work on translation, but frequent contact with ETs would be too risky. Working in neighbouring countries is sometimes an option, and the following two case studies illustrate such an approach.

While local churches are able to meet in the home country of the 'Tagank' people, whose population is 65,000 (Simons & Fennig, 2018), no expatriate-based mission activity is allowed. However, Tagank people are permitted to travel to a neighbouring country where expatriate advisors could live and work. In June 2012, a group of Tagank church leaders affirmed their desire to have their own translation and in the following month they sent four MTTs to begin working on the project. Due to low literacy rates in the Tagank home area, reviewer checking proved to be difficult. For this reason, the team printed a trial copy of the New Testament and distributed it to church leaders. Changes suggested by the church leaders were incorporated into the final version. The New Testament was completed in 2017. At this point, the Tagank Scriptures are mainly being distributed in audio form, and church-based children's literacy efforts are ongoing. As one of the ETs said, "The environment continues to be hostile, and yet the Tagank have had an amazing bravery, to continue to meet,

to continue to teach the children, to continue to go out and pray for people and lead people to the Lord, so that the church can continue to grow" (name withheld, personal communication, February 23, 2019).

The 'Oyta' people, which has approximately 50,000 speakers (Simons & Fennig, 2018), live in a country that severely limits Christian activity. The Oyta translation project began in 2014 when Oyta translators were able to travel from their home area to meet expatriate team members living in a border city. The Oyta team now has five MTTs and three ETs. Currently, the team has completed the translation of Mark, Luke, Acts, and Genesis, with James, Philemon, and Philippians in progress. The team has created a few basic tools like alphabet charts and alphabet books, and printed dozens of Bible storybooks. Audio-recorded Scripture and songs have had a very positive response.

Non-Christian Religious Environments

In other countries, it is the dominant religious system that makes the environment challenging or impossible for translation work to proceed. In each of the following three case studies, the dominant religious system is Islam.

There are approximately 200,000 speakers of the 'Wondip' language (Simons & Fennig, 2018). The Wondip language project began in the 1980s when an ET family came to the Wondip area and began language learning and relationship-building. The ETs also spent a good deal of time on a dictionary project, something that the community was particularly interested in. However, an outbreak of opposition forced the ETs to move to the capital. When family issues led the ETs to return to their home country, 'Julia' (a Wondip speaker) became the MTT, with daily Skype chats and collaborative work with Paratext [Bible translation software]. Some national church planters were active in the Wondip language home area and were able to distribute Scripture passages as they became available. The team anticipates that within three years they will have completed their initial Scripture

translation goals. One of the ETs has been able to regularly return to the Wondip language area to attend meetings of church planters. Julia has made regular trips back to the home area to keep her knowledge of the language up-to-date and for distribution and reviewer checking. One lingering regret is that the dictionary in the Wondip language was never completed.

The 'Tomako' language project for 16,000 speakers (Simons & Fennig, 2018) was initially part of a "cluster project," a coordinated strategy for eight related languages. The Tomako translation project began in the fall of 1998 with an ET family moving to the Tomako home area for initial language learning. Due to unrest resulting from a local non-Christian religious movement, the Tomako translation team shifted location and began meeting in the capital city of a neighbouring country. The MTT is a teacher and is only free to work full-time on translation one month of each year. So far, the Tomako team has translated the Gospel of Mark, completed rough drafts of Matthew, Luke, and Acts, and are working on the Gospel of John along with passages from the Old Testament. The team is hoping to carry out oral Bible storying activities over a three-year period, focusing on key Old and New Testament stories. One of the ETs wrote, "We plan to continue as able in the translation work and trust God's timing to be able to check our translation in the community at some point in the future. The main lesson learned is that this is God's project, not ours, and we need to trust Him with the timing of things. I would not have imagined that I'd be 20+ years into the project and not have the New Testament completed" (name withheld, personal communication, February 21, 2019).

The 'Kasala' language community of 2.2 million speakers (Simons & Fennig, 2018) lives in a country that for most of its history has been very difficult for gospel workers to access. There is an increasing number of Kasala believers and a few Kasala churches have formed in the diaspora. The Kasala translation project began in 1992 with an ET family living among a large diaspora community. After some time, it became possible for the

translation team to move to the Kasala home country. After four years, the ET members of the project moved back to their home country but returned regularly to the Kasala homeland to meet with MTTs. During this time, efforts began to assist a Kasala MTT and his family to emigrate to the home country of the ETs. These efforts proved successful in 2015. In 2020 the team plans to publish the New Testament, the Pentateuch, Psalms, and Proverbs. Literacy materials are widely accepted in the home area, but no Scripture materials can be distributed openly. Copies reach the community through friends and get passed on to trusted persons. A phone app has been introduced to all of the community readers. As an ET shared: "God is faithful! This is literally the biggest lesson that we have learned. He has seen us through many moves, up and down finances, changes of staff and co-workers, the raising of our children under sometimes stressful situations. In all of this the work has continually progressed forward, and we can only thank God for His faithfulness" (name withheld, personal communication, February 26, 2019).

Concluding Thoughts

We have seen that it is possible for Bible translation to proceed in the most challenging of circumstances. In each case study, the translation team has found creative ways to overcome different obstacles. In this section, I want to draw together some similarities between the case studies with the hope of offering suggestions for present and future displaced language projects.

All translation projects need to include certain basic elements, including linguistic analysis, basic literacy, translation, partnership development, training, and Scripture-use activities. Developing creative strategies to address these elements is the hallmark of displaced language translation programs. As Persson noted earlier, "Adaptability is the key" (Janet Persson, personal communication, February 5, 2019). We have seen a number of examples of such creativity. The use of cross-border work locations is an important aspect of five of the case studies. Whether it is the use

of technology for regular long-distance communication, as seen in the Wondip project, or involving church leaders in reviewer checking, as in the Tagank project, a determined translation team can find a way. Helping an MTT to emigrate to the home country of the ETs can take a great deal of time and energy, but the Kasala team is now benefiting from all being in one location.

Connecting with partner churches and ministries that are active in the language community home area is an ongoing challenge for displaced language projects. Even if translation work is proceeding in some remote location, the church should still feel that it is "our" project. In those projects where church leaders can travel to meet the translation team, such as those that are based in a neighbouring country, there is opportunity for ongoing support. We have seen this particularly in the Rengaki case study, where the opportunity for a group of church leaders to read through the entire New Testament proved to strengthen bonds of partnership. The Tagank project began in earnest when church leaders designated four MTTs to assist with translation.

One thing that also stands out from the case studies is the connection between some aspects of a displaced language program and the quality of church life in the language community. Where there is a strong, vibrant faith, such as in the Tagank and Oyta communities, it seems to lead to strong partnerships and rapid progress. Where Christian faith is almost non-existent, such as among the Tomako and Wondip, translation must proceed with great caution.

Incorporating training of MTTs into a displaced language translation program has proved to be challenging but rewarding. The article by Brace noted that it was possible to arrange for high-level training for selected individuals, so that they could return to their translation project and function more independently. When Mike—a Rengaki speaker who had received graduate-level training—joined the Rengaki MTTs, it led to a significant increase in translation quality.

Even when translation activities are proceeding in a remote

location, continued access to the language community home area is still important. An important stage in preparing translated Scripture is reviewer checking, where speakers of the language are asked to read the translation and give feedback. Basic literacy depends on regular access to groups of speakers. Translation teams that have regular access to the language community for checking and literacy teaching will likely see faster progress toward completing project goals.

Note that of the six case studies in this chapter, five of them dealt with situations where the MTTs were able to remain in their home community or in their home country, and either traveled to work with their ET team members or the ETs traveled to meet them. Many other displaced language projects have found MTTs among diaspora communities.[2]

A final point from the case studies is that anyone considering getting involved in a displaced language translation project should carefully take stock of their motivation and spiritual resources. Such projects require a high level of commitment. Everything from initial language learning to ongoing translation and literacy is significantly more complex. Working in a remote location means that much of their knowledge of the language community and how the translation is being received will be second-hand reports from others. All translation team members, both ETs and MTTs, will need to be content with this.

The most up-to-date statistics on the task remaining for the Bible translation movement state that there are 2,161 languages that are "vital enough for communities to sustain and benefit from translation work, which do not have any work in progress and do not have any Scripture" (progress.Bible™, January 2019). A sobering reality about these languages is noted in Hong (2017):

> About half of the languages where translation work still needs to begin are spoken (or signed) in sensitive contexts

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2   For an excellent study of such projects, see Hong, 2017

> where there may be issues of safety, security, and political or religious opposition, similar to the situation in Korea in the 19th century. Therefore, new strategies are needed to get the Bible into these languages (p. 2).

It is reasonable to assume that the strategy that will be employed for many of these languages will be some version of the displaced language translation project. May God give grace, wisdom, and strength to all those He calls into such projects, that the world might receive His word.

Reflection Questions

1. Staying connected to believers and churches in the language homeland is one of the main challenges facing displaced language projects. Can you think of ways other than those mentioned in the chapter that would help to keep these connections strong?
2. Are there any other aspects of displaced language projects that could be improved?
3. What have I learned about displaced language projects that will help me to better support them in prayer? Is God calling me to become personally involved in such a project?

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CONCLUSION:

MORE ENGAGING PRAXIS FOR MISSION

AMID GLOBAL CRISIS

—A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

Narry F. Santos

Introduction

This volume unfolded as a collective exercise on praxis. In his chapter, Smith defines praxis as the "interface between action and reflection" and describes it as the "fruit of the theology of mission translated into action in a particular context." Throughout the book, we saw the chapter contributors engaging in biblical and theological reflection on the realities, consequences, and opportunities triggered by global crises (Part I), shared examples of action and collaboration in engaging the globally displaced within the Canadian context (Part II) and attention to two important issues (Part III). This concluding chapter challenges us toward more engaging praxis for mission in Canada amid global crises. Here I will draw on observations, questions, and conclusions found in the diverse chapters of this volume.

Understanding Crisis and Its Challenges

To engage in a deeper and more fruitful praxis, we need to understand the nature of a crisis and the challenges it brings. In the book's introduction, Naylor states that crisis refers to any situation that threatens well-being in society and creates human suffering. Das explains that sustained human suffering has led to humanitarian emergencies of forced displacement and migration, which

have become the "new normal in the global community." This new normal is set within the contexts of poverty, hardship, and chaos—all rooted in conflict, economic, and environmental catastrophes. Das also contends that conflict has been the main driver for humanitarian need over the long-term, while natural disasters have affected people for a period of time.

Morrison describes the painful experiences of conflicts and disasters as a journey of disorientation—the result of identity-crushing occasions that create radical uncertainties of where people stand. When people are marginalized and dehumanized, Stowell explains that they go through three kinds of poverty (economic, relational, and spiritual). In the context of complicated translation projects, Jeffery lists four challenging crisis-like challenges that delay or derail the completion of these objectives; namely: (1) natural disasters; (2) unrest and conflict; (3) antagonistic governments; and (4) non-Christian religious environments.

Within the Canadian context, the journey of disorientation by the displaced has raised complex challenges and questions for the Canadian Church. Chaise raised this sobering conviction and challenge: when it comes to the refugee issue, the Canadian Church has an identity crisis—that we are thinking as Canadians instead of thinking as Christians. He contends, "Showing up as the Church is different from showing up as a bunch of Canadians who are Christians." Grunau posed his own challenge to Christ-followers: Canadian churches need to move from surface hospitality to deeper and more involved engagement (or radical hospitality).

In relation to Christian humanitarian aid, Smith asked Canadian believers a series of tough questions: Is there anything uniquely Christian about Christian humanitarian aid that sets it apart from other forms of community development? Or would a simple apostrophe (') be helpful in clarifying the agent of transformation? Is a "Christian's response to hunger" an accurate description, if the aid was being given by people who self-identify

as Christians but may not necessarily perceive that their work as being informed by their Christian faith and practice?

As a result of the Red Cross Code of Conduct and the ensuing role of Christian humanitarian agencies, Das also asked this set of questions: What is the relationship between evangelism and providing humanitarian aid? Is humanitarian assistance or other acts of compassion by themselves valid ministry and part of the mission of God, even if there is no proclamation and evangelism? If disaster relief, community development, and other ministries of compassion are separated from other aspects of spiritual ministry, what are the objectives of these ministries?

Reflections on the Praxis of Mission

These challenges and questions prod us to engage in deeper reflection and discernment from the Spirit regarding our Canadian role in mission amid global crises. Specifically, this concluding chapter presents three insights that have come out of the reflections in this volume, along with two general action steps in the praxis of mission. Let us begin with the three insights on mission reflection.

Role of the Scriptures in Mission Reflection

Smith highlights the primary role of Scriptures in our mission praxis. He advocates for a deepening commitment to Scriptures, in order to ascertain God's intentions, purposes, and perspectives. He calls on Canadian Christians to allow Scriptures not only to provide motivation and information but also to shape and guide our understanding of mission practice.

In this volume, the chapter contributors modeled such Scripture reflection on mission through the following means: (1) a study on the metaphor of God as king and the Kingdom in the Old Testament to comprehend the significance of poverty (Stovell); (2) a survey on the use of "stranger" in the Bible and the attendant role of God's people to welcome the stranger and be hospitable to the marginalized (Santos and Chan); (3) an

exploration of John 4 as a way forward in responding to the "other," as exemplified by Jesus in His interaction with the Samaritan woman (Chan); and (4) the use of the Sermon of the Mount in Matthew 5–7 as Jesus' manifesto for His Kingdom, as His vision of human flourishing, and "as orienting space by describing evaluative Kingdom distinctives and gracious Kingdom rhythms that order our loves and map our beliefs" (Morrison). In fact, Morrison argues that the Word of God offers displaced people a "macarism" (a pronouncement that a certain way of being in the world produces human flourishing).

In other words, the Scriptures gives fresh courage and a whisper of hope that we can flourish despite suffering and pain. The Bible also gives us perspective on how to be on mission with God in ministering to those in a journey that has created disorientation and despair.

Value of Holistic and Integrated Mission

Aside from the value of Scriptures in mission reflection, this volume also highlighted the benefit of holistic and integrated mission. Das emphasizes that both proclamation and acts of compassion need to be "integrally linked," and that holding a holistic theology of mission restrains us from separating the material from the spiritual. Smith also puts forth a holistic understanding of transformation that involves dismantling structures of evil and establishing right relations with God, human society and its structures, and the natural order of creation. He also presents a tripartite concept of Christian mission, stressing the "continuous state of dialogue and interaction" or "praxeological interconnection" among the three circles of the biblical text, faith community, and mission context. Thus, this interconnection leads to the integration of orthodoxy (involving the integrity of the Gospel) and orthopraxis (the way mission practice is carried out).

Integration happens when poverty is not only understood at the economic level but also at the relational and spiritual levels

(Stovell). Stovell proposes an integrated theology of the Kingdom of God that includes the restoration of God's people to Him, the removal of injustice, and the reconciliation of God's people with one another. The chapter on the TIM Centre showed that a further element of integration occurs when research is meant not for mere data analysis but for use in ministry among immigrant communities in Canada. Research finding must be disseminated and applied to further action-reflection within faith communities (Chapman and Watson).

Posture of Humility, Patience, and Dependence on God

The first two insights in the reflection praxis on mission amid global crises are the primacy of Scriptures and the value of holistic or integral mission. The third insight relates to having a posture of humility, patience, and dependence on God. In the quest of a Chinese-Canadian church to sponsor seven Syrians families that were located in a Lebanese refugee camp, the church leaders learned this key lesson: "It takes much humility, wisdom, and patience to serve the seven Syrian families and to partner with a local Syrian church in Toronto, the church in Lebanon, different Canadian mission agencies, and RHCCC members. In relation to ministering to the Syrian families, the church had to learn how to hurdle cultural and language barriers and expectations in order to communicate love to them" (Santos and Chan). Smith also reminds us of the posture of dependence on God in mission with these words: "All mission activity must be done in an attitude of humility and dependence on God."

The posture of humility, patience, and dependence on God enables us to enter into "holy insecurity." Xenia Chan quotes Fumitaka Matsuoka who defines "holy insecurity" as the "gift of courage to live in the midst of unresolved and often ambiguous state of life." We can navigate this "holy insecurity" when we look to Jesus, who understands our ambiguities and limitations in mission and who feels the disorientation, unresolved suffering, and dehumanization of the globally displaced.

Actions in the Praxis of Mission

Aside from doing theological reflection on mission, this book also offers action steps in addressing the needs of globally displaced and suffering people. The first set is aimed at the active participation of local churches as partners in extending acts of love. The second set of suggested actions is comprised of four lists of practical ways to do mission drawn from the chapters of this book.

Local Churches as Partners in Mission

In Part II of the book, we featured examples of local churches actively engaging mission to the globally displaced in Canada. A Korean-Canadian church intentionally took the time to minister to six Yazidi families in the northern part of Toronto (Song), and a Chinese-Canadian church intentionally sponsored seven Syrian families (Santos and Chan) in collaboration with mission agencies and other churches. A Vancouver-based mission group created communities of welcome for the refugee-claimants and partnered with six local churches to train volunteer teams in showing radical hospitality to families of refugee-claimants.

In addition, Das proposes that the best partners of Christian humanitarian agencies are the local churches. The local churches have the following advantages: (1) they are a community that can help the globally displaced in the latter's rehabilitation and integration into society; (2) they are already an integral part of the community; (3) they offer a personalized approach; (4) they have a communal spirit that allows the displaced to feel safe and gain a sense of belonging; and (5) they have knowledge of the local neighbourhood and have access to an existing volunteer base.

Even in Bible translation, translators benefit from partnership with local churches, especially in the area of reviewer checking. Jeffery comments, "Connecting with partner churches and ministries that are active in the language community home area is an ongoing challenge for displaced language projects. Even if translation work is proceeding in some remote location, the church should still feel that it is 'our' project. In those projects

where church leaders can travel to meet the translation team, such as those that are based in a neighbouring country, there is opportunity for ongoing support." Moreover, a research-based centre in a seminary (like the TIM Centre) can play the significant "role as a catalyst for the exploration of church and immigrant relationships" (Chapman and Watson).

Practical Ways to Engage in Mission

As we read through the experiences of the Christian humanitarian agencies, mission groups, community-based research centers, and local churches, we can learn from four lists of tangible ways to engage in mission amid crises. First, Chaise suggests three ways to overcome what he calls the Canadian Church "identity crisis" in relation to the refugee issue: (1) self-identify as the people of God instead of being formed primarily by the political and social discourses in Canada; (2) accompany and support a refugee; and (3) welcome refugees of all kinds (sponsored or claimant).

Second, to overcome the three types of poverty (economic, relational, and spiritual), Stovell proposed three responses that convey the Gospel to the poor: (1) restoring people to God; (2) removing injustice; and (3) reconciling people to one another. The third list is drawn from the chapter on a Canadian church's experiences in sponsoring seven Syrian refugee families. The church learned three valuable lessons: (1) a service project can morph into a discipleship learning process for the local church; (2) it takes humility, wisdom, and patience to serve refugee families and to partner with other churches and refugee agencies; and (3) sponsoring multiple refugee families requires the whole church to unite and serve together organizationally. Finally, the last list of three items comes out of the chapter on caring for Yazidi refugees in Canada. The author emphasized the importance of understanding (as much as possible) the culture and worldview of cultural groups arriving in Canada, an appreciation of their anxiety about the well-being of family members that are left behind and the desire for reunification, and the vital

requirement of presenting the Gospel in a way that they understand (Song).

Transformation in our Mission Praxis

As we conclude this volume, it is helpful to be reminded of what we learned in the introduction: the intersection of crisis and God's mission provides insights into how we can face crises in a transformative manner. Praxis (action and reflection) in mission leads to transformation. Transformation occurs when victims of a crisis experience a supportive community and a healing process because of Jesus (Morrison). Transformation happens when the people of God welcome strangers and bless the nations (Chaise). Transformation through the Gospel of Jesus brings new and unexpected opportunities for witness (as Adbul and Maria experienced in Grunau's chapter). Transformation also awaits those who engage the displaced by means of holistic or integral mission (Smith).

I leave you with this reassuring affirmation: greater transformation will be seen as we engage in a deeper and more faithful praxis on mission amid global crises for the glory of our global God.