The Mediator

A Journal of Holiness Theology for Asia-Pacific Contexts

ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Bridging Cultures for Christ
1 Timothy 2:5

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Jarrett Davis is a graduate of Mount Vernon Nazarene University in Ohio, USA. He is a 2011 graduate of APNTS with a MA in Christian Communications (Intercultural Studies). His thesis summary presented in this volume of The Mediator is a significant study of social identity related to a church planting model. It has been praised by Filipino leaders and others for its insights. Mr. Davis is planning to pursue a Ph.D. in the area of anthropology/development.

PREFACE

The world is ever changing. Note the recent unexpected crisis in Japan as a giant earthquake, subsequent tsunami and nuclear catastrophe all seemed to strike at once. Upwards of 20,000 people are dead. Large sections of coastal Japan have been devastated. There is more than 300 billion dollars (US) of destruction. There are hundreds of thousands of homeless people. But it is not just Japan that is affected. The economies of countries across that world are feeling the adverse affects. And radiation levels are rising as far away as North America! Such is change.

Sometimes change is slow and incremental. Often it is sudden and unexpected with unforeseen consequences. Not just the physical is affected by change, but the very fabric of life—even the heart and soul of a people.

This volume of *The Mediator* is dedicated to broadly missiological interests. It represents only some of the research, thinking and emphasis of the Donald Owens School of World Mission, located on the campus of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. There are many other exciting areas that capture our attention today as well. Among these is the anti-human trafficking movement and our own Step-UP Program—an educational preventative program aimed especially at out-of-school youth. There is also the cutting edge Cyber-Mission emphasis represented by a recent Cyber-Cultural E-missions Consultation held under sponsorship of DOSWM that explored both how to utilize cyber space for missions, and cyber space as a mission field in its own right. It was led by one of our own APNTS graduates, Professor Emil Kaburuan who is completing his Ph.D. dissertation in Taiwan. There are the developments of web-radio, which was demonstrated by two of our APNTS students, and web-tv. But these are all things for a future edition of *The Mediator*.

This volume deals with other equally interesting aspects of missiology. The lead article is mine this time. It is an article dealing with the constant change in the practice of missions. Change has always been a factor in missions. The difference now is the rate and scope of change.

We are living in a time when change is happening much more rapidly due largely to technological advances; change often can have a world-wide impact. Think of the things like the social phenomenon of FACEBOOK, which in four short years has 500,000,000 users across the generational spectrum.

Robert Bickert offers a very insightful article into the urban mix of Islam and Christianity. This article was urged to have been published quite some time ago, but it is our privilege now to be able to bring it to you in the pages of *The Mediator*. This is a case study conducted in Sierra Leone West Africa, but it has implications in many urban settings today. We trust you will find some enduring principles that may inform your own present or future ministries.

Alexander Schipp is a 2000 graduate of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. He gives us a short case study based in the Philippine context. We appreciate his keen insights and observations. The twin concern of missions, and indeed Christian ministry in general, is both to exegete the gospel message well and to exegete the people with whom we minister at the same time.

We are publishing a summary of Jarrett Davis's thesis about social identity of a community of people in the Philippines who are part of a church plant. This is the first time we have published such a summary. We recommend this case study to you for its fine insights into the social dynamics of people in a Christian ministry setting related to church planting methodology. I hoped many will benefit from the insights presented through the first-hand interviews as well as the analysis of the author.

Please feel free to contact me or interact with me about this volume at rdonahue@apnts.edu.ph.

Robert C. Donahue, D.Min., D.Miss.
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THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE MISSIONARY?

Robert C. Donahue

Introduction

Today missionaries are not welcome in a large percentage of the countries of the world. Many nations issue no visas for missionaries. In many places it is dangerous to be a missionary. In others missionaries are afraid to operate openly for fear of persecution, expulsion or worse. This is not a friendly time for missionaries.

Several decades ago the ecumenical movement declared a virtual moratorium on sending missionaries.[1] Today many western mission agencies are looking at their budgets and downsizing their long term missionary forces. Some seem to think the day is over for sending large numbers of missionaries especially from western nations and are shifting instead to "national workers" in rather large numbers.[2] It might be asked of the missionaries of this new century—especially the missionaries from the western nations—*Where are you going?* Do the changes of our times really necessitate a return of missionaries back to their home countries, a shrinking of long-term missionary forces, a retreat particularly of the western nations from the front lines of missionary work?

Is this a time to a cut back to a skeleton crew of primarily administrative missionaries, and leave the thrust of missionary work including evangelism and discipleship to the "nationals"? Is there no place for missionaries to engage in church planting and evangelism? Are Western missionaries almost useless in much of the work of

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[1] Johannes Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction*, translated and edited by Dale Cooper (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 334 ff. Verkuyl gives considerable background leading to the "moratorium" adopted by the World Council of Churches.

[2] A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, Gary B. McGee, *Introducing World Mission: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 285-286.

missions around the world? These are just some of the questions that come to mind as we consider the situation of missionaries in today's world.

The rapid changes of our time in technology have impacted how missionary work is done. All indications are that this will continue. Will the roles of missionaries also change? Let us consider what has been happening, and what some of the implications are.

The Flat World

Meaning

The concept of a "flat world" illuminates the rapid change in our present world. In only twenty-five years the world has changed dramatically.[3] This has profound implications for missionaries. In some sense the role of missionaries probably has been "changing" from the very beginning of the Christian faith. This is not to say that the essence of what a missionary is has necessarily changed or that the essential role of a missionary has changed. It does mean that societal conditions have changed, transportation has changed, communication has changed, educational expectations have change. A particular mode of operation may have changed; and the way a missionary is perceived may have changed, but the essential role of a missionary remains constant.

Let us consider the proposition of missionary role change in a "flat world." The idea of a "flat world" in the popular vocabulary of today is quite recent (2005), having been introduced by Thomas Friedman, journalist with the *New York Times*. The "flat world" concept will guide our current consideration of the changing role of missionaries.

It is important, therefore, to explore the meaning of this "flat world." The "flat world" is one in which people are able to relate vertically and equally. "Flat" is used in the sense that there is now supposed to be more equality for people to make decisions affecting their lives and to participate in the economic and informational

[3] Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

worlds because of the Internet and globalization. There are various aspects of twenty-first century life that Friedman points to support his premise that the world is flat: globalization, and the Internet being prominent.[4] The business world provides models that may help us consider the impact of the "flat world" concept for missions.

Application in Business

A Foreign Affairs officer for the government of the Netherlands recently made reference to Friedman's "flat world" concept using the phrase in an economic context and meaning referring to "reform wholesale" and "reform retail" to promote entrepreneurship. This means custom making national policies to promote entrepreneurship. This is a key to success to make the new paradigm of partnership workable. It will work hand in hand with an open dialogue between and among the parties involved at all levels. Open dialogue is fundamentally important for the entrepreneurial partnership to succeed.[5] This is just as true for the missionary enterprise of the twenty-first century.

The business world has long been interested in what will work in the emerging globalized world. Much research has gone into finding answers. The forces of globalization have brought significant change both for individuals and for institutions. "Computer and information technology have collapsed time and distance between individuals and institutions all over the world. Disparities between groups are being reduced . . . ."[6]

The Other Side of the Flat World

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[4] Friedman, *The World is Flat.*

[5] Van Ardenne (Minister of Development Cooperation - Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs - The Netherlands), "Permanent renovation: Vietnam in a flat world", speech in Hanoi, Vietnam, September 6, 2006, http://www.minbuza.nl/en/news/ speeches_and_articles,2006/09/Permanent-renovation–Vietnam-in-a-flat-world.html.

[6] *Changing Roles, Changing Relationships: The New Challenge for Business, Nonprofit Organizations, and Government*, A Three Sector Collaborative Project of: The Conference Board, Council on Foundations, Independent Sector, National Academy of Public Administration, National Alliance of Business, National Governors' Association, 4; http://www.independentsector.org/programs/leadership/changeroles.pdf.

Just how flat is our world at the beginning of the twenty-first century? Benjamin J. Allen in his recent installation remarks at the University of Northern Iowa, reflected upon this idea in response to Thomas Friedman's book: *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*. Allen says, "It is difficult to succinctly define what he (Friedman) means by a flat world but saying the 'playing field is now flat' for more than half of the world gets close to it."[7]

The truth is that even though technology has produced a certain leveling and equality, this is simply not true for everyone. Many will be left out of the benefits. There are many who will benefit, but almost as many who will not. In India for instance, "the Dalits and other lower castes will be left out of the 'flat world' and will be consigned to menial tasks such as sweeping roads, scavenging and traditional cultivation. In short, the flat world will not be flat for the lower castes."[8] This is true of the poor classes of people all over the world.

I see this in the squatter areas of Metro-Manila, Philippines. A small percentage of Filipinos are relatively wealthy and have access to computers, the Internet, technologies of all kinds. The schools they attend are well equipped technologically and access to information is readily available along with highly educated teachers and tutors.

But the youth of the squatter areas, if they can afford to attend school at all, find few if any computers or much of any other kinds of technology available to them. Many have never been taught to use a keyboard, and few have even spent any time on a computer let alone the Internet. Information acquisition is largely unknown. Many of these youth cannot even read or write very well, and some not at all. The separation between those who have in this flat world and those who do not have is very wide indeed. And it appears to be getting wider all the time.

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[7] Benjamin J. Allen, "Installation Remarks" (at the University of Northern Iowa), Friday, September 29, 2006, http://www.uni.edu/installation/installation_speech.pdf.

[8] Kancha Ilaiah, "Untouchability In A Flat World," *Deccan Chronicle*, 25 October, 2005.

There are two sides to the "flat world." The two sides—the haves and the have nots—or the flat world and the not so flat world—are increasingly very different. There is a difference in the shear amount of information available, the opportunities for learning, for jobs, for improvements in life generally. These two halves of the world are very real and distinct. They must be taken into account by the modern missionary and mission organizations.

The truth is that the half of the world that is not so flat is growing at a faster rate than the flat world. The flat world is impacting the rest of the world but often not in uplifting ways. The rest of world seems to getting the left-overs or worse, being exploited to make life better for those in the flat world. This is a morally repugnant situation and is indefensible from a Christian worldview.

This provides an opportunity for Christians to step forward with compassion and the uplift of the gospel to be interventionists in the Name of Christ to help make a better world for the not so flat half of the world. The temptation may well be to concentrate smugly upon the flat world with all of its wonders and possibilities. The challenge for the missionary will be to connect with the other half, perhaps utilizing the new technologies where possible, but always attempting to be compassionate, redemptive and discipling. This is a tremendous opportunity for discipleship and education generally from a Christian worldview for spiritual and moral uplift that will in turn contribute to social and material uplift.

Changing Roles, Changing Relationships

The move toward cooperation, partnership and collaboration has become more possible and certainly easier. There is now technology spanning the entire world for virtually instantaneous communication and exchange of information. *A Three Sector Collaborative Project* suggests seven factors that have made collaboration successful: (1) a common goal; (2) a convener; (3) a structure to organize and manage the core talents of those participating; (4) awareness of the geographical dimension of others working on problems; (5) effective communication; (6) periodic evaluation for establishing accountability and generating

information; (7) trust and confidence.[9] Each of these factors echo in the missionary enterprise. We will follow each of these suggested factors in light of the missionary.

A Common Goal

General Call. Let us begin with the idea of a common goal. Is the common goal for missionaries the transformation of the nations through making the peoples of the nations disciples of Jesus Christ? This is a basic question that defines the missionary as well as the mission. Findley Edge has reminded us that the call of God is basically a call to mission; the mission is redemptive both socially and personally. Each Christian is called to this mission and fulfills it through a personal ministry.[10]

The mission is a ministry of transformation. In the Great Commission Jesus refers to it with the imperative to "make disciples" of all nations *(Matthew* 28:19). The discipleship of this passage is grounded in the obedience to everything Jesus commanded (verse 20). Whatever else a missionary may be or do, a missionary is first of all a person called to the ministry that is redemptive, a ministry that is transformational, and a ministry that is missional.

That missional ministry of transformation is certainly general to all. The apostle Paul pled with the Roman believers to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may *discover* (through experience) the . . . perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2). In that "perfect will of God" is found particular and specific roles or functions within the Body of Christ. The apostle Paul teaches us that "There is one body, and one Spirit . . . but unto each of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Ephesians 4:4-7). The apostles continues, "And he gave some to be apostles (missionaries) . . ." (Ephesians 4:11).

Particular Calling. It might be objected that the term "missionary" is not found in the New Testament. Donald Owens notes that, "Historically the Church has found justification for using the term missionary derived from the word *apostolos* (*apostle*) or those

[9] *Changing Roles, Changing Relationships*, 5.

[10] Findley B. Edge, *The Greening of the Church* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1971), 39.

who are *sent*. Biblical scholars seem to be in agreement, that the term *apostle* is not limited to the Twelve . . . [it means] someone who is dispatched to convey a message or do an errand."[11] Both a general call to do missions, and a particular calling of specific missionaries is found in the New Testament.

Paul describes himself as "a slave of Jesus Christ, an apostle, set apart to God's gospel" (Romans 1:1). The cultural and societal back-ground to this introduction is significant. Domestic slaves (*douloi*) were commonplace in ancient Rome; indeed many of those addressed may well have been such slaves themselves. Paul not only identifies with his audience but he uses an illustrative word with which they were well acquainted to describe his specific ministry calling: *apostolos*. This was a common scene in the households of the wealthy for both the rich and the slaves. An *apostolos* was a trusted slave called into the presence of the master of the house and personally entrusted with a message (often written) to be delivered to a designated party. This is Paul's identification of his "missionary" calling.

A Convener

Who is the convener for missionary organizations? Another name for this person could be "facilitator." This person must be able to have the confidence and trust of all who are facilitated. This means a person who is not necessarily an employee of the structure nor a manager in the structure. The person may need to be somewhat of an outsider to the organizational structure, but one who is in personal agreement with the common goal for missionaries.

The reason for the presence of the convener is to facilitate relationships which will in turn form and strengthen true partnerships or collaboration. John Drane points us to the need for Christian ministers generally in the Twenty-first Century to be relational rather than hierarchical in their ministries.[12] Strong relational ministry is

[11] Donald D. Owens, "Finding God's Will in Missions," unpublished paper, October 2006, 2.

[12] John Drane, *Cultural Change and Biblical Faith: The Future of the Church. Biblical and Missiological Essays for the New Century* (Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press, 2000), 122.

demanded by the post-modern culture of the West as well as the expectations of many of the cultures of the world. Without strong relational ministry it will be almost impossible to build strong international and multicultural partnerships. Junias Venugopal suggests further need to study this whole area. "Partnership between Christians from different parts of the world is built upon a mutual foundation of respect and ability to contribute to the missionary enterprise . . . Studies in Christian partnership between different ethnic and national groups will need to address this issue in greater depth."[13]

A Structure to Organize and Manage

Is there a structure that facilitates the organization and management of the core talents of the participating missionaries? The nature of this structure is important. If the structure becomes complex and bureaucratized, then the tendency will most likely to channel energy, personnel and finances into preserving, maintaining and protecting the existing structure. Control and manipulation of personnel and finances will be the order of the day. This may include an empire building mind-set. If, however, the structure is simple and flexible then the tendency will probably be toward dynamic creativity. Personnel need flexibility and freedom to become entrepreneurial, to experiment, to take risks, to emphasize relationships and mutual networking.

Awareness of the Geographical Dimension

Awareness of the geographical dimension of problems should be a given understanding in missionary organizations. Sometimes, however, the organization may give consistent priority to "the headquarter's needs" rather than seriously considering all areas of concern and responsibility. Awareness must extend to regional and local cultural issues rather than assuming only a "global culture." Cross-cultural and intercultural issues are foremost for the emerging mission organizations of the twenty-first century. Missionaries and mission organizations will need to concentrate more than ever in identifying and understanding these kinds of issues. It will be

[13] Junias V. Venugopal, "Prolegomena to a Historical Perspective: The Use of Education as a Mission Strategy in Asia," *Journal of Asian Mission*, 5:1 (2003), 27.

imperative for the smooth operation or mission work—this is not an option.

Effective Communication

This is possibly the most important aspect to be considered. Communication that is effective is a must for any successful missionary organization in the twenty-first century, just as it is important in business. According to David J. Hesselgrave, communication is the basic term which describes the basic missionary task "because the missionary's concern is not for the gospel alone but for the whole counsel of God . . . early missionaries understood their commission to make disciples of all nations involved the ultimate in communication"—persuading people to be faithful and reproducing followers of Christ.[14] There are several things to consider about communication and the modern missionary and missionary organization.

Persuasion. The point that Hesselgrave makes is crucial for understanding what the role of the missionary is. He indicates that a persuasive type of communication is essential in understanding what the early church missionaries were all about. That they tried to convince people to turn from their ways and turn to Jesus Christ to become a faithful follower and learner of his seems apparent. King Agrippa's words to Paul, "Almost you persuade me to be a Christian" are indicative of the communication style of the apostles of the early church (see Acts 26:28). In another place (2 Corinthians 5:11), the apostle Paul says that "we try to persuade men."

Will Durant, in his book, *Caesar and Christ*, makes the point that the early Christians were powerhouses of persuasion: "Nearly every convert, with the ardor of a revolutionary, made himself an office of propaganda."[15] This should be understood as an essential part for every missionary. This is part of the role of the missionary that does not change—persuasive communication that urges people

[14] David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 81.

[15] Will Durant, *Story of Civilization*, vol. 3, *Caesar and Christ* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1944), 602.

to turn from their own ways to Jesus Christ and to follow him faithfully in his way of truth and life (John 14:6).

Two Ways. There is always the sender and the receiver in communication. Both are essential. Communication is not simply the sending of an e-mail or a memo. Communication is two-way; it is interactive. There is sending and receiving, coding and decoding. In the hierarchical mode, communication can be perceived by those at the top as having taken place when a message is sent. This is not the case, of course, because the recipient must receive the message and be able decode and understand it in order to respond, otherwise, the "communication" will not take place. Open communication will only take place if the two parties to the communication perceive a freedom to express and are unhindered in responding to each other. This means that it is important to engender free association, trust and collegiality in order to enhance open communication.

Cognitive and Intuitive. There are various aspects of communication that are just as important as those already mentioned. Another one of these is the difference between cognitive communication and intuitive communication. The first is grounded in logic and objective thinking. The second is founded upon experience and subjective thinking. Both may be correctly employed, but those involved in communication must understand the difference to appreciate it. It must be understood that some cultures are more experienced based than others and vice versa. Understanding the difference will help to decipher the message.

It should be noted that women in some parts of the world at least tend to rely more on intuition rather than cognitive analytical.

How They Think. Robert T. Oliver urges that "communication be more closely allied with cultural anthropology, social psychology, and general linguists . . . that we study . . . not just in terms of what people think but in terms of how they think and formulate their ideas."[16] We must appreciate that there is no one way to communicate—there is no one rhetoric, but many rhetorics. Understanding and focusing on the audience with whom we are communicating is essential. But there is more. It is important to

[16] Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally,* 98.

realize that the peoples of various cultures present much diversity in this area of communication.

Reeducation Needed. It is true that "audiences of different cultures may be so different as to necessitate, not just more education, but reeducation."[17] Communication by the missionaries is not the only communication of importance to be considered. Communication among missionaries and between missionaries and mission "the headquarter's staff" is also important to consider. The missionary may employ cross-cultural considerations in communication, but the staff may or may not be so attuned. It is essential that the thinking underlying communication be thought through by everyone involved. This may indeed involved education and reeducation for all participants.

Communication and Technology. The impact of the new technologies may well have a lasting and increasingly important impact upon missions. The role of the missionary in this increasingly connected world will no doubt include a need for significant understanding of communication theory, and practice and skills to utilize these technologies effectively for communication of the gospel. This will demand continual re-training. Continuing education will become more and more a necessity for missionaries. This will need to be planned for in the busy schedules of missionaries. Mission organizations must plan for continual upgrading of the education and skills of their personnel. Missionaries serving educational and training needs will need to have mission support to keep abreast of their fields and specializations. These educational missionaries will be called upon to fulfill the growing need for training and education of missionary personnel as well as other church leaders.

One key area that the new technologies will need is programming or content. Just as radio and later television found the need for specialists to create programming to make successful use of the those technologies, so missionaries today will be called upon to create content for the new technologies. Much of this will need to be visual since world societies are increasingly demanding visual and

[17] Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*, 99.

graphical content. This will range across various fields such as video production to film making to variations on texting, webcasting, *PowerPoint*, and *podcasting*. *Podcasting* may well be an effective means to target a particular audience. Short video clips used as *virtual videos* may already be used in the millions and may provide a rich approach to gospel communication. The rapid rise and adoption of digital technology and the Web in Asia may actually replace television as the primary methodology for CBN ministries in the next few years.[18]

Communication and Missionary Education. We will need mis-sionaries who can communicate well by utilizing the new technologies. More importantly we will need missionaries who can create content to make effective use of these new technologies. Schools of missions must include education and training for prospective missionaries to make effective use of technology. Skill training and technological education must be integrated with a broad curriculum of missiology and Christian education. This will help missionaries to be able to create and produce the stories and ideas that will convey the gospel particularly in visual forms.

Blessed will be the schools that can provide both for the older technologies such as radio, television and print media, and the new technologies of video production, podcasting, PowerPoint, and virtual video (among other things). This emphasis upon technology will need to be integrated with a first-class understanding of cultural anthropology and ethnographical studies, and biblical theology and biblical hermeneutics. The lessons of history, linguistics, and good mission practice will need to be combined with evangelism and discipleship and church planting into a sharp integrated approach to missions.

Evaluation for Accountability and Information

Evaluation and assessment on a periodic basis will generate information and accountability. This will benefit everyone if the evaluation is done across the board. Evaluation must be done horizontally rather than vertically—among colleagues and

[18] Sterling Huston, IEC Chair, "Digital Technology to Replace Television in Asia," *IEC Newsletter*, October 2006 (sighting an address by Gordon Robertson, President of CBN Asia); http://community.gospelcom.net/Brix:pageID=20243.

collaborators or partners rather than between employers and employees or between managers and the managed if good solid and reliable information to be gained. The first is an example of the kind of "flat" relationships that have been possible through the technological revolution of the twenty-first century. The second is an example of the top-down, largely outdated authoritarian approach going back to the start of the industrial age.

Further, accountability will be established through periodic evaluation. If this is done in the horizontal version, the accountability will be mutual which will be more useful because everyone is accountable. In a hierarchical arrangement those at the top are generally not held accountable which makes for a weaker system, and sometimes a more dangerous arrangement (note the ENRON company in which top management was only held accountable belatedly and then only through the courts).

In this time of rapid change, however, it may be that the choice is not necessarily exclusively either the one or the other. Scott Sunquist argues strongly for blended models as the wave of the future. "Those who are tempted to resist the flattening and hold fast to hierarchical control, as well as those who relish the idea of the democratic and flat world need to rethink things. The future is with those who can develop a blended model."[19] Sunquist seems to negate the powerful implications of the "flat world" revolution. His point of caution is well taken. It is always wise to be careful and cautious in the midst of rapid change. To create that "blended model" may be the great challenge facing current mission organizations.

No matter how a new model is shaped, however, the new model cannot be simply a new version of the hierarchical model. It must include a strong element of the egalitarian, which is compatible with the implications of the "flat world" reality the new technologies have made possible. Otherwise great frustration will undoubtedly result. And for missionaries, the standard of holiness—social holiness—must pre-dominate not only with its concerns for

[19] Scott W. Sunquist, "Presbyterian Mission in a Flat World" (An address delivered at the Wilmington Missionary Conference, 25 July, 2006).

transformation and righteousness, but for reconciliation and justice. Together these elements are key standards for evaluation.

Trust and Confidence

Trust and confidence are essential to the well being of any organization. Trust and confidence takes time to build. Time, shared experiences, and a history of interactions are needed to build the relationships and experiences with one another that lead to trust and confidence. Trust and confidence is not a given just because we may share a common goal, belong to the same mission organization or hold the same doctrine. Trust is at a deeper level of human experience than these things. Mutual respect is involved and a shared openness. If the "us" and "you" continue to prevail as a mode of thinking, then trust and confidence will be slow indeed to build.

Trust and confidence are built upon attitudes. At my faculty induction address given at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary in the Philippines some years ago, I made the following points:

> I believe the practice of missions is crucially influenced by our attitudes. Godly attitudes of the heart are vitally important for effective missions. Christians must confront their racism, prejudices, and paternalistic attitudes if the peoples of the world are to hear and receive effectively the gospel. Billy Graham has said: "Racism and ethnic hostility is the foremost social problem facing our world today . . . our world seems caught up in a tidal wave of racial and ethnic tension" (Billy Graham, "Racism and the Evangelical Church," Christianity Today 37 (11): 27). It also threatens the integrity of the world missionary enterprise . . . A change of heart is essential to eliminating our sinful attitudes. To say that a change of heart is the answer alone is not complete. The heart change must produce a change in the outer social structures if it is to be of real value . . . Often prejudiced behaviors have resulted due to neglect or indifference, but with unresolved fear, hostility, or pride

> in the background . . . This deficient model can often be seen in the practice of missions.[20]

Racism has been one of the great sins of the Christian church, and even in the missionary enterprise. It has happened often because some of the most essential features of the gospel itself have been suspended or abandoned in the name of doing good. Gordon Aeschliman reminds us:

> Third World leaders often suffer under the legacy of missionaries who considered elements of our calling optional. The gospel witness lacks integrity in many suffering parts of the world where the missionary has sided with the oppressor in the name of "neutrality" or "evangelism-only." South Africa is an example. Black leaders regularly refer to missionaries as people who gave them the Bible and stole their land.[21]

Trust and confidence are built upon the bedrock of positive open attitudes and authentic relationships. Secrecy, authoritarianism, prejudice, paternalism, racism—and a host of kindred attitudes will destroy the basis for trust and confidence. Open hearts, and open minds toward one another, mutual respect and encouragement will foster the kind of climate in which trust and confidence will spring forth in abundance. This is vital for individual missionaries and for missionary organizations.

The Place of Theology for Twenty-first Century Missionaries

Reconciliation

Twentieth Century missions seems to have been driven largely by Western perspectives and ideologies. The Twenty-first Century hopefully will see a commitment to a solid Biblical theology to drive missions into the future. This new century can witness mission driven by the whole church—the whole church participating

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[20] Robert C. Donahue, "The Journey of One Missiologist," *The Mediator*, 2:1 (October 2000), 50-51.

[21] Gordon Aeschliman, *Global-Trends: Ten Changes Affecting Christians Everywhere* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 107.

in the Great Commission of giving the whole gospel to the whole world.

In practical terms this will mean not only new faces but new perspectives. For this to happen successfully, the church as a whole must take seriously the call of Christ to do reconciliation—especially reconciliation among the members of the Body of Christ. We have too often in the past ignored this or been ambivalent about it. But the reconciliation must be so thorough that not only is equality achieved, but actual servanthood and humility. It must come to the point that we are all engaged in building up one another in the Lord, encouraging, and preferring one another. We must intentionally engage in the work of empowering God's people to "do the work of ministry" (see Ephesians 4:12).

Holiness

Holiness as Transformation. An issue of rising importance to believers across the theological spectrum is holiness. This is no longer (if it ever was) the private domain of the holiness churches. Holiness speaks of the quality of God himself; it is about purity (Acts 15:8). It is certainly about wholeness (1Thessalonians 5:23). It is also about transformation (*metamorphoō*, Romans 12:2; Galatians 4:19). These are all biblical words and concepts referring essentially to the same thing. I Peter 1:15-16 reminds us that we are to be holy as the LORD is holy. Paul seems to teach in Romans 12:1-2 that this holiness is accomplished by *metamorphosis*, an utter changing through a process from one thing into another. This is the picture of the caterpillar that transforms into the butterfly.

One of the key reasons for this rise in concern for holiness is the failure of spiritual transformation in many churches—the lack of visibly changed lives outside and inside. John Ortberg notes that believers have been settling for at least two major counterfeits: (1) confusion of the Christian life with a bare minimum entrance requirement for heaven, (2) outward appearances substituting for real spiritual maturity.[22] Real transformation of personal life as well as

[22] John Ortberg, "True (and False) Transformation," *Leadership Journal* (July 1, 2002), 1-4.

society, beginning with the essential relationships toward God, then toward others, is at the heart of Wesleyan-Holiness missiology.

Social Holiness. Our missiology in the new century must be driven by a biblically and theologically sound holiness dynamic. John Wesley's view that "there is no holiness except social holiness" must be taken seriously and applied in the world of the twenty-first century. This is the charter of the Church of the Nazarene—it is a call to holiness as we identify with the despised Nazarene who touches the lives of the poor toiling masses of the world. It is indeed a "social holiness." Holiness does have a person application, but the application to social context and relationships is crucial. Holiness must penetrate the very fabric of the social order in which we minister.

Scripture

The Bible will continue to be the authority and resource for missions into the new century. The Bible will continue to show itself as an alive book which speaks especially to the developing nations of the world. The concerns of the Two-Thirds world will not necessarily be the same as those in the developed world, and certainly not the same as those found in a modernist-oriented Western world. Missionaries will need to appreciate the Bible as a book of power and authority. John Wesley certainly pointed the way in this regard with his emphasis upon the Bible. He was known as a man of the "one book"—the Bible. It would be well for missionaries of our own time to concentrate upon the Bible as the God-breathed book that exudes both authority for service and power for salvation and transformation.

The tendency of the modern Western church towards an emphasis upon biblical criticism should probably be minimized by missionaries as largely irrelevant. This is not to depreciate reason, but to give a strong emphasis to experience. Missionaries should emphasize the Bible as in touch with much of emerging world Christianity. It should be understood as addressing the concerns of worldviews predominate in the Two-thirds world and a post-modern worldview generally. The power and authority of the Bible for much

of the world in the twenty-first century is apparent.[23] Missionaries need to understand this and be ready to confidently assert the Bible's authority for faith and practice, and trust its power to accomplish salvation and transformation.

Missiology

Missiology will be seen as the necessary applied theology of the whole church. Therefore, participation from the local level will increase significantly. Even theological and missions training will become more and more in concert with the local church and grass-roots of the worldwide church.

Missiology should be viewed as the integration of the disciplines of theological and biblical studies. In particular theology of mission should be understood as the foundation and fountain of theology. It is the doing of theology.

True theology is not a contemplative pursuit but a real life exercise in discipleship. Missiology understands that believers are directed by the Great Commission to make disciples. Missions is not just the domain of missionaries, but missionaries share with all believers in the work of making disciples.

Bishop B. F. Westcott once observed, the great danger of today is that we will allow the ministerial offices to supersede the general power bestowed upon the whole church. That power can, and has been, awesome. It is the power from the Holy Spirit particularly designed for the fulfilling of the command of Christ to make disciples. This new century is the time for a renewal of this grand general power to be restored in the church practice. The fulfilling of the Great Commission is not for a select few but is the commission of the entire church! God in Christ has given his Holy Spirit to his church to fulfill his commission.[24] This is a return to emphasis upon the priesthood of all believers concept stated by Peter: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises

[23] Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the in the Global South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 18ff.

[24] Robert C. Donahue, "The Great Commission," *The Mediator*, 3:1 (2001), 111-112.

of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9, NIV). This passage implies no special order of persons for declaring the message of God. Here is a call for all believers to be equally employed in such declaration—so-called clergy and laity alike.

Other Foundational Theological Understandings

There are several other key theological ideas that will predominate. Most of these have counter-parts in the past. Christi-An Bennett has pointed out some of the foundational doctrines that propelled the early Wesleyan world missionary efforts. These included: a universally available redemption; the entire sanctification of believers in perfect love; the doctrine of divine providence; the power and authority of the Bible; and the evangelical understanding of the exclusive claims of Christianity.[25]

Other emphases could be mentioned including prayer, suffering, and martyrdom. Martyrdom may seem a bit extreme unless one considers that the past century may well have produced the largest number of Christian martyrs in the history of the church. Wilbert Shenk notes:

> Some scholars have argued that a touchstone in the formation of the New Testament canon was whether a document helped prepare the disciple community for suffering, even unto death. A corollary for a missionary church in the twenty-first century may well be that only that theology which prepares the church to bear witness to Jesus Christ, even at the price of death, will be accredited.[26]

Theology as Praxis

The new century seems to herald some new ways of understanding theology. Certainly there will be an increased concern for experience, and a desire for people to make sense of their world and particular life experiences and lifestyles. Integration and synthesis will be the order of the day in theology. Praxis will be of ultimate

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[25] Christi-An C. Bennett, "Theological Foundations of Wesleyan Missiology in Historical Perspective," *The Mediator*, 3:2 (2002), 68-72.

[26] Wilbert R. Shenk, *Changing Frontiers of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series, No. 28 (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 190.

importance and relevance. Affective or experiential learning will become equal with the cognitive learning of the recent past. More importantly, theology will be understood as a life long process in the light of praxis and will take place more and more in the context of the work place rather than in the theological schools.[27]

Missionaries of the Twenty-first Century

In Essentials the Same

In essentials, the missionaries of the Twenty-first Century should be no different than those of the First Century. Whether we use *apostolos* or *missionary* should make little difference. Whether we refer to mission or missions may not be all that important. David J. Hesselgrave says:

> . . . let us not allow terminological confusion to undermine the primary task of sending missionaries into all the world to do precisely what the first missionaries did - evangelize and gather believers into local congregations where they can be taught the ways and words of Christ. *That is their specialized task. Whatever else they do by way of doing good to all people (Gal. 6:10), they do, not because they are missionaries, but because they are Christians and belong to the larger church of Christ!*[28]

Essential Nature of the Missionary

There is some debate over just who are the missionaries. In Protestant organizations, until recently the term has applied primarily to those who were involved in the preaching-teaching-evangelism ministry and particularly in church planting. There is ample evidence for this usage in the New Testament. Now there is a tendency to apply the term to a broad spectrum of persons who may not be involved in any way in preaching-teaching-evangelism or church planting. These persons may be administrators, academics,

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[27] Drane, *Cultural Change and Biblical Faith*, 128.

[28] David J. Hesselgrave, *Today's Choices for Tomorrow's Missions: An Evangelical Perspective on Trends and Issues in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 90.

maintenance engineers, secretaries or accountants. There may be a broader understanding of missionary possible. But it should be understood that evangelism and discipleship are always at the essential core of who a missionary is. The sharing of the gospel is primary. All believers are to be engaged in carrying out the ministry of reconciliation which is the bedrock of the mission of God (2 Corinthians 5:18).

Those who proclaim the message of Christ for salvation certainly participate in the mission of God (Romans 10:9-15). Jesus commanded the disciples to pray specifically for "laborers" to be sent into the harvest. These laborers surely are believers who participate in the great mission of God to reconcile the world unto himself.

All believers are called to participate in the mission, though each believer will have a specific function with the scope of spiritual gifts. "Missionary" might be understood by some as referring to every believer, but that does not seem to be the case in the New Testament (see Ephesians 4:11). Biblically, the term should probably be reserved for those who are engaged specifically in the preaching-teaching-evangelism and church planting type of ministries, but even some of the key missionaries of scripture were tent-makers such as Paul. All believers, however, participate in the mission of Christ generally, although they may have other specific designations.

Missions is the work of vast numbers in the church worldwide. "The Great Commission cannot be reduced to a voluntary activity engaged in by a few enthusiasts."[29] If in the past the idea of missionaries has been rather narrowly defined, in this new century it is being vastly expanded.

The Wesleyan-holiness movement is a case in point. From its early beginnings with John Wesley there was a broad participation by the laity in the work of ministry. Vijeya Chandrakumar Abraham makes this observation in his recent dissertation about laity and in particular the school-going youth: "These are two key groups that the Church should target for training [training people to do evangelism]. The history of the Salvation Army and the Wesleyan movement show

[29] Eddie Gibbs and Ian Coffey, *Church Next: Quantum Changes in Christian Ministry* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001), 60.

that these provided the majority of evangelists."[30] This evangelistic spirit brought a broad spectrum of participation and drove the work of missions at home and abroad.

Proliferation of Missionaries

The number of missionaries will rise. In this new century there will be more missionaries, not fewer.[31] There could well be an army of laity who step forward to fill the ranks of missionaries in this new century. There are many in the West who can take early retirement or can even serve effectively after retirement who are willing to serve Christ as missionaries. Many are ready to serve short-term including school-aged youth. We should encourage this as a wonderful opportunity for service and positive worldview adjustment rather than discourage the youth. Youth have tremendous energy, idealism and enthusiasm to offer, and many can be highly committed if they are challenged. There are youth all over the world who want to make a difference in their world and are eager to be challenged to do so. As Herbert Kane pointed out, this lay apostolate is not a new thing in the church:

> In the first century there were no missionary societies such as we have today and there were few professional missionaries outside the apostolic group. The gospel was spread far and wide throughout the Roman Empire by laymen—soldiers, slaves, merchants, and even displaced persons. Luke informs us that those that were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen went everywhere preaching the gospel (Ac 8:4).[32]

The persons who will be the missionaries are already shifting dramatically. The large numbers will no doubt arise from the so-called laity, and the church at large may well become much more personally engaged in the direct work of missions worldwide.

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[30] Vijeya Chandrakumar Abraham, *Rediscovering the Spiritual Gift of the Evangelist and Its Implications for the Church Today*, a dissertation presented to the Asia Graduate School of Theology Philippines, Doctor of Missiology, March 2006, 199.

[31] Aeschliman, *Global-Trends*, 105.

[32] J. Herbert Kane, *Winds of Change in the Christian Mission* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), 117-118.

Destinations of Twenty-first Century Missionaries

There has been great focus upon the 10/40 Window area of the world in recent years led by Brazilian mission leader Luis Bush. Although at present there is only a small fraction of missionaries and mission resources going into this least evangelized part of the world, the momentum seems to be gaining to bring personnel and resources to bear on this gospel needy part of the world. The Back to Jerusalem movement out of China has been focusing on this area for sometime and challenging Chinese missionaries to go to these difficult "closed" nations.

China itself is receiving much attention as a destination for missionaries. Obviously the missionaries do not go in the historic style, but none-the-less missionaries are finding their way to this great diverse nation to share the gospel and make disciples. India is also a nation both sending and receiving missionaries. Many of the missionaries are Indians going to hard to reach parts of India itself. This is also true in places like Indonesia and Nigeria.

Some very interesting destinations of the twenty-first century missionaries are the United States and the European Union. It is interesting because for the past 200 years missionaries have tended to be sent from these places. Now they represent vast fields for missionary work. Even the late Pope John Paul II noted the great need to re-evangelize vast regions in the twenty-first century where the Christian church had previously been very strong. Today nominalism prevails, and these areas have millions of non-Christians as well.

Much of this involves nationals following their own people in the mass migrations taking place. This has been done in the past history of missions and will continue in the present. It should not be thought strange for Indians to go to the USA to minister among Indians who have immigrated there. And I should add that Indians could serve as missionaries among the postmodern Americans, perhaps very well. Mission agencies should be strategizing how to most effectively field missionaries in the USA and European Union.

Missionaries of this new century will be from everywhere to everywhere—and this should be encouraged and strategized for effective results.

Senders of Twenty-first Century Missionaries

The vast numbers of missionaries for the past two hundred years have come from the western nations of Europe and North America. This is changing dramatically already and will most likely continue to change for the foreseeable future. The number one sending nation may soon be Korea. Korea could conceivably be replaced by others such as China, India, even Nigeria, Indonesia and the Philippines could be in contention for first, second or third places as sending nations. The ambition and vision of evangelical leaders in the Philippines is have 200,000 Filipino missionaries (Outstanding Filipino Witnesses) by 2010.[33] The numbers of missionaries coming from the Two-Thirds World will continue to increase dramatically, but Western missionaries should also continue to be sent in large numbers.

Conclusions

Change is the one thing that can be counted on in the next few decades of the twenty-first century. Changes will be driven by many things: new technologies, populations shifts, economic dislocations, information explosion, rising educational expectations, social unrest. The Internet by itself may solidify the universal use of English for cross-cultural communication and at the same time spur the prominence of Mandarin.[34] As the twentieth century can be referred to as the American Century, it is possible that the twenty-first century will be known as the Chinese Century.

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[33] Luis Pantoja, Jr., Sadiri Joy B. Tira, Enoch Wan, editors, *Scattered: The Filipino Global Presence* (Manila: LifeChange Publishing, Inc., 2004), 201.

[34] Janna Quitney Anderson (Elon University), Lee Rainie, Director, *The Future of the Internet II*, September 24, 2006, Pew Internet & American Life Project, 1615 L Street, NW - Suite 700 Washington, D.C. 20036, 3.

All these changes will impact the role of missionaries. The essential nature of the missionary as a primary agent of spiritual and social change through evangelism, discipleship and church planting will not change. The tools that are used, the situations, indeed the missionaries themselves may change. It will be increasingly difficult for Western missionaries to function well in many countries, but there will continue to be a need for them around the world. The temptation for Westerners will be to substitute the giving of donations in place of personal involvement. The emerging churches of the Two-Thirds World are already rushing personnel into the harvest fields of the world. It may be the partnership and collaboration both in funding these personnel and sending their own personnel may continue to be a great work for the Western churches and mission organizations. Whether funding of personnel is a focus or not, collaboration and partnership should be the key to missionary operation of the future.

Some basic foci on role changes include missionaries equipped for and involved more in communication of the gospel utilizing many of the new technologies. Even this communication will need to be re-thought in terms of cross-cultural and multicultural dimensions. This means that the missionary role will call for more sensitivity to cultural perspectives and considerations rather than mission policy or denomina-tional mores. This will not be an easy role assignment to fulfill.

There will be an increasing need for a few highly educated mis-sionaries to provide high level research and missiological understanding for missionary strategy. They will be instrumental in the preparation of a new core of reproducing missionary leaders. But it is essential that these persons become collaborators and partners with all the other participants in the great missionary thrust of our time. They should not be viewed or treated as "elite" or exclusive.

For an increasing majority the roles of the missionary may well be short-term and mobile. The missionary role of tent-maker probably will become a major role filled by the missionaries of this new century. This may mean partial support from local and district churches and individuals as well as income from professions and

businesses. This will no doubt be a major role for missionaries from the Two-thirds world, and increasingly from the western nations as well.

Missionaries will fill roles that are less directive and administrative and become coaches, collaborators and partners in mission projects, leader preparation, and pioneer work. The missionary role will be one who works along side of local people much more than in the past. For many mission organizations this will demand considerable change in structures, assumptions, policies and practices. More importantly it will call for a set of visionary leaders willing to learn to operate with a high degree of equity and collaboration in an emerging flat world paradigm.

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"STRENGTH" –
BEING FILLED WITH ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD!

Robert A. Bickert

Introduction

Why am I a Christian today and not an unbeliever?

Reason: The means of my salvation is my great great grandfather, Henry Wiegman.

Why? My grandfather Wesley enjoyed telling me stories about his growing up years on the farm. One story he liked to tell was about his grandfather Henry who lived with Wesley's parents during his senior years. Henry had served as a Methodist lay preacher and evangelist. He had planted the Methodist Church in the German community where Wesley lived. My grandfather talked about his grandfather's habit of prayer praying out in the barn where they stabled their horses. Grandpa said, "I could hear my grandfather praying out there. I would go to the barn door and open it a crack and look in. I could see my grandfather on his knees with his arms raised up to heaven and his face looking up as he prayed, 'Lord save little Wesley and make him a blessing in life. Bless my children and my grandchildren and may they live to bless the world for Jesus.'"

Grandpa told me, "I am a minister of the gospel today because of my grandfather's prayers."

Yes, why am I a believer? Because of my great grandfather's prayers for his family in the horse barn.

Why? What is the principle involved in prayer?

Dennis Kinlaw, founder of the Francis Asbury Society and past president of Asbury University, explains this principle in his message,

"Prayer, are you Pregnant?" at the Cove in N.C. in 2006.[1] This is Kinlaw's insight,

> That something can happen in my heart that can make a difference in someone else's circumstances and possi-bilities, in another persons' privileges and changes. At the heart of intercession is the person who interposes himself [stands between God and another person, an intercessor]. That person who interposes himself [who stands between God and another person] makes the saving power of God a possible opportunity for somebody, [the person interceded or prayed for]. That means that the key to every person's well being and salvation rest outside of him/herself in someone else.

What does this mean? It means that because my great, great grandfather, Henry Wiegman, interceded for his family, I came to faith in Christ.

Why did Paul pray for the believers in the City of Ephesus, as we read from Ephesians 3:14-21? Remember what we learned about the living conditions in Ephesus in our DVD tour Tuesday. We heard that the believers faced daily conflict; they lived under daily persecution, even the threat of death or death itself.

Paul wanted these believers to be strong in faith. Paul wanted these believers to overcome their persecution and stand faithful for Jesus, their Lord. Paul wanted them to be victorious in the face of death.

Paul wanted their life to reflect the character of their God. Paul knew they could be strong if they understood their God's character. In fact, Paul wanted them to imitate their God's character, to be like God—"Be imitators of God as little Children and walk in love" (Eph. 5:1-2).

The reason why Paul wrote a letter to these Ephesian believers was to explain the character of their God and to tell them how they were to imitate God's character.

How did Paul begin to explain God's character?

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[1]Dennis Kinlaw, *Prayer, Are You Pregnant*, DVD/CD (Wilmore, KY: www.Francis AsburySociety.com).

Paul began by telling the Ephesians what God had done for them, what he gave them.

An outline of Ephesians 1 looks like this: 1:1-14; First Prayer 1:15-23; 3:14-21 Second Prayer; 4:1 Commands.

Paul called what God had done for them, *Blessings*! Paul lists seven blessings:

1. Chosen to be holy and without blame before him in love—God's major goal
2. Predestined to be adopted as God's sons
3. Redeemed
4. Forgiven
5. Revealed God's mysterious plan
6. Inherited into God's family
7. Sealed with the Holy Spirit.

What was so shocking, so radically different about their God's actions, about God's blessings in contrast to their common cultural beliefs?

Paul pointed out that their God initiated giving. God gave to them first without them asking, without them begging, without them giving a sacrifice.

What was the custom or rule for how the Ephesians were to approach their God?

They must bring a sacrifice. The Igorot people of the Central Cordillera know that they must bring a sacrifice in order to approach their creator god Kabunon.

When we were in Cambodia, I watched our neighbor every morning bring a sacrifice to their spirit worship house, their *Neakta,* in the corner of their yard. Inside this little temple was a Buddha. The homeowner brought a gift of sacrifice such as tea in a cup, some type of food or fruit, and lit incense sticks to satisfy these spirits so that they would protect and bless the family. Every home and business had a *Neckta* in front of it. Everyone wants to be protected and blessed.

Paul called God's initiative *grace*—God reaching out to them out of his love, God putting his arms around them.

Did you notice how Paul addressed God? What term does Paul use in Ephesians 1:2-3? "Grace to you and peace from God our Father."

Father!

How many fathers do you have?

How many gods and goddesses did the Ephesian's worship annually?

They had built at least 20 temples to house and worship their gods.

Remember, every god must receive a suitable sacrifice so that they will bless the city. Every member of the city must participate so as not to anger the gods who can withhold blessings as well as bring a curse.

The term, "Father" implies how many? One!

The term "Father" also implies something else, what? The term implies the source of our blessings, our provisions, our food, our protection, our security.

Father also implies something even more significant—a relationship; a loving relationship between a father and his children.

I read the story of a lady from Pakistan whose husband was a high official in the Pakistani government. A friend gave her a copy of the New Testament. As she began to read, she felt it was impossible for her to believe that people could begin a prayer with "Our Father." One thing she knew about Allah was that he was not like humans. He was greater than humans and infinitely different and that he could never be described in human terms, and certainly never as directly as father. However, when she came to faith in Jesus Christ, her first response was to lift her heart and say, "Father," and the moment she uttered the word, she fell to the floor in absolute terror of being killed for her impertinence. But instead, the heavenly father came to her in all his love and compassion and she heard one word: "Daughter." She recalled, "I

wept uncontrollably at the reality that God in his sovereignty and greatness could belong to me in that kind of a relationship."[2]

Paul continues his greeting, "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus who has chosen us before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blame before him in love." God's purpose for us, chosen to "be holy and without blame," comprises Paul's theme for writing.

God used a common relational term used among the people of the Ancient Near East to explain his relational nature, his character; the word *"holy."*

It is important to understand that all the gods and goddesses in the ancient world were called holy. Also, things or persons that belonged to these gods were also called holy such as the temple. People who served the gods were holy; temple prostitutes were considered holy; temple priests were called holy.

Why? Because of *their relational connection* with their god or goddesses.

God used anther commonly used practice in the Ancient Near East in the time of Abraham and Moses, the term *"covenant"* to teach Israel about his relational character.

A covenant is an agreement between two parties or people like a marriage contract.

The term "holy" can only be understood in the context of the covenant relationship.

What binds a husband and wife together is a relationship between the two, an affinity, like a magnet, to the likes and dislikes of the other person.

What unites a husband and wife is their ability to communicate, to share one's heart with the other, the ability to give oneself completely to the other. This is what unites a couple as one flesh.

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[2] Dennis Kinlaw, *This Day with the Master* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2002), Feb. 8.

My wife and I had been married four years. We believed we had a good marriage. We were in ministry together. But one day in the fall of 1966 after the birth of our second son, my wife told me that she felt like committing suicide. This shocked me. What was wrong? Kay had often told me that we could not communicate. Oh yes, we talked about our food, about taking care of the children, about our schedule and work, but not things from the heart. Something was blocking true heart-to-heart communication. Kay felt that I was holding something from her and her imagination kept building whatever it was into a huge mountain. Within a couple of weeks of our marriage, Kay shared her heart, her deepest secrets with me. She was expecting me to do the same. Instead, I became silent and closed the conversation. My failure to become transparent blocked true communication and prevented us from becoming one. While in my third year in seminary, one of my classmates gave a message in senior preaching class in the spring of 1967 that spoke to my heart. It was like a light turning on in my thinking. "I see now the problem between Kay and myself. We cannot communicate." When Kay returned home from teaching school, I quickly greeted her with, "Honey, I know the problem between us—we cannot communicate!"

Her response, "Yes, I have been telling you that for years!" That evening, after putting our two boys to bed, I took Kay by the hand and said, "I want to share my hidden self with you."

That night we truly became one flesh, nothing hidden between us. What a wonderful feeling.

Paul reflects back to what God told the children of Israel after he had delivered them out of 400 years of slavery in Egypt. God wanted them to understand his character as a loving father to his children.

Let's read Exodus 19:3-6. Notice the relational terms used, "holy," "covenant" in v. 3.

> And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a

> special treasure to Me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'"

"These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Notice the condition for a relationship with Israel's God who had delivered them from slavery: "if . . . then."

God acted first. He reached out to the two million children of Israel.

God extended Grace: "I brought you to My self," like an eagle swooping down and picking them up.

"Now because of what I have done, because I loved you, I brought you to Myself like a husband bringing his bride."

Therefore, God asked them to do certain things so they could have a relationship with God, like a husband and a wife. Therefore, "*If* you *obey* my voice—Listen, hear, if you keep my covenant—the ten words or commandments."

These 10 Commandments explained what God liked and what God did not like. God was saying, "If we are going to live together in a relationship, you must obey me, you must please me, hate what I hate, love what I love. *Then* you will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. In other words, *you will be in a right relationship with me."*

God said, "You must be holy because I am holy. You must have my character, you must imitate me, so we can freely communicate with one another."

Did the Ephesians understand this relational character of their God?

What was Paul's means to help them understand?

Paul prayed.

Keep in mind what Kinlaw explained about prayer: *The key to every one's well being rests outside of him/herself in someone else.*

Lets look at Eph. 1:15: "For this reason." This refers back to what God did for them cited in verses 1:4-14, just like God's deliverance

of Israel out of Egyptian slavery—"chosen to be holy and without blame."

Prayer: *"Oh Father, please give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus, open their spiritual eyes, the eyes of their heart, their mind, so that they will really be enlightened."*

Notice verse 18, the purpose of Paul's prayer, "in order that." This is what Paul really wanted them to know, to understand.

1. **Know** the hope of God's calling—to be holy and blameless, that is, know how to relate to their Father, know how to relate to God's children, be blameless. Live together in right relationships; act toward one another with pure motives. Do not take advantage, do not steel, do not lie, do not covet (the 10 Commandments).

God created us so we can be God's conversational partners. Live in a right relationship to God and to others.

2. **Know** that we are God's inheritance; we are his wealth, his jewels.

3. **Know**, understand the power God has given to his children—the exceeding greatness of his mighty power. What is this power? The Greek root is *dunamis* from which we get the word dynamite.

How did God illustrate his mighty power given to believers?

(1) He raised Christ from the dead (v. 20).

(2) He seated Christ at His right hand (v. 20).

(3) He put all things under His feet (v. 22).

(4) He made Him head over the Church, His body (v. 22).

(5) He made us alive who were dead (2:1-7).

(6) He united Gentiles and Jews in one body (2:11-22).

Paul continues his prayer in Chapter 3:14 ff.: "for this reason."

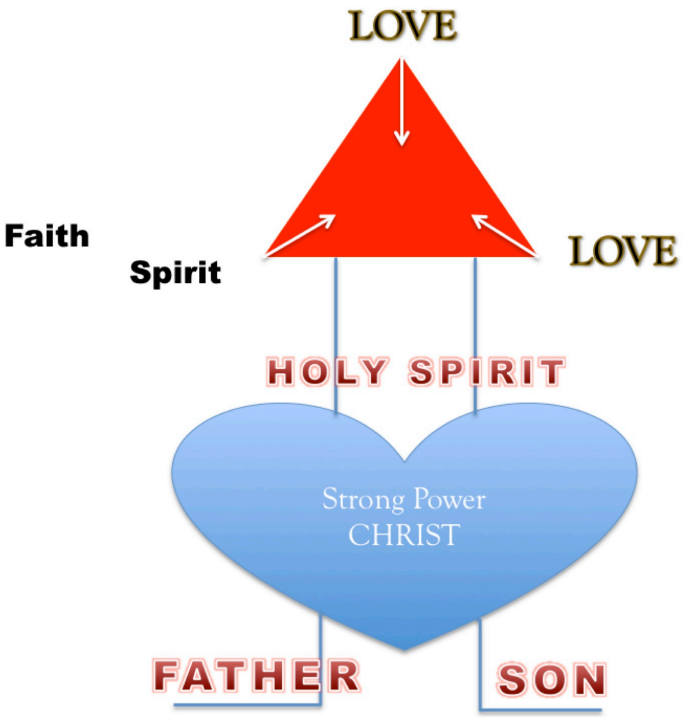
Paul prayed that the Ephesian believers would be strong (3:16).

Did the Ephesians need to be strong in order to withstand their pagan culture?

Did they need to be strong to withstand the pagan practices such as the sexual worship of Artemis, their patron goddess of fertility?

Did they need to be strong to be true to their Lord, Jesus Christ in the face of death?

Means of Strength: "with Power"



How could they be strong? What means did Paul give?

Notice the Trinitarian structure in this diagram of the triangle: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

Notice the arrows moving to the center from each member of the Trinity.

Each member focuses on the other, lifts up the other. Jesus used the word, "glorify" or "glorified" five times in his prayer in John 17:1-5. "Father, glorify me as I have glorified you on earth." Jesus lifted up the

Father, and the Father is now lifting up Jesus. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit, when he is come, will "glorify" or lift him up (John 16:14). Each member of the Trinity is glorifying or lifting up the other. They are other oriented or other focused. This is the character of *agape* love, "other oriented", or "other focused." The central characteristic of the Trinity is love. ***God is love.***

The Trinity is the source of our strength—power, the capacity to love others more than ones' self.

Let's look at the four purposes Paul prayed for:

1. **That** he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man,

2. **That** Christ may dwell in your body through faith,

3. **That** you, having been rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the width and length and what is the depth and height—to know the love of God which passes knowledge,

4. **That** you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Let's explain each part.

What is the *objective* of Paul's prayer? That you be STRENGTHENED with might **— power** *dunamis.*

What is the *source* of power *dunami* : Through *His SPIRIT* – the means.

What is the *home* of **power —** in the *INNER MAN.*

What are the *purposes* of **power:** *that Christ may DWELL in your heart*, the inner man in an abiding living relationship.

(1) What is the *means* of dwelling: *Through faith.*

(2) What are *the purposes* vs. 17-19 **—** "in order that."

a. Having been *rooted* **—** (the result of being rooted) *in love.*

b. Having been *grounded in love.*

c. You might have *full strength.*

1. *To comprehend the love of Christ*

(a cube—width, length, depth, height of God's love)

2. To *know the love of Christ* which surpasses knowledge!

What is Paul's *final purpose* — "in order that": "**You BE FILLED with all the fullness of God."**

Notice that "be filled" is in the aorist tense—a one-time act. Being filled is the means of strength, being strong, being able to love others more than yourself, to love those who persecute you, to love as God loves because God, who is love, is completely filling your inner being. Being completely filled with God allows us to live in an intimate relationship with our Father, to have a—face-to-face—eye-to-eye, be God's conversational partner, walking in a "hand-in-hand" relationship.

Dennis Kinlaw wrote in *This Day with the Master,* "When God puts his holiness into a human heart, it does not become a human possession. Rather, when the presence of God himself comes in and fills a person's heart, it enables that person to share in God's holy character. It is possible for this Holy One to come and dwell in us so we begin to look like Him."[3]

Is God able to completely fill us with Himself? Is the Holy Spirit able to complete us, purify us so that we can live in a loving relationship with our Father?

Paul concludes his prayer in this confidence, v. 20:

"Now until Him who is able to do exceedingly more than we can ask or think."

Notice that "is able" is the present participle of *dunami*—power. God always has power available. God is not limited; he is always able to meet our need.

Here is the key to God's ability to help us: "According to the power that is at work in us." This power, *dunami* is the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

Yes, God is able to fill us with himself IF we let him do so.

Chapters 4-6 covers action we must take in response to what God has done for us. Paul wrote these chapters in the imperative voice (in Greek grammar), as commands to obey. Paul begins chapter four

[3] Kinlaw, *This Day with the Master,* Feb. 13.

with, "Therefore" meaning, "because of all that God has done for you" covered in chapters 1-3, now live like this—"I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (4:1 NIV).

Remember, in 1:4, Paul points out that God has chosen us to live holy and blameless. Paul now continues in the next three chapters 4-6 to explain what "holy" and "blameless living" looks like. He explains how to live daily in a holy or right relationship with God and how to live in a right relationship with others with right actions and pure motives.

In 4:22, Paul commands, "Put off the old man!" This is the self-centered nature we are born with, the "I will do want I want to do attitude." Paul refers to this nature in Romans 2:8: "But for those who are *self-seeking* and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

Paul commanded, "Put on the new man which after God is created in true righteousness and holiness."

I remember the Wednesday night in March 1955, I knelt at the altar and put off my old man, when I died to my spiritual pride. I had been seeking for a pure, clean heart for over a year. I claimed Jesus' promise in Matt. 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled." As I continued to walk in the light and continued to obey the Holy Spirit's voice to make restitution and ask forgiveness from people I had hurt with my critical words, God was breaking down my will and pride. When I made my last known restitution to ask forgiveness from the member's of the Baptist Church I had attended my first year of high school during their spring revival, I was now able to believe God could clean me and fill me with His Holy Spirit. That Wednesday night prayer meeting in the Nazarene Church, when I stood up to share my joy in having made my last restitution, the Holy Spirit said, "Tonight I will cleanse and fill you if come and pray." I asked the people to come and pray with me as I went forward and knelt at the altar. There I confessed things hidden in my inner being, which seemed to put a knife in my spiritual pride. I died to myself. I surrendered myself. I knew of nothing left between me and God. I felt free, clean, pure. I then looked up and said, "Father, please fill me now. I believe you to do so." I felt so peaceful. I felt a wonderful sense of love filling my being. I felt as if I could put my arms around everyone

present. I knew I had put on "the new man." I knew God had filled me with Himself. I experienced an overflowing sense of love that far exceeded the love I had experienced when I first invited Christ to come into my heart.

Frank Laubach, the World's Apostle to the Illiterates, tells his story of death to his "Old Man" and "Putting on the New Man" filled with God's love.

Dr. Laubach came to Asbury Seminary in 1968 to teach his course on literacy during my senior year. Kay and I took his course and learned his story.

Frank and his wife Effa went as missionaries to the Philippines in 1915 with the Congregational Church. He taught in Union Seminary in Manila and was almost elected president. He began an experiment with God trying to give 15 minutes out of an hour to focus on God. Later, they went to the Island of Mindanao in the southern Philippines. Frank ministered to the Moros (Muslims) living around Lake Lanao. By the early 1930's Frank was becoming discouraged. He had little success. He became very discouraged with his own ministry among the Moros, very discouraged with himself. In the evenings he would climb up Signal Hill behind their home to a spot where he could overlook the city, meditate and pray. This time led him into a deeper experience with God he called "Minutes with God." Frank now sought to give one second out of every minute during his waking day to God. He would focus on a thought of praise, send an SOS request, or think of God's glory. Frank felt he was making progress, the more he prayed, the more he successes. Frank wrote to his father and shared his experiment and asked him to pray for him. He wanted to please God.

One evening in prayer on Signal Hill, Laubach began to reflect on his life. He saw his pride, he was proud of his educational achievements. He had a Ph.D. in sociology from Columbia University. He had also studied theology at Union Theological Seminary. He was proud of his family heritage, his father was a dentist, his mother a teacher. He was proud of his accomplishments. He had been a seminary professor; he had published a history of the Philippines (1925).

Laubach saw that his life was a complete failure over the past 20 years. Laubach analyzed how he looked at the Moros. He had disgust

for their religion, for their holy book, the Koran, for their betel nut chewing, for their unclean ways. Laubach confessed, "I do not like them." God seemed to be speaking to him, "My child, you have failed because you do not really love these Moros. You feel superior to them because you are white. If you can forget you are an American and think only how I love them, they will respond."

With these words, Laubach experienced what he considered a reconversion. In self pity he had been asking God, "What can I do for hateful people like these: murders, thieves, dirty, filthy, betel nut chewers –our enemies." But at this moment of insight, he felt God stripping away his sense of superiority. "I am that way. I do feel better and superior, but I am miserable in my failure to live up to your expectations. I wish I were dead. I can not do anything with these people." He waited for a moment, but God did nothing about his desire to be dead. He was still alive! So Laubach prayed, "Come and change me then. Make me over." And it happened.

Laubach explained. "I felt a sense of forgiveness, a sense of peace. In that moment I became "color-blind." Something seemed to snap inside me and I fell in love with the Moros.[4]

As I walked down the mountain, "I felt I could put my arms around the first betel nut chewing, filthy old murderer who came along."[5]

Then the Holy Spirit whispered,

> "If you want the Moros to be fair with your religion, be fair with theirs. Study their Koran with them." God's voice seemed to speak. "My child," it said, "you have struck your pace. Here in Lanao you will accomplish something with me for the human race. You will broaden the circles of their minds which is good. You will help them to a new

[4] Laubach read and studied the world's great mystics. He saw that they have gone through two periods of anguish. He wrote in his spiritual diary as he read these works, "The first was when they broke with their sinful habits. This was called 'Purgation.' After this process was finished, there came a period of such deep joy that they supposed their troubles were over. But sooner or later came the second dark night of the soul, more terrible than the first when self must die" (David Mason, *Apostle to the Illiterates* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966], 37).

[5] Mason, *Apostle to the Illiterates*, 33.

> comradeship with me which is the most wonderful thing that can happen to any man. You must not fret because you have not done more in your past life. You need not worry about what you *do*, but only about what you *are*. And what you *are* depends upon whether you are holding on to *Me."*[6]

As Laubach walked down the hill, he saw a group of Datu's (Muslim priests) coming up. He could see hate and contempt in their eyes.

Just then, a thought flashed in his mind. "I called out after them—I want to study your Koran, will you teach me?"

At these words, their look of hate changed to amazement. One said, "I think he wants to become a Muslim."

Frank explains, "The next night, my sala [living room] was filled with Datu's with their Korans." He said, "God changed my attitude and my approach. I accepted them and they learned to accept me. I saw their need to read. God gave me a plan to teach them their language with pictures corresponding to the sound of their alphabet. Within days, I was teaching them to read with my picture chart. Their self-esteem went up. They loved me. One Datu ordered all who learned to read to teach someone else. This gave me the idea for our motto, "Each One Teach One."

This teaching process began a world wide literacy ministry, Laubach Literacy Fund.

By the age of 84, Laubach had taught more people to read than any other human being. *Time Magazine* referred to him as the founder of a world wife literacy drive. Frank taught people to *r*ead in over 300 languages in 100 countries. Lowell Thomas, [national radio commentator] called Frank, "The foremost teacher of our times." Frank held one earned Ph.D. and four honorary doctor's degrees.[7] Norman

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[6] Mason, *Apostle to the Illiterates,* 34.

[7] Frank had earned a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Education, a Bachelor of Divinity, a Master of Arts and a Master of Education; a Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology, a Doctor of Divinity, a Doctor of Letters, a Doctor of Humane Letters and a Doctor of Philanthropy (Mason, *Apostle to the Illiterates*, 17-18).

Vincent Peale in a *Look Magazine* article called Laubach, "one of the five greatest men in the world."

Laubach reflecting on his life's accomplishments, "It all began on Signal Hill when I died to myself and gave God time in prayer. The more I prayed, the more I accomplished."

Conclusion

Have you died to yourself, to the old man's self-centered nature? Are you struggling with defeat, being up and down in your spiritual life?

Are you living in an intimate, eye-to-eye relationship with your heavenly Father?

Are you strong, overcoming temptations, living with pure motives?

Would you like to put on the new man? Would you like God to fill you with all of Himself so you can love others as God loves?

As we stand and sing, "I surrender all," this altar is open for you to come and surrender all. God is here to meet your need. Come and die. Come and let God fill you with Himself.

POVERTY AND MORALITY: A CASE STUDY

Alex Shipp

This case study looks at the link between poverty and morality by examining a real life situation. This is not to say that poverty directly reduces morality, but perhaps the moral options open to people are so severely reduced by their economic circumstances that morality may be difficult to sustain or simply too idealistic in the eyes of the poor who do not yet know Christ.

It is very easy for us to judge people for their immoral decisions, but are they entirely accountable for the choices? What were the circumstances behind their choices? And who is to carry the responsibility for the extreme social and economic difficulties that made people like this feel so trapped that a compromised morality seemed their only recourse? We have to consider that while their final choice may be an immoral one, their choice may be the climax of a long line of external factors including social greed and exploitation.

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If anyone of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:3-7, NIV).

I first met Ding[1] while I was at the market. We said hello in passing, and he asked what my name was and where I was from. It was a typical Filipino encounter. He asked if he could talk with me for a while, which is also very normal in this culture. But all the same I felt a little uncomfortable. As long as we stayed in a clear public place, I supposed it was safe enough to spend a little time with him to see what he wanted.

[1] "Ding" is not his real name to preserve his privacy.

Ding is a guy of average looks, healthy, a good height, with a strong personality. He was dressed in his tight Lee jeans with a large shining buckle, a body hugging Sando,[2] an earring, and red highlights in his hair. He was obviously not a Christian. By any Filipino calculations he was obviously "carnal."

I could guess at a glance some aspects of his lifestyle. Quick to judge, I already pictured him getting drunk with his barkadas[3] and womanizing whenever he got the chance. I felt self-conscious walking along with him or sitting and talking with him. What will others be thinking? Especially other Filipinos who will quickly assume maybe he was a pimp for me. At least they would be laughing amongst themselves as they watch him become "my guide," being friendly just so that this foreigner will take him for a free ride, buying him food, clothes, entertainment, or what ever other "fringe benefits" may develop out of the relationship.

What did he really want? I asked him straight to his face.

He said he would like to talk to me about some things.

Still, I was suspicious why he wanted to hang around with me. I asked him to wait for me while I went across the road, and watched him at a distance to see if he had any companions hiding in the crowd, but he just stood there alone, waiting, and communicated with no one.

I was beginning to be chastised by thoughts of what Jesus would do, because Jesus would even talk with crooks and prostitutes. For all I knew, Ding might be genuinely reaching out and I could be giving him the cold shoulder. He might sense my unease and leave. My chance would be lost.

"If other people jump to the wrong conclusions about me spending time with him, isn't that their problem?" I told myself.

I still had another one hundred questions racing around my head but I went back across the road. We found a place to have afternoon tea, and a chance to talk.

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[2] A Philippine-sytle singlet.

[3] That is, "his drinking and gambling mates."

He had been doing his own calculations too it seems, and figured there was something that made him feel he could trust me. He never asked me for anything. He did not even want anything to eat; just a drink. I was beginning to be impressed. He was not proving to be like some of the negative experiences I had had before.

"I need someone to talk to," he said, and I agreed to meet him again.

He did not seem really distraught as if some sudden crisis had grabbed him. I began to sense there were some deeper life issues, something real and fundamental he felt burdened to verbalize. Anyway, I was also intrigued how it could be that his English was excellent, even though he was obviously not highly educated, not from a wealthy background, not a professional.

Over the next few meetings I discovered many sobering things. Ding was born and brought up in a very poor family in a remote part of Quezon province. His family owns no family land, simply laboring on other people's farms. He was one of the very few in his family who graduated from high school. But what could he do in that remote place? There were no prospects for him in his hometown.

He was determined that neither he nor his family should have to live generation after generation in poverty. He was going to get out of the place and "make a difference."

So as a young man of only 22 he moved to Manila, his first time in the big city. He only had enough money for a few weeks, and getting a job was nearly impossible if you had no connections; contacts to get you into employment, an uncle with a factory, a family friend who runs a store or some other open doors.

The money was running out quickly. He had no return fare, and he would soon be evicted from the boarding house once "one month overdue for payment" had been reached. Anyway, he was already beginning to get desperate as the money for food had already run out.

It was clear, he had to take desperate measures. Manila is a merciless place for the homeless without money or food; so merciless that it would not be unrealistic to imagine he would die in the city. He knew nobody, had no money. He looked at those sleeping on sheets of

cardboard under the overhead Light Rail and dared to let his mind see himself there just for a moment.

There was a certain panic that welled up inside him. There were only days left, that was clear. "I'll die if I can't do something fast!" he thought to himself.

He had seen some signs inviting "Applications Within" but he never had the courage to ask about the work. He did not have to be too bright to figure out what the game was. But what other choices were there now?

He tossed and turned for a few more nights, before plucking up enough nerve. He scrubbed up both his body and clothes, and took decisive action. He was good looking enough with a good physique. After only half an hour of discussion with the manager, he could start straight away. He was now employed: a "dancer" in a strip club.

It was so humiliating to take off his clothes in front other people and have then whistling and leering at every part of his body. Inside himself he had very mixed feelings. He was rejoicing that he had a job at all and this job paid really well. But on the other hand he was ashamed to make a living this way

Soon the manager explained that the club also ran an escort service for men and women. The manager explained that he did not have to agree to every proposition, but if he were not willing to ever "entertain" the club customers, he would have to look elsewhere for a "dancer."

This was really hard for Ding. He had not had any sexual experience before let alone this type of "service." All the same, he dare not lose his job. So he got used to it. After a while it just became a job. But his strong determination stayed with him. He planned his course of action and eventually got there. But it was going to take money and he had to be focused to do it without family connections to help. He worked for five years in the club, saving his money and learning English proficiently.

Finally he did it. He landed an overseas contract to work as ground crew for a foreign airline in the Middle East. This really pulled in big money and he saved everything he could for the five-year term. He came back from the Middle East two years ago now. He saved enough

to buy a piece of land in the country and build a house for his parents. He also had enough to buy a vacant section in Manila.

In the eyes of his family, Ding is a hero. They all know fully everything about his former lifestyle, but in fact they are proud of him for it because he made real money without becoming a "hold-upper" or a drug-pusher.

Ding is now waiting for confirmation of another overseas contract in a nearby Asian country. He will be working as factory laborer. His goal is now to build himself a house on his lot and also have enough money to start some sort of personal business.

In a material and secular way, at 34 Ding has really made something out his life. So why did Ding want to talk to me? What troubles him that he has to find a friend to off-load with?

The problem for Ding is that material survival "by any means" has left him with all sorts of regrets and pain, most especially his sexual experiences. As a sexually inexperienced young lad, his feelings of self-worth are badly eroded and damaged. He is well adjusted in other areas of life and perhaps you could say that overall he has a good self-image, but in term of sexual purity, he feels dirty and sordid. Ding would love to marry a "sweet young wife," to have a family and a happy home, but his earlier exploits make him feel unworthy of hoping for that.

It is easy to say glibly, "Well, I guess that's the price you pay for immorality!" especially as you see him now, well fed, well dressed and some material things to brag about. But what were his choices in those fearful days of total poverty?

Is Ding really the one to blame? Sure, he was the one who personally chose the path of immorality, but in what ways was he cornered into these choices by poverty?

After spending several hours together over several meetings, I was the one who began to feel ashamed. When I first met Ding I made some quick but accurate assessments of him. The story he went on to tell me about his life was in keeping with what I anticipated. In that regard my reaction to him was justified. But I never really took the time to consider what circumstances made those choices seem the best of the bad selection as he saw them.

That is not to say that I think it is acceptable for any man to be a stripper and escort, but I can be much more compassionate about how he got into that situation. I can also see that others are in part to be held accountable, including the "systems" that cause such poverty and that provide the opportunities to do evil.

Now I have found the person inside Ding, a strong and resourceful person. I have found a person with a good heart, with real regrets and pains, a person who wants to do it right, a person whom I learned to care enough about to believe he deserved to find a new life in Christ.

Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

"No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:8-11, NIV).

EVANGELIZING AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION MIGRANTS IN URBAN CONTEXTS IN WEST AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

Robert A. Bickert

In 1978 this writer experienced an unforgettable encounter with a then recent convert to Islam in Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa. The following conversation stirred a marked personal interest in the rural migrant's exposure to urban Islam and gave birth to a concern for methods the church could employ to bring the adherents of African Traditional Religion to faith in Christ.

As this Muslim's story unfolded, curiosity gave way to genuine interest: why had this recent migrant from up country become a convert? "Why did you leave your African Traditional belief and become a Muslim?" the writer asked. He replied, "I was attracted to a group of Muslims who came together every evening to pray at a place beside a wall paralleling the road near my home. I began to listen to their prayers. They asked me if I would like to join them and I did. Now I am a Muslim" (Interview:1978).

The Problem

The challenge facing the church in urban evangelism in Africa has not gone unnoticed. Marion Birch, a second generation Wesleyan missionary in Sierra Leone, has made this comment: "Many up country African Traditional adherents are drawn to Islam when they migrate to the urban centers" (Interview:1978). Similarly, Don McCurry, founder of Ministries to Muslims, stated that "Muslim evangelism of African Traditional believers who move into the cities is one of the hottest issues right now in West Africa. The church has not yet awakened to this opportunity" (Interview:1991).

Statistics indicate that Islam is spreading rapidly in West Africa (Clarke 1982:259). According to John Mbiti, Muslims living in Africa in

1984 were estimated to be two hundred eleven million. He has estimated the rate of increase to be about 2.5 percent every year. This rate parallels the natural increase of population in Africa (Mbiti 1991:186).[1] What are some of the reasons? Is there a link between the growth of Islam and urbanization?

Along with the growth of the population in general, urbanization in West Africa also continues to increase significantly. Africa, which was 20 percent urban in 1960, is projected to be 39 percent by 2000 A.D. and as much as 54 percent urban by 2025 (Zanotelli 1988:278). A United Nations Report states that Africa has the world's highest urbanization growth rates, averaging about 4.6 percent per year through the 1970s.[2] Alex Zanotelli, a Comboni missionary and former editor of *Nigrizia Magazine* predicted that

> urbanization combined with high population growth rates will lead to dramatic increase of Africa's urban population and create slums, where 70-80 percent of urban population will likely be living in the future, according to some experts. These conditions present a direct challenge to the mission of the church in the world. If the church, and in particular, its pastoral agents could discover a way to the poor, the way to the slums, it would then become more dynamic and more effective (1988:280-284).

The question arises: How may the church best respond to this reality?

Methodology

This study examines the rapid urbanization in Africa and a number of its causative factors. In addition, the paper explores the

[1] Mbiti states that Islam has dominance in approximately one-third of Africa, covering the Saharan region and north of it, as well as the northeastern strip of Africa including the whole of present Somalia. He cites strong Muslim minorities in some parts of Uganda, the Durban area, Ethiopia, Nalawi, Mozambique and Tanzania, the Coast ad Sierra Leone and Chad (199:185).

[2] *The Global Report on Human Settlements* (1986) was released in Nairobi in 1987. The *Report* was prepared by the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat) based in Nairobi and as a whole reflects serious concerns about the trends of urbanization in the world.

socio-cultural dynamics involved in the rural, community-oriented migrant's adjustment into urban life in an effort to provide an understanding of the worldview of the recently-arrived urbanite. Also, the research led to an examination of the socio-cultural characteristics of the rural, African Traditionalist.

The thesis of this paper focuses upon the need of the church to awaken to the plight of the rural migrant and offers some suggestions for effective urban evangelism in order to win these receptive people before they become assimilated into Islam.

Characteristics of the universal religions, Islam and Christianity became a part of this research in an effort to find where these traits might parallel African Traditional Religion. Further exploration led to an appraisal of the socio-cultural-religious systems of these three groups in an effort to discover how Islam and Christianity may identify with the African Traditional migrants and minister to their needs. Finally, a comparison is made of several parallel cultural concepts that provide contextual means to meet migrant needs. A case study of the Wesleyan Church in Freetown, Sierra Leone, demonstrates how the home cell ministry utilizes cultural parallels in developing projects to meet community needs which may bring families into the body of Christ.

The writer conducted eight interviews with representatives from four West African nations: Ghana, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Gambia.

Urbanization

Before an evangelization strategy can be designed that will reach the rural migrant, several factors need consideration:

1) The cultural context of the ruralite who has become an urbanite,
2) The world view of these African neo-urbanites, and
3) The core culture that will direct their search for identity and fulfillment.

As a backdrop for understanding, we look at the term urbanization.

Definition of Urbanization. A definition that goes beyond a traditional demographic concept of urbanization, as reflected in the

statistics of a city, serves to clarify the term. Aylward Shorter offers this concise description: "Urbanization is a form of social consciousness" (1991:7), which echoes Kenneth Little's definition: "By urbanization is meant the process whereby people acquire material and non-material elements of culture, behavior patterns and ideas that originate in, or are distinctive of, the city" (1974:7). Shorter (1991:26) believes that for the ruralite migrant, contact with urban life affects his/her thinking and culture. As a result of this social change, modern Africans find themselves disoriented. They feel the need to keep in contact with their traditional or root culture; yet they also see the need to redefine their traditions in the context of modernization.

For many of Africa's urban dwellers today, their social consciousness reflects their village roots and traditional beliefs much more than does modern or educated urban thinking. However, these new urban dwellers possess an openness toward change which is significant for evangelism. Shorter reminds the reader that "the ultimate focus of the urban migrant remains rural" (1991:16). This is due largely to the more recent and rapid rise of rural migration to the urban centers as urban growth factors.

Urban Growth. Urban growth represents the physical aspect of urbanization and refers to the number of people actually living in urban areas (Shorter 1991:7).

Rate of Growth. Urbanization is a universal phenomenon today, particularly true in Africa. Little states in his book, *Some Contemporary Trends in African Urbanization*, that "one of the most significant features of modern Africa is the flight of people from their own countryside" (1966:65). As noted earlier in this text, Africa has the world's highest urbanization growth rates, which averaged 4.6 percent per year through the 1970s. This is most significant when one considers that in 1960, Africa, the least urbanized region in the world, had only 20 percent. Urbanization jumped to 27 percent by 1980 and is expected to reach 39 percent by 2000 and 54 percent by 2025. Eastern and Western sectors of Africa have the highest annual rates of growth for urban populations on the continent and have the fastest growing cities in the world. The rural-to-urban migration factor figures significantly in the growth of these towns and cities, whereas in northern and southern Africa natural population increase primarily accounts for urban growth (Zanotelli

1988:280-81). When one considers that 70-80 percent of the overall population of Africa currently lives in the rural areas (Mbiti 1991:191), the potential for urban growth through migration is staggering.

Effect on Towns and Cities. Rapid urbanization in Africa has generally been accompanied by even more rapid growth of large towns, according to Zanotelli. Seven percent of the population lived in cities in 1985, but urban growth in cities is expected to increase 20 percent by the year 2000 and is expected to increase by 34 percent by the year 2025 (Zanotelli 1988:281).[3] Shorter states that the population growth rate in Africa is among the world's highest, but that Africa's urban growth rate is generally twice as high as the world average (1991:8).

Shorter shows the effects of this as follows:

> In 1970 Africa had only seven cities of more than one million people. If present trends continue, by the end of the century it will have 95 such cities, five of them with more than five million inhabitants. In 1970, in addition to the big cities just mentioned, there were 137 towns of 100,000 or more. If these present trends continue, by the end of the century there will be 692 towns. This combination of fewer cities with high urban growth rates implies a staggering growth of existing towns—towns doubling, tripling, even quadrupling their size in every decade. It also implies the mushrooming of new towns, the spread of an urban network throughout the countryside—villages and trading centers turning into towns before one's eyes (1991:8).

This projected increase in population growth indicates extensions of urban growth along the trade routes into the interior, which in turn shows the close link between the urban-rural communities. Shorter believes there is a sense in which whole African countries are becoming "peri-urbanized" (1991:19).

Cities are spread relatively evenly across Africa except for the Copperbelt, an area 70 by 30 miles in Zambia, and southwestern Nigeria (O'conner 1983:42). These two areas are heavily populated. O'Conner

[3] Zanotelli bases many of his statements on the *Global Report on Human Settlements* (1986).

remarks, "the significance of the urbanization process in tropical Africa is enhanced by the fact that the cities exert all kinds of influence out of all proportion to their modest size" (1983:16).

Factors Contributing to Urbanization

Opportunity. The city provides a huge and diverse market which attracts such ventures as industry, trade, banking, education, entertainment, communications, administration and government (Shorter 1991:9-11). The rural population for many generations has been moving toward migration because of the education system. Schools were established by missions and the government throughout rural areas. The youth, who have been increasingly trained, turn to the urban centers to apply their education and seek for a higher standard of living. Gideon Sjoberg in his work recognized this trend: "The fact that ruralites continue to flock to the large cities suggests that the urban communities are providing those people with certain advantages not found in the village" (1965:223). The Wesleyan Church in Sierra Leone counts among its members over a thousand youth and families who have migrated to Freetown in the 1960s and early 1970s (Birch Interview:1978).

Hopelessness and Poverty. In addition to opportunity seekers, many people are forced to flee to the cities when drought and warfare affect the countryside (Shane 1989:39). In addition, the increasing trend today is for Africans to bring their families to town, which causes faster urbanization, as the ratio of women and children to men changes in urban contexts (Wilson 1961:103). However, in general, as O'conner points out, more children and older people still remain in the country than do those who migrate to the city. The most numerous among age groups in the cities are the young adults between the ages of 20-29, but this is changing. This trend makes single family households much more common (1983: 81, 83).

The Female Factor. As noted, women migrating to urban centers contribute to urbanization. Women naturally follow their men to urban areas, and the men follow the financial opportunities. Some women as well as men migrate because they want to break with the constraints of confinement and control placed on them by their traditional society. Also marital troubles spawn a desire for escape (Shorter 1991:17; Little 1974:25).

The Age Factor. Youth flock to cities in search of work. Shorter concludes, "the search for casual employment is the chief occupation of the young migrant to an African town" (1991:12). The opportunity factor draws ruralites like a magnet. In looking at the structure of an African town as to age, Shorter gives the following overview:

> Around 85 percent are under the age of thirty with young adults between the age of twenty and twenty-nine accounting for 30 percent. Adults in their thirties and forties constitute ten percent, while the over fifties are a mere five percent (1991:12).

These are a few of the many factors that draw people to urban centers. The living conditions that await these opportunity seekers are another matter for consideration.

Living Conditions. What kind of living conditions will these rural migrants find in the urban centers? Since they have had very modest living standards and generally are without many resources, they will be forced to live simply. This probably accounts for the fact that many West African cities are still rural in orientation in contrast to modern Western cities (Little 1974:12-13). Estimates, according to this standard, place most of these masses on the poverty scale. At present, in the big cities 40-50 percent of the urban population are living in slums, in shanties, in sub-human conditions with some experts forecasting that as much as seventy-to-eighty percent of the urban population of Africa will be living in these conditions in the future (Zanotelli 1988:281).

Shorter attests that urbanization is the most important social reality in Africa today and that Christian evangelization must take full account of it (1991:1). However, as one looks at this potential for evangelism and conversion in this urban milieu, one discovers that Islam rather than Christianity has the advantage. Islam poses a strong attraction to the rural migrant; many become Muslims. Christianity has not drawn nearly as many. Why?

In an effort to understand the cultural dynamic at work in these bodies, this paper focuses on the major characteristics of the two universal religions, Islam and Christianity and how these affect rural migrants in the urban context. Similarities and differences between these religions suggest at what points the natural attractions lie. Also, the

research highlights significant characteristics of urban living which serve to draw attention to the needs of the migrant. A grasp of these factors helps prepare the church for migrant ministry.

Islam in Urban Contexts

Islam adapts to the urban context, and attracts followers in this setting. Even Islam itself in the Seventh Century impacted urbanization because its genesis in Arabia was experiencing an urbanizing movement.[4] One explanation is that Islam's African genesis and propagation was in the trading community. Islam came into Africa via the trade routes and first took root in the trading centers and courts of the chiefs. In West Africa, the first Islamic contacts date to the eighth century (Clarke 1982:1). Levtzion states that the term "trader" and "Muslim" became almost synonymous in the Sahel and Savannah region of Ghana as traders tended to become Muslim (1979:209). However, Davidson commenting on basic causes for early conversion to Islam in West Africa describes it somewhat differently. He says,

> Islam, for some of those who embraced it, was seen as a highly prestigious religion. Muslims were literate; they had wide-ranging diplomatic contacts, a formal system of education and a simple but effective legal system. They were a modernizing force with the skills essential for the efficient administration of expanding, developing states or empires 1966:98).

Clarke says that by 1600, "Islam's main strength was among the privileged classes, the rulers, the administrators, the scholars and the merchants. It was confined to the urban centers in very many parts of West Africa with the western Sahara being the exception. The mass of the people in the rural areas had remained virtually untouched (1982:71). However, Clarke points out that Islam continued to expand in the 17th and 18th centuries as literally thousands of Muslim communities, even though some were no doubt small and very temporary, were established along the trade routes and in the commercial centers (1982:108).

[4] Shahid, *Pre-Islamic Arabia*, Cambridge History of Islam.

Shorter explains that Islam has its own historic urban tradition on the East and West African coasts and on the southern fringes of the Sahara. Shorter states that Islam feels more at home in the urban center than does Christianity (1991:2). But during the advent of Western colonization, which gave birth to new towns, new forms of government and educational systems, Islam was confronted with a rival with conflicting ideologies and the Christian religion. As a result, Christianity became the faith of the elite in the coastal urban centers and Islam became the religion of the poorer majority. Moreover, even in the interior, all towns took on a Muslim tinge, even in the midst of complete pagan village culture (Trimingham 1968:104).

The following characteristics of urban Islam in West Africa offer a concise description of Muslim practices that provide contact points for the rural migrant who comes from an African Traditional religious context.

1) Islam offers a strong sense of community. The tenets of Islamic faith tend to mold Islamic adherents into a very strong community. Islam uses a variety of practices such as observance of the five pillars, use of a common calendar, acceptance of the clergy as guides of conduct, and the operation of the Qur'anic village school. All of these practices contribute to unifying features of Islam (Trimingham 1968:56). A participant enters into identification with and bonding to the group.
2) Islam reaches out to embrace strangers and meet their needs. Muslims like to perform good works which they believe will please God. Alms-giving (Zakat) is one of the five pillars of Islam and means to purify one's position, helping one to get into heaven (Loum 1992).[5] This coercive measure, plus the strong sense of sharing derived from communal living, provides Islam with strong incentive for compulsive benevolence.
3) The Islamic community will give assistance in times of need such as in death or sickness. The community helps bury the corpse.

[5] Rev. John Loum graduated from Sierra Leone Bible College and has done advanced studies in Islam, holding a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Islamic studies. He works with the project for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa and serves as the area advisor for Sierra Leone as well as regional coordinator.

Muslim burial, carried out on the day of death, has a simple and inexpensive ritual. The body is wrapped in a sheet and placed on a mat in the ground. The community will also help the grieving family by providing food and assisting with expenses. When sickness attacks a member, the community will collect an offering to help. An Islamic group in the northern provinces of Sierra Leone called *Basaliya* comes when the family has a problem or death, bringing their cooking pots, rice, and wood, and everything to sympathize with the family. They will not let the family give a single cent (Turay 1992:Interview).[6]

4) Islamic community members own many apartments and dwellings. Muslims will offer their residences to migrants.

5) The Islamic community owns many businesses and is involved in trade. Therefore members can offer employment to migrants. Trade continues to be a primary means of spreading Islam just as it was a key factor from its genesis in Africa (Levtzion 1979:211).

6) Islamic dress draws attention and respect. Muslims attire in long flowing robes in a very modest, clean, proud-appearing manner. This places them before the people in a very visible and attractive way (Turay, Loum Interviews:1992).

7) Islam takes the fears of the people very seriously. Amulets are given to ward off evil (Forson Interview:1991).[7] Levtzion cites

[6] Rev. Bobson Turay was raised in the Muslim faith in Sierra Leone and converted to Christianity during his high school days. He is a graduate of the Sierra Leone Bible College, an ordained elder in the Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone, and presently serves as the General Director of Evangelism and Church Growth. Rev. Turay pioneered the Kissy Dock Yard Church and began the home cell ministry there. This church had 19 active home cells weekly in 1992. He also serves as an officer in the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone. He has done additional studies in the Philippines. Turay began a Christian Development program when he pastured the Kissy Dockyard Church which assists people in need with loans, clothing, food, medical care, scholarships, housing, etc. This program has been very effective in winning the poor to Christ (*Wesleyan District Conference Journal*, 1989: 38).

[7] Mathias Forson is an ordained elder in the Methodist Church in Ghana, West Africa. He did graduate study at Emory University and completed the Doctor of Missiology degree at Asbury Theological Seminary in 1993, writing his dissertation on *Split-Level Christianity in Africa: A Study of the Persistence of Traditional Religious Beliefs and Practices Among the Akan Methodists of Ghana.*

Islamic religious power as a primary reason for its appeal, second only to trade. He concludes that this is why the African chiefs at the first contact were attracted to Islam. They were inclined to seek the Muslim amulets and their prayers (1978:210).

8) An underlying factor that enhances Islamic presence in a community is what Loum calls Islamic dynamism. He explains,

> When Islam comes to an area, it assimilates itself into the culture of the people so the people see no difference between Islam and the African culture. This makes it even easier for people to accept Islam. For example, the Imam in the mosque plays the role of both a spiritual leader and a soothsayer. When people are ill, they don't think of going to a clinic, but rather to the soothsayer who in most cases would be a Muslim Imam (1992:Seminar).

Levtzion observes this accommodating attitude of Islam which combined Islam and African Traditional Religion (which he calls symbiosis) as an explanation for the successful spread of Islam in Africa (1978:208).

This dynamism or accommodation factor allows Islam to function naturally in its environment. Since Islam uses the animistic practices of magic and divining, which parallel African Traditional religious beliefs, it has strong appeal to the rural migrant (Trimingham 1968:42).

These communal aspects of Muslim life and worship place Islam at center stage in the urban context. Islamic characteristics have the potential to meet the basic needs of the rural migrant.

Christianity in Urban Contexts

In contrast to Islam, which has had an urban orientation from its genesis, European Christianity changed its former orientation from urban to a rural-centered focus from the 14th century onward. Western missionaries often arrive in Africa having known this rural setting and subsequently have a negative bias toward urban ministry. Thus from the onset of missionary work in Africa, generally ministry has been aimed toward reaching the tribes located in the interior villages and the country

(Shorter 1991:60-62). Shorter further points out that Mainline Christianity has experienced a long-standing problem of evangelizing the towns in North America as well as Europe, which is reflected in its reluctance to identify with the town in Africa (1991:2). Several reasons account for the church's ineffectiveness in urban evangelism and ministry.

Characteristics of Urban Christianity

The following are aspects of Christianity in many places of Africa:

1) Church architecture and placement generally reflect a Western pattern. The church grounds provide more space around the building and are more scenic than are Islamic surroundings. Often the church building is located at some distance from the members and in a higher economic level of society. The church is normally not open for prayers except on Wednesday evening and Sunday. Usually, the pastoral staff are absent from the sanctuary (Loum, Turay Interviews:1992).
2) Members tend to be somewhat independent, to be isolationists, and not group oriented (Turay Interview:1992).
3) The pastor usually does not call on all the members regularly. Therefore, the pastor lacks a general awareness of their needs. The pastor may also hold himself aloof from the members (Sookhdeo 1991:176).
4) Members are spread over a wide area; thus they do not have a close community spirit among themselves (Loum, Turay Interviews:1992). Another isolating factor comes from the elitist attitude some Christian communities have of themselves which keeps them from becoming incarnational in ministry or open to outsiders (Sookhdeo 1991:176).
5) Institutions receive the money instead of people in need. Lamin Sanneh comments, "the church generally does not have funds readily available to reach out and meet needs of the community in times of death, sickness, emergencies, or schooling" (Interview

1992).[8] Likewise, the Reverend Dixon, president of the Methodist Church in Ghana stated, "*The church tends to think always in terms of money and budget* [Emphasis his]. Thus the church tends to avoid becoming involved in issues for fear a program will cost them money. This is one of the problems" (Dixon Interview: 1991).

6) Christian funerals are expensive. There are several causes: using a coffin, keeping the body for several days, providing quantities of food for the people during a long wake. The high cost of a Christian funeral raises a barrier for many, especially the migrant and the poor.

An examination of a number of the traits of migrants may serve to highlight the interaction of the church and the migrant constituency.

Characteristics of the Rural Migrant

A number of factors characterize the rural migrant explained as follows:

Community. Community is basic in African society. Everyone belongs to a group such as a family, a secret society like the Poro or Sande,[9] a tribe, and a village. Every person has an identity. Bobson Turay reflects on the background of this concept. He explains:

> Our culture is people oriented and a person is the key in the culture. Our family is regarded as any member belonging to our extended family, even to our great grandfather, so the family means the whole range of family contacts, not just the nuclear family. So the emphasis on the importance of an individual makes everyone part of a family or a group. So beginning with the home, the family ties are kept very strong. Anything that threatens the family tie is regarded as an

[8] Sanneh is professor of Missions and World Christianity at Yale Divinity School. He was born in Gambia West Africa. Sanneh was converted to Christianity from Islam in his youth. He authored the book, *West African Christianity*.

[9] These are secret societies in Sierra Leone: the Poro for male and the Sande for female members. Little gives an extended description of both societies and their initiation ceremonies in *The Mende of Sierra Leone* (1967: 113-130).

> enemy. This even goes to the extent that in the village, people will consult the dead ancestors who are believed to be present with power and are regarded as members of the family.[10] Thus village people consider that everyone belongs to a group. Every person desires a group identity so they will feel secure and not be treated as enemies of any group. Identity gives security which is the motive behind membership in the secret societies (Interview:1992).

Needs of the rural migrant. The following list given by Lamin Sanneh (Interview:1991) highlights, in order of importance, the major concerns facing the urban newcomer:

1) He/she needs community identity, a sense of belonging to a group.
2) He/she needs housing and food.
3) He/she needs employment.
4) He/she needs help when sickness or death comes.
5) He/she needs schooling.

Often these pressing needs are accompanied by anxiety and fear. Sanneh states that rural migrants find these experiences very unsettling because their traditional patterns have been disturbed (Interview:1991). When faced with such trauma, one naturally reacts according to known patterns.

In summary, the first primary need of the migrant African Traditional believer concerns identity in a group, which gives the newcomer a sense of security. This sense of belonging satisfies the person's core cultural values and supplies the confidence that through the

[10] Parrinder states that in Sierra Leone, "prayer is normally offered through a succession of ancestors . . . two distinct groups of ancestors are 'worshipped' . . . those ancestors whose names and feats are known . . . and those who died in the far distant past." He says that ancestral spirits plays a very large part in African thought and they are very prominent in the spiritual world. They are part of the social group. Also, they are linked closely with the beliefs in gods and the Supreme God. In some aspects, ancestors are believed to fulfill functions elsewhere ascribed to the gods, such as rain-making. For some who believe in many gods do not distinguished them all clearly from ancestors, in fact some have developed out of distant ancestors who have moved away from the nearer and more recently departed (1962: 57-58)

community his/her secondary needs, whether they be financial or personal concerns, employment, or housing, will be met. When there is need or an emergency such as sickness or death, the group will respond by sharing their resources. The second primary need concerns worship. Loum states, "the African is a religious man, he can not distance himself from religion. He wants to belong. It would be a disgrace for an African to die without belonging to any religion.[11] This would disgrace his family" (Interview:1992). Thus the African Traditionalist in a new urban context seeks a means to meet his religious needs.

The rural migrant's outlook. The worldview with which country migrants arrive in the city serves as a guide for survival in this new milieu. John Mbiti observes that "we should take note of the fact that African Religion is now moving into towns and cities in certain forms" (1991:192). He mentions such things as traditional medicines sold in the cities and traditional medicine men and diviners who are doing a prosperous business. Often urbanites revert to traditional methods for problem-solving and responding to crises (1991:192).

Lamin Sanneh offers this explanation: "The rural person has come from a community where belonging is expected and natural. Now in the urban center, this rural, community-minded person seeks another community in the urban context. The migrant looks for a network of support and organizations similar to those in the village and where he can use residential habits" (Interview:1991).

Rural migrants, driven by their immediate need for housing, food and employment, reach out to find a familiar avenue to meet these needs. Which group will better identify with the needs of the migrant, Islam or Christianity?

Turay states, "When the migrant comes, they will find Islam. The Muslim will say right away, 'Welcome.' The greatest percentage of

[11] African Traditional Religion has no sacred writings but it has many forms that embody faith, giving security direction for every aspect of life. Mbiti gives a concise summary of where to look for and find African Religion. He says African Religion is found in the following: rituals, ceremonies, and festivals of the people; in shrines, sacred places, and religious objects; in arts and symbols, music and dance; in proverbs, riddles, and wise sayings; in names of people and places; in myth and legends; in beliefs and customs; basically in all aspects of life (1991: 20-29).

house-owners in Freetown are Muslim. They will open their hearts to those coming in from up-country, even if the person does not rent from them" (Interview:1992).

The migrant's subliminal desire for security and belonging makes him extremely sensitive to his new environment. Turay suggests that the presence of Islam in the community will catch the up-country traditional believer's eye. He says:

> The way the Muslim comes dressed in and out of his house is a testimony to Islam. The Muslim carries his culture with him. They dress respectfully in their long flowing robes causing people to look at them and say, "Oh, that is a Muslim." Thus, a person tends to want to identify with this group which stands out (Interview:1992).

The religious mindset of the migrant is open to new thought. Lamin Sanneh points out,

> The rural animist, in his traditional religion, comes to the urban center with a world view that maintains an openness to other religious traditions and freedom to absorb them and at the same time has an absence of an exclusive, controversial attitude to religious options (1980:2).

Also, significant is the fact that many of the migrants are young and as a result are more open to change and new ideas. An older study in 1961 in Brazzaville, Belgium Congo underscores this early age trend, revealed that the average migrant age was 18 for women and 19 for men (Little 1974:3). Consequently this group comes with openness to change, a prime factor of conversion potential.

The migrant sees Muslims in the community at worship daily. Numerous Mosques are scattered throughout the city. If the Mosque is at a distance, Muslims will establish a place of prayer in their immediate community, which may be in a vacant yard or along a fence or road. Worshippers will gather at the appointed times of prayer daily, especially at sunrise and sunset. Loum states that this daily prayer ritual has drawing power. The non-Muslim watching will be fascinated by Muslims' procedure (1992). The rural newcomers will not only be attracted by Islamic prayer but will often be invited to join in worship to Allah. This was the experience of the man referred to in the introduction of this

paper. Thus the migrants' desire for identity and worship can easily and quickly bond them to the Islamic community (Turay Interview:1992).

Urban Characteristics

Several aspects of living conditions characterize African urban life today.

Lack of Family Coherence. The urban context tends to compact people from many different backgrounds within a confined area. The limited living area forces family members to seek homes wherever they can find them, thus breaking family coherence and the sense of community.

Lack of Housing. O'Conner observes that "housing is a big problem of rapid urban growth throughout tropical Africa, where both poverty and inequality are all too clearly reflected in housing patterns" (1983:165). O'Conner feels, however, that the lack of housing does not cause as much concern from a distinctly African perspective as it does from a Western point of view (1983:165).

Lack of Employment. According to O'Conner, unemployment is now one of the most serious problems in most African cities (1983:159). This condition is related to rising standards of education, rising expectations, and the lack of opportunity for work in the rural areas (1983:160-61).

Increased Stress. Little believes that urban living places the family and the marriage under stress and creates larger tribal groups than those in the village (1974:74). Thus, the sense of intimacy is diminished. Urban centers draw upon Western systems of organization; these systems focus attention on the personal independence and separate family structure rather than upon communal living representative of village life. The attitude of self-care prevails (Turay Interview:1992).

Alien Culture. O'Conner comments that the environment of the cities is viewed by the vast majority of the African population as being totally alien in its cultural forms (1983:87).

Indigenous Innovations—The Voluntary Associations. Rural migrants are forced to adapt to their new milieu; however, innovations contextualized from their rural culture help them to adjust to their urban

environment. Migrants have taken the communal aspects of rural life and organized a similar communal indigenous group called the Voluntary Association. Little recognizes that these associations largely substitute for the traditional institutions of kinship and local community, especially in the industrialized towns of the coast and sometimes inland (1966:8-9). Little further states that these Voluntary Associations exist for economic, social, and religious reasons and as a result they flourish (1974:74). These associations meet the needs of migrants in various ways such as by making innovations seem less strange and helping women find their place in urban society. As a result, the migrant "has begun to assimilate urban industrial values" and "many individuals who move for the first time into the city . . . are already 'urbanized' to an appreciable extent . . . [because] there is this degree of continuity between rural and urban social systems . . ." (Little 1966:10-13). One can readily see the important role these indigenous groups play in urban acculturation and survival for the rural migrant.

The next section will examine ways the body of Christ can contextualize its ministry to meet the needs of rural migrants and bring them to faith in the living Jesus.

Meeting Community Needs:
The Churches' Theological Resources

The church is referred to as a body by the Apostle Paul (Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; and Ephesians 4:16). A body by its very nature functions through the various members interacting with each other. The body of Christ, the church, is designed for sharing and interaction between members (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Thus the nature of the church is to form a strong community which leads to bonding among its members. However, as we have pointed out previously, these aspects are often obscured in an urban context. If the church will explore ways to contextualize the presentation of itself in the urban setting and become involved with people in an incarnational ministry at the grass roots level of the community, it will have great potential to draw the rural migrant into its fold. The fact that Christianity continues to spread rapidly in the areas of Africa where African Religion has been most predominant (Mbiti 1991:198) underscores this potential.

John Mbiti points out that the church has parallels with African traditional life in which kinship and the extended family play a central role. He notes:

> The Church is the Christian family, in which all are related to one another through faith and baptism in Jesus Christ. The Church also includes those who have died and those who still live. This is similar to the African view of the family of both the living and the departed (1991:190).

This parallel between the living and the departed provides a significant point of contact with the African Traditional follower and the gospel.

Another significant parallel centers in the African's concept of God, states Mbiti. He explains that Africans "give up certain ideas, beliefs and practices in their traditional life and assimilate newer understandings of God's dealings with men as proclaimed in Christianity" (1991:189). The various aspects lost in past ages have once again gained recognition through the revelation of Scripture.

Mbiti again comments:

> These are the gifts of immortality, resurrection and the making of all things new again. In this, Christianity seems to fulfill a great need in the African world-view which had no hope of rediscovering those lost gifts (1991:189).

Additional parallels come in the area of morals and ethics (1991:190).

God has equipped His earthly body for identity and communication. However, for the church to be effective in African urban culture it must divest itself of the more Western individualistic characteristics and contextualize. This writer offers the following suggestions for the African situation:

1) The church body should extend its fellowship bonds and be structured in such a way that it can welcome the stranger and the poor in the community.
2) The church should be visible. Its members who are dispersed throughout the community must serve as "light" and "salt." The early church met daily in the temple and in every home to teach and preach Jesus Christ (Acts 5:42).

3) The church should be compassionate and share in order to meet the needs both of its members and its community.

4) The membership should be faithful in its corporate worship at the church and in its private worship in homes.

A congregation functioning with these dynamics will form a caring community with magnetic attraction.[12] Shorter offers this insight: "The Church has never found it easy to enter this world [of the poor] but it is in the measure that Christians draw close to the poor that they remain spiritually open and creative" (1991:56).

A function of the church is to recognize the needs of the up-country migrants in their new urban context and to discover ways to reach the migrants. The church must understand that the migrant is need-oriented and that needs can become points of contact. Lamin Sanneh emphasizes this situation. He poignantly states:

> When the up-county migrant comes into the urban context, he begins looking for a way to meet his immediate needs. Where will he find help the easiest and quickest? When migrants move into the city, one of the first things they do is look for communities like folks back home. Failing to find this, they look for communities that are closer to these. These tend to be benevolent societies, communities that will help take care of burials (the issue of the funeral), lodging, putting one in touch with people and organizations that can help them find jobs, take care of arrangements for marriage, schooling for children. These are patterns of support, even though they are not like the village, they help to make the urban conditions less intimidating and less disruptive. This is especially true for women coming from rural areas who fall easily into prostitution (Interview:1991).

[12] Rev. Bobson Turay, former pastor of the Kissy Dockyard Wesleyan Church, reports that "The home cell ministry has established personal relationships with Christian believers from other churches in Freetown: the Limba Church, Roman Catholic, A.M.E., Nigeria Baptist, etc. Some of these have come to love our local church, which they have often expressed to us. However, we have encouraged them to remain in their local churches rather than joining us" (*Freetown District Conference Journal* 1989:38).

Thus, one can see that a community of believers functioning with vibrant body-life and demonstrating loving care for each other has the potential to attract the migrants who seek a caring community similar to what they left behind.

In addition to the body of Christ ministering to each other, the church must extend itself into the neighborhood to make contact with others and meet needs. Again, Sanneh comments:

> The church must extend itself into the community to deal with rural migration.[13] Ministry and evangelism will take place when the community can see and feel the body of Christ at work meeting needs. The church must be a community of life, not just for salvation (Interview:1991).

How Can the Church Reveal Christ's Character?

The church can manifest Christ's character in significant ways. For example, the members can:

1) Demonstrate genuine love and compassion for others.
2) Accept the migrant into the church community.

Loum reminds us,

> Remember that the strength of Africa is the *community*.[14] Once persons leave the village, they lose this village identity and community solidarity. Therefore the church in an urban area should pay attention to this factor and concentrate on these people by making them feel they belong and are wanted. If we pay attention to this *community cultural dynamic*,[15] it will help the advancement of evangelism among them. On the other hand, if the church fails, in all likelihood, the Muslims will take hold of them because Islam is also

[13] Some of the African Independent Churches are already reaching out to meet migrant needs. They have healing services, mid-week services with meetings and general socializing on the church premises. In Nigeria and in Cameroon the churches are responding in some degree to the rural migration opportunity (Sanneh Interview: 1991).

[14] Author's emphasis.

[15] Author's emphasis.

> community based. They will go out to provide their needs, both spiritually and physically (Interview: 1992).

Loum suggests the following ways the church can provide this sense of community:

1) Provide a place for the migrant to live. Because many people arrive with nowhere to go, often the Muslim will give them a place to stay. Through this avenue, the visitor will follow the religion of the host.
2) Provide practical help. The eyes of the church should be open to this need.
3) Provide employment. The migrants want to make a living. If they do not have a means to do so, the Muslim will help them and they will follow Islam.
4) Provide Schooling. The migrants lead the way for their families to come to the city so the church should provide schooling because the migrants want their children to become well-educated [and thus they would likely place them in the church school] (Interview:1992).

Such services offer the community a channel into the fellowship circle of the church. The church must not neglect them. As Loum suggests, "the church can locate the recent arrival to the community through conducting a survey of the area periodically" (Interview:1992). The church then can extend an invitation to attend services as well as provide practical assistance.[16]

How can the Church Build Bridges to Its Community?

There are a number of innovations that could bring the church into contact with the community and help to meet felt needs.

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[16] The Kissy Dockyard Wesleyan Church in Freetown, Sierra Leone, provides an example of community involvement. This church operates what they call the Kissy Home Cell Christian Development Program through which they are able to reach out to poor communities (Bottom Mango, Kamanda Farm Cola Tiek, and Moyiba Hill were cited) to provide help in the form of loans, clothing, medical care, scholarships, housing, etc. The pastor states, "God has used this programme together with the Home Cell Evangelistic Ministry to win many souls for Christ" (*Freetown District Conference Journal* 1989:38).

Ministry in time of death, claims Lamin Sanneh, meets a great need. Several things can be done to identify with the family and to assist them.

1) *Wake-Keeping*: Church-body participation in "wake keeping." Bobson Turay, former pastor of the Kissy Dock Yard Church in Freetown, said his church substituted the traditional "wake keeping" form with its drinking and evilness, with Christian meaning so the church could utilize this very important event in the life of the family. This innovation communicated a Christian witness.

Rev. Turay explains the wake's meaning:

> The wake traditionally witnesses to the dead person's background and former participation in the cultural traits of the tribe. The community visualizes it like a monument to the person. The bigger the wake, the more important the person's role in the community. The wake says the deceased belonged to a group and a culture which is one's greatest desire and inheritance. The church by contrast, should view the wake as a time of Christian testimony. The purpose for going is not to bear witness to the late person's life, but to celebrate the life of Christ, his death, and resurrection power. The church members attending the wake understand clearly their goal and guidelines for their presence. They determine their songs, their message, their testimony. No liquor or wine is allowed for the Christians. They also set a time for departure (about 2:00 AM) rather than staying the whole night through (Interview:1992).

In Ghana, President Dixon, head of the Methodist Church, says that some Methodists and Presbyterians have begun holding the wake in the church to save the members' money. He further suggests that each church should establish a funeral fund to assist the family. He believes that if the church will make changes to lower funeral costs, a powerful appeal could be given to those outside the church who do not wish to be forced into debt with expensive church funerals (Interview:1991).

2) Means for Giving Condolences: Provide an open book for condolences to assist family needs. The church people can contribute money, food, and other items to address the needs of the bereaved family

so that the family does not have to bear all the burden. This practical help can be a convincing testimony for the Christian community. The Muslims do this. If Christians do not help, people are often forced to go to the Muslims for help to bury their dead (Turay Interview:1992).

3) *Community Burial Casket:* Provide a community burial casket to be reused or provide wood and laborers to make the coffin. The communal burial casket has precedent with the Muslims. They call this "*Berria*" which is like a casket. No matter who dies, they use this same box to carry the body to the gravesite. Then the body is removed and buried in the African way. This communal box can be used for those who cannot afford a coffin like those used in a village setting in a province. Alfred Kamara, home cell director for the Kissy Dockyard Wesleyan Church in Freetown, Sierra Leone, stated that even the Catholic Church in the town of Lunsar uses the communal box. This cuts down costs. As noted, making the coffin is another way to help. The National Pentecostal Church in Freetown buys and stores coffin boards. The moment a member of their church body dies, their men get the wood and construct the coffin so they can bury that day or at another time. They do not take the body to the mortuary. This cuts the cost from about 50,000 to 60,000 Leons (Sierra Leone currency is equivalent proportionally to the U.S. dollar) to about 10,000 Leons. The church should establish a funeral committee of those who can immediately assist the bereaved with such skills as carpentry and serving (Turay, Kamara Interviews:1992).

4) *Same Day Burial:* This can save expenses. However, too great of haste could have a detrimental effect. Guarding the deep respect the African holds for the body is a means of showing compassion and of honoring the African position. Rev. Turay notes, the dying person is very, very important in African culture. Understanding the African culture at this point is very important. Burying the dead in a rush because of lack of funds reflects very negatively on the family and their group identity. Time for wake-keeping has great significance. (Interview:1992).

Barje Maigadi states that in the African village, the burial rite may last for days symbolizing a worthy send-off celebration for the living dead (Interview:1993). African mentality believes that a strong group will assume responsibility to bury the deceased properly. To be forced to

skip this involvement due to lack of funds suggests a weakness in the family and the community. Thus, if a church body fails to give this custom great respect, disgrace befalls the dead. Then the watching community will play down the image of the entire congregation (Turay, Kamara Interviews:1992).

Theological Bridges to the Community

1) *Baptism*: Perform this ritual in the traditional context with drums and much singing, as in the village ceremonies. Loum states that Christian Baptism is a powerful symbol and can greatly diminish pagan practices. In the African culture, immersion is very symbolic. When a convert is taken to the river and immersed three times, this event stays with the person as long as that person lives (Interview: 1992). As Lamin Sanneh has commented, "I believe this service should be accompanied with much joyous activity, drumming and singing which reminds the baptized that the church is wholly with him in support and that he has not been completely left out of his animist heritage which uses much drumming and singing" (Interview:1991).

2) *Easter celebration:* Sanneh advocates making much of the Easter event and resurrection celebration. Also, he suggests preparing the membership for this celebration well beforehand and gathering an offering for a time of fellowship following the worship. He would reach into the community and invite all contacts. Using indigenous ideas, a congregation could develop a special Lord's Supper rite or new liturgy with Scripture could be created. Sanneh says:

> I would seek to get across the idea of initiation into the community, carrying the concept "We are the community of God,—the family of God being initiated again into the wider family of the Church." I believe this would help the outsiders to have a more Biblical perspective on this practice. Make the death and resurrection of Christ the major calendar year emphasis, even over Christmas. Christmas is very theological; Easter is theatrical. Easter is the public "out-dooring" of the Son of God in African eyes. This is the day God anointed His Son, christened Him with a costly name—Christ, a name to whom every knee shall bow, every tongue confess. The

risen Christ and the empty tomb is God's own outdooring of Christ (Interview:1991).

Nigerian pastor, Barje Maigadi, likewise affirms placing emphasis upon the resurrected Christ: "The Christian's hope of the resurrection offers a powerful attraction in contrast to the belief of the African Traditionalist who conceives only of the lingering spirit of the departed, but no resurrection of the body. Islam as well has no assurance of a resurrected body" (Interview:1993).[17]

President Dixon, leader of the Methodist Church in Ghana, West Africa, explains, "Christians celebrate Easter as an outstanding event. Parades are common on Good Friday afternoons. Easter Sunday people come to church dressed in white" (Interview:1991).

1) *Christmas.* "Make more of the Christmas event," Sanneh advises. Extend the celebration over several weeks and highlight the various narratives such as the angel's announcement to Mary, Mary's story, the trip to Bethlehem and the search for an inn, the birth of Christ, the angel's announcement to the shepherds and their response, and the visit of the Wisemen. These could be portrayed through drama, choral groups, and readings. Sanneh further suggests that the church could raise funds and provide for the needs of the poor of the community in remembrance of God's gift to humankind (Interview:1991).

2) *Festivals.* Sanneh encourages the church to capitalize on group gatherings such as festivals, which provide a special time for coming together to celebrate, eat and share. As recorded in the Old Testament, God established many such occasions among the Israelites. Also, Sanneh suggests that the church should take note of Islam's festival events. Muslims follow a religious calendar which includes numerous festivals. These festivals provide wonderful opportunities for people to socialize and fraternize. A kind of distributive ethic prevails in these events, where those who were "lucky" when they came to town now share the fruits of their labors with the less fortunate. These festival events help to acculturate people into the Islamic ethos and they even serve as introductions to Islamic religious teachings (Interview:1991).

[17] Barje Sulmane Maigadi, a Nigerian, was the first Ph.D. graduate in Inter Cultural Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary in 1997.

3) *Drama and Bible Emphasis.* Sanneh suggests that the church community can bear a powerful witness through such tools as:

a) Drama.

b) Exaltation of the Bible. Christianity must lift up the Bible as the Word of God communicated by the Holy Spirit and hold it forth with clarity and confidence as authoritative and life-giving. Christ commanded that the gospel be proclaimed to all nations (*ethne)* or people groups (Matthew :19, 20; Mark 16:15). By exalting and following God's Word, perhaps the church can bring the Qur'an, the sacred book of the Muslims, into proper perspective. Sanneh wrote,

> The church needs to bring down the Qur'an from its pedestal. Until this is done, we have a very weak position among the Muslims. Islam has the lingering idea that Arabic is a language that is not translated, that it is holier than a language that is translated. Even if a Muslim becomes a Christian, he carries an inferiority complex (Interview:1991).

c) Translate the Bible into the People's language. The Scripture should be available in the vernacular language. Gatherings, such as "the home cell" and public worship, where possible, should use the vernacular language. Sanneh suggests that the church can take advantage of the deep desire and longing for self-respect and self worth that is reflected through the use of one's own native language. Placing the gospel message in the vernacular elevates the person and his/her culture. The use of the vernacular by the church gives its ministry an advantage over Islam, which insists upon the use of Arabic for religious worship in such practices as prayer, fasting, and the reading of the Qur'an. The Islamic belief that Arabic is the language of God, since He revealed the Qur'an in it, makes Arabic a special if not almost sacred language. This places all other languages in an inferior position and suggests that the vernacular should be replaced with Arabic, especially for key religious functions. Sanneh believes this attitude permeates one's own self-concept, creating a negative self-image.[18] This position places a major hurdle in front of

[18] Sanneh writes, "Mother tongue speakers find themselves in the anomalous position of conceding that their languages are 'profane' or 'mundane' (*ajami*) for the decisive acts of the religious code" (1989:212).

Islam's appeal to the non-Arabic speaker (Seminar Asbury Theological Seminar: 1991).

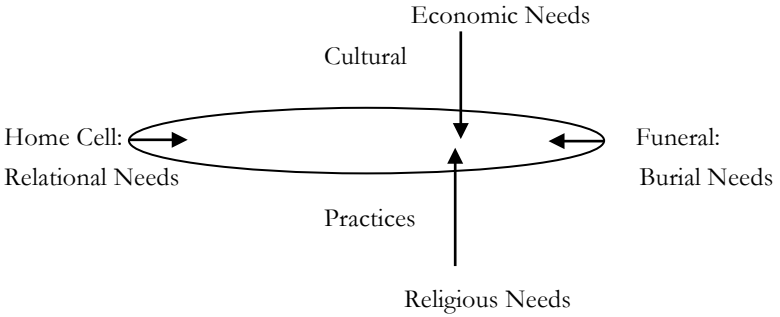
Non Theological Bridges to the Community

a) Favor a strong stand against alcoholic beverages. Islamic rules forbid people to consume alcohol, thus helping those coming from the rural areas to avoid the temptation to become addicted and eventually end in a base lifestyle (Interview:1991). The church should take no less a stance.

b) Introduction of literacy classes to reach the community. This ministry, done without charge by the Methodists in Accra, Ghana, has been a means of drawing people into the fellowship of the church (Dixon Interview:1991).

In these key ways, then, the community inherent in the church body can become a powerful witness in any given social structure.

This diagram illustrates the role of "Community" in bridging needs:[19]



In addition, the church can have a vital ministry through small group gatherings as demonstrated by the Wesleyan Home Cells in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

[19] In Acts 15:8-9, we see a model, the role between the "Holy Spirit" and "us", the body of Christ, the Church. On the spiritual side, the Holy Spirit gave direction to the body. The church accepted the Holy Spirit's direction regarding Gentile practices. In Sierra Leone, we have identified a number of practices/rituals observed by the Church. When the church can understand their practices in relationship to direction by the Holy Spirit based in Scripture, then the church has solid ground for their practices.

The Role of the Home Fellowship

Home fellowships provide a unique setting in which the church can serve as a viable body of Christ. Home-based groups established within the communities surrounding the central church can easily be in touch with grass roots needs and feelings. As previously noted, one of the first things migrants do when moving into the city is to look for communities similar to those back home, communities that will have benevolent societies to assist with personal needs. This study has pointed out that few African townsmen are entirely lost in town because they have or eventually will establish contacts. Shorter makes this observation:

> Beginning with initial family or ethnic contacts, the migrant builds up a "survival network" of workmates and patrons. Sports, leisure activities, funerals, church services and political manifestations bring people together. However, the urban migrant is not simply "given" a ready-made community, as he would be in a village. He chooses his own associates and creates his own selective neighborhood (1983:364).

The migrants' sense of "networking" and desire to select their own new community associates prepares them to be accepting of the home cell fellowship model. Lamin Sanneh suggests these informal fellowships need to meet on a regular basis and have a certain amount of organized structure. He explains,

> Moslems will respond to these fellowships because in the villages, Islam is a lay religion led for the most part by lay-people. The church that extends itself through these lay-led group fellowships knows how to deal with its own people. This concept is absolutely critical. The home fellowship is the obvious way to proceed. It places the focus on the people, which is very important for growth (Interview:1991).

Shorter, commenting on the role of community groups, concludes that "in my opinion, they are the most important initiative of the urban church in Africa today" (1991:100). As an example, the Wesleyan Church has applied the home fellowship concept in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Home Fellowships: A Wesleyan Church Case Study (09:1992)[20]

In the Wesleyan context the home fellowship parallels the function of the Voluntary Associations in a number of aspects in an attempt to meet the needs of the community, especially those of the migrant.

The Freetown District of the Wesleyan Church has 43 home fellowships known as "home cells." Most of the 11 Freetown District churches have one or more home cells. One of the Freetown churches, the Kissy Dockyard Wesleyan Church, has 19 home cells in the communities surrounding the church. The church appointed a layman to supervise their home cell ministry. The church divided the area into three zones and appointed a director over each zone. Each week, the director visits the cells to supervise and encourage the members and leaders. All the home cell leaders, both men and women, meet together each Saturday for instruction, sharing and prayer under the direction of the home cell supervisor.

The home cells identify culturally with their community. Ten to 15 people from the immediate community compose the cell led by a lay member. Spirited singing, testimony, sharing of needs, prayer, and Bible study fill the two-hour weekly gathering. Often new people from the community who have been invited by the members attend. Weekly gatherings rotate at members' homes, providing they have adequate room to meet. Thus, evangelism and Christian witness touch a wide area through the grass roots membership who know the people and the needs of their community.

Home Cell Ministries

Home cells minister in a variety of ways:

1) *Discovering Strangers in the Community:* Strangers are discovered almost immediately because home cell members generally know their

[20] The author spent a month in Freetown in September, 1992 doing research for his dissertation. He visited and interviewed over a dozen pastors and home cell leaders in Freetown and visited three home cell services in the Kissy Dockyard area one evening. I experienced first-hand their dynamic life and influence in their community. The pastor of the Kissy Dockyard, Bobson Turay served as my guide and interpreter.

neighbors. Rural migrants receive a welcome and their needs become known. Members invite them to their cell meetings. For the newcomers the opportunity to join a group appeals to and meets a basic need of identity. Their home cell provides a place for weekly fellowship and bonding in these community gatherings. Also, the home cell can provide daily places to gather and pray in the mornings and evenings such as the Islamic community does.

2) *Employment Needs Addressed:* The cells have established a capital fund from which the cell makes loans to enable people to turn the money over to make some income. Through this means the recipients can have a sense of belonging to a group and become self-supporting. Members may also be able to offer employment, at least temporarily.

3) *Special Community Needs Addressed:* Needs for food, assistance in times of sickness, and death are met through a special offering called *OSSU*, a charity gift. If trouble overtakes someone, each member contributes a small amount to assist the person. In this way, the person in need identifies with the home cell as people who love and care and show they are true brothers and sisters through their sharing (Turay Interview:1991).

4) *Housing Needs Addressed:* Home cell members may be able to offer housing which is one of the basic needs the migrant faces.

5) *Powerful Home Cell Member Influence:* Home cell ministries testify to Christ's love which causes recipients to open their homes to extend the Christian witness and Bible study. Often visitors request Bible studies in their own residences. When these new persons receive Christ, the circle of witness widens in the community or extends into a new community.

6) *Home Cell Uniting Factors:* Just as the Islamic community does on Friday at the Mosque, all the home cell members gather at the church on Sunday for worship and celebration which unites them with the larger body of Christ.

7) *Potential for Church Status:* Some of these home cells reach a point in attendance and spiritual maturity that enables them to separate from the parent body and organize new churches. Nine of the existing Wesleyan churches in Freetown began as home cell fellowships, and this

number will continue to increase as new home cells form throughout the city.

The home cells provide a sense of community and assistance in securing basic needs which remind the rural migrants of their communal village roots. Thus bonding with the home cell community can be the means of helping the African Traditional adherents bridge the gap in finding Christ and a spiritual community within the church. In conclusion, Wesleyan home cells have been instrumental in bringing many African Traditional believers to Christ and church membership.

Another interesting dimension in urban evangelism involves following the migrants to their origins in the country.

Urban Links Enhance Rural Evangelism

As the church grows in the urban centers, the opportunity for rural evangelism and church planting also increases. This circumstance is a result of the continuing relationship between the new urbanites and their village roots. Moller states that a survey of this situation shows that although townsmen maintain many links to kinsmen in their urban social relationships, they have a greater capacity for social participation which permits them to involve themselves in both urban and rural relations (1987:279). Little points out that it is in the tribal village, not the town where the most important personal ties remain (1966:7). As anticipated, the urban migrants make frequent visits to their rural homeland (Shorter 1991:15). Rural and urban dwellers are thus bound together, each affecting the other. In recognition of this interaction the reader may then more easily understand Shorter's observation that "there is a sense in which the whole of African countries are becoming urbanized" (1991:19).

Migrants finding Christ in the city have the opportunity to share their new faith with family and communal members in the village. For example, most of the 90 plus Wesleyan churches in the country of Mozambique resulted from the witness of family members who had found Christ while working in the gold mines in and around Johannesburg, South Africa. Thus, the more contacts the urban church can establish with the urban migrants, the greater the potential for evangelism in new communities in distant rural areas.

Summary and Recommendations

This study has focused on the accelerated growth of Africa's urban centers and more importantly upon the responsibility of the church to reach out to and assimilate urbanites into the Christian community. These urban magnets are drawing the poorer rural population who seek the "better" way of life through the many opportunities urban living offers such as employment, education and a higher standard of living. According to a United Nation's report, Africa led the world in urban growth rates with an average of 4.6 percent throughout the 1970s. The urban population in Africa has been projected to reach 39 percent by A.D. 2000 and as much as 54 percent by the year 2025. The majority of people migrating hold a worldview rooted in African Traditional Religion. As the reader has seen, these rural migrants come with a certain openness to change; thus they are prime prospects to convert to another system of religious belief. The various circumstances confronting migrants enhances this openness to conversion. Migrants to the cities face a new and foreign environment. They have immediate need for housing, employment, food, education and identity. And they need a community like that which they left, which had provided them with security and support.

Both an Islamic and a Christian presence exists in the city. Which one will most likely assist the migrant? With which one will the migrant identify? As we have seen, Islam, due to its early contact with the colonial trading centers, remains a strong presence in the cities and towns, often controlling a large portion of the business establishments and available housing. Islam is in a position to offer immediate help to meet the physical needs of migrants. Since Muslims worship openly throughout their communities, they attract attention. Furthermore, Islam's communal base offers a common ground the rural migrant can relate to. All these factors place Islam on center stage. Consequently, the migrant comes into contact with Islam almost immediately and reacts favorably to the overtures of Islam. The opening story of this paper illustrates that many rural migrants convert from their African Traditional Religion to identify with the familiar community spirit they see in the Islamic religion. This gives them a sense of security and the resources to meet their immediate needs. The mushrooming migrant population with

its high potential for conversion appears to be one of the major reasons Islam continues to increase in West Africa.

On the other hand, the migrants generally do not have the same exposure to Christianity as they do to Islam. The more Western orientation of the church and its isolation from the local community and daily living tend to mask the true communal nature of the body of Christ. This often prevents the church body from knowing the personal, daily needs of the local residents and especially recently arrived migrants. Therefore, migrants do not come into relationship with the church as readily.

However, this study has emphasized that the church does possess inherent qualities that can provide points of contact with the rural migrant who follows the African Traditional Religion. These parallels may serve as avenues between the two groups that may lead to conversion and ministry. As suggested, there are a number of ways the church can use these parallels for ministry and evangelism in the community, especially with the rural migrants.

In addition, this paper mentions the Voluntary Associations that are helping the rural migrants find identity and employment in their new urban environment through this indigenous communal body. The home cells of the Wesleyan Church provide an indigenous parallel to these Voluntary Associations for evangelism and church planting. This study has also highlighted various ways home cell groups have served to meet the needs of local residents as well as provide a setting to expose them to the Christian faith and community. The home cells display Christian life in action and represent the church at the grass root level of the community. Rev. Bobson Turay and Mr. Alfred Kamara have explained how the presence of the home cells in the local community brings Christians into immediate contact with visitors and new residents. As a result the home cells serve as links to Christ and the church.

In summary, this study has noted that the home cell organization serves to meet migrant needs and that the loving concern that they demonstrate serves to open the hearts of the migrants to explore the Christian faith in weekly home Bible studies which usually result in conversion to Christ. As a result, cell membership grows, cells divide, and new home cells multiply. Thus the Christian faith slowly permeates

one community after another with new churches and home cell networks. The home cell model provides the urban church an acceptable means for incarnational ministry in the community and becomes, in particular, one of the most effective channels to reach the rural migrant within a growing metropolis.

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IDENTITY AND DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE PEOPLE OF LOOBAN OUTREACH CHURCH

Jarrett Davis

Preface

The study of identity is foundational in understanding not only *who we are*, but also *what we can become*. This research examines the development of self-identity in "Looban," a marginalized, squatter-relocation community, on the outskirts of Metro Manila, Philippines. It focuses on the dynamics of social interaction between "Mother-church," a large, affluent church from the philippine upper/middle class, and "Looban Outreach Church," a mission outreach of Mother-church comprised largely of the social and economic bottom of philippine society.

Social Identity Theory serves as the theoretical framework for this case study. It understands that people will do whatever it takes to negotiate a "positive and distinct" identity for their own group, even if it means adopting another group's identity. To this end, group identity serves to create and maintain a sense of *self-esteem*. The youth in Looban indicate a strong desire share in the identity of mother church, however, their social context seems to keep this desire from fruition.

Philippine social structure is organized as an interpersonal hierarchy of relationships that seem to mimic familial relationships. This hierarchy tends to prescribe and maintain the nature of interactions between differing social classes. Those of higher social class or position function in parental roles as caretakers, providers, and educators. As those of lower class or position are provided for, they, in turn, owe their loyalty and respect to those who have provided. As mother church has sent leaders to aide in the development of the outreach, most of these leaders have carried with them the strong social identity of mother church. Thus, under the *sakop* framework, the roles and expectations of both mother church and Looban have been clearly defined and static,

providing little social mobility. As Looban has tried to negotiate a "positive and distinct" identity for themselves, they find themselves at a split. Are they a functioning part of mother church's identity? Or are they just a charitable endeavor?

This study utilizes interviews and focus-group discussions combined with participant observation to give an ethnographic picture of the identity formation that took place between these two strongly contrasted socioeconomic identities.

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Looban (an alias, pronounced "loh-oh-bahn") is an urban-poor resettlement community that lies just outside of Metro-Manila. For its size and large population, very little is commonly said or known about the 171-hectare, government-allocated plot of land at the edge of Laguna Bay. For a number of years, the muddy plain saw very little activity other than the daily deposits of garbage that were collected from around the southern parts of Manila and left to decompose on its shores.

The great migration to the community was initiated by government proclamation 704 issued on November 28th, 1995 under the former president Fidel V. Ramos. This proclamation officially designated Lupang Looban as a "socialized housing project." From an initial 124 families, a bustling community sprang out of the muddy floodplain with in just a few short years. Many of these early settlers literally built the community with their bare hands, moving to the area from economically depressed sub-cultures in Rizal Province as well as from the surrounding areas in Metro-Manila including Marikina, Makati, and Quezon City[1].

There is little exact information known about the present population of the community. The most conservative estimates from barangay leadership hold the community's population to be approximately 60,000 people,[2] however the Asia Development Bank has published estimates as high as 125,000 inhabitants.[3]

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1 Kito Ramos. Interview by author, 22 September 2009, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines. Digital recording.

2 Kito Ramos. Interview by author, 22 September 2009, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines. Digital recording.

3Asian Development Bank, *The Garbage Book*, (Mandaluyong City, MM: Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, 2004), 72.

Amid this rapidly developing community, public health concerns and environmental issues have been just a few of the issues that have been raised. Until its closing in 2003, the Looban Area served as one of the 9 major garbage-dumping sites of the Metro-Manila area. The site closed when it reached capacity in 2003. Because of this history, the Looban community presently sits atop nearly 2 million cubic meters of decomposing garbage and it has become synonymous with rampant concerns for both public health and crime. One news article appearing in the *Philippine Inquirer* quotes one public official as saying that Lupang Looban, "has become a sanctuary for informal settlers, a disposal site for domestic and industrial waste and the subject of social clashes due to land tenure and ownership conflicts."[4] Notorious for such public identification, the Lupang Looban Resettlement is not only geographically "marginalized" on the outskirts of Manila, but also suffers from deep sociological marginalization as well.

9.1

Context of the Looban Outreach Church

In 2002, a fire ravaged through a community known as "Pinestra" (about 10 kilometers from the Looban community). Following the devastation, several families took the opportunity to pickup what things they had remaining and start over again in Looban. Many of these families had been a part of an urban-poor outreach ministry of a large, affluent church (hereafter referred to as *mother church*). As members of the devastated community relocated, mother church took the opportunity and made a bridge to the, now rapidly-expanding community of Looban.

Mission groups from mother church started to hold simple services in the community. They would gather in any open space to hold

4 Jerry Esplanada, "Special Report: Squatter proliferation worsens LLDA garbage dumping woes." *Philippine Inquirer Online* 10 December 2003. http://www.inquirer.net/globalnation/sec_prf/2003/dec/10-05.htm (Accessed 9 Oct. 2009).

Bible studies and outreach fellowships.[5] Their mission outreach became known as Looban Outreach Church.

At this time, the community was little more than a dumping ground in the middle of a floodplain. The leaders would often need to drive four-wheel drive vehicles to navigate the unwelcoming terrain. One leader recalls that there were very few houses at that time and boots were needed to travel down the narrow and muddy path to the ministry site in Looban. During those days, leadership and laity from mother church would hold Bible studies and to conduct evangelistic crusades in the community. At times they would have evangelistic film showings for which they would need to bring a generator, because there was no electricity in the community at that time.[6]

Perhaps one of the biggest changes to the outreach in Looban was in 2005 when Looban Outreach Church took shape in the form of a building. The project was a joint effort between a Work and Witness teams from the United States and groups from mother church. Under the direction of mother church, Looban Outreach Church was given a wealth of resources in staff, programs, and materials such as sound equipment, drums and the basic "furniture" that would be expected to come with the church "package."

The Work and Witness team spent three weeks constructing the frame of the church building on the campus of the local seminary for the denomination. They transported the completed pieces to the Looban community for final assembly. One of the lay ministers from mother church comments that the building was finished in only three weeks and it was different than any other building that can be found in Looban.[7] After the building was completed, it quickly became the permanent site of the feeding program and several of the weekly Bible studies for the members of the Looban outreach.

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5 "Mother church Pastor," Interview by author, 16 September 2009, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines. Interview Notes.

6 Pulpit pastor, Interview by Author, 22 February 2010, Interview transcript, 3-7.

7 Pulpit pastor, 36.

Context of Mother-Church

The municipality in which mother church is located has its own unique identity as well. It is an urban municipality in the province of Rizal with a population of 262,485 people as of September 2009.[8] Although it shares in many of the same economic hardships found throughout the Philippines, it carries a well-respected distinctiveness. The socioeconomic and physical profile for the municipality commends the municipality for its active economy, hosting a number of big manufacturing industries[9] especially its garment industries which supply demand both domestically and internationally.[10] These industries generate substantial employment opportunities and contribute greatly to the economic growth of the area. On November 9th 2007, SM Prime Holdings opened a new 91,920 square-meter SM Supermall. The mall is well known in the area and has developed into a prime *tambay* (hangout) area for youth and adults from around the area.

Mother church is well-known and respected for its programs held in the municipality. The church's high-end, well-produced, energy-filled youth services attract a few hundred youth from around the area. These youth gatherings are often hosted by a well-known radio disk-jockey, who serves as a youth pastor at the mother church. Sunday nights will sometimes feature testimonies from celebrities who have come to know Christ, along with performances from leading bands and singers in the area. Progressive groups of youth and adults from the area seem to

8 National Statistics Office, Republic of the Philippines. (n.d.) Population and Annual Growth Rates by Region, Province, and City/Municipality: 1995, 2000, 2007: 2007 census. Accessed 15 September 2009; available from http://Ibid.census.gov.ph/data/sectordata/2007/municipality.pdf

9 These industries include: The Philippine Automotive Manufacturing Corporation (PAMCOR), Steniel, Fibertex, Capital Garments, National Panasonic, Singer, PHILEC, and Pacific Products. *Taytay Socio-Economic and Physical Profile Guide,* Section 5.1, 2.

10 National Statistics Office, Republic of the Philippines. (n.d.), *Taytay Socio-Economic and Physical Profile Guide*, Section 5.1.2. (Taytay, Rizal: National Statistics Office, 2004), 55-56.

resonate with the lively messages and innovative means of communicating Christ to the equally progressive area.

Amid the progress, behind the shopping and business centers, and despite the growth, the municipality still shares in the reality of the 30% (2003 est.) of Filipinos that are living at or below the poverty line.[11] Mother church has played an active role in working among these groups who have been affected by the widespread cycles of poverty. Mother church has involved itself in many projects around the area. Food, clothing, even micro-economic projects have been facilitated by ministry teams desiring to share Christ's love to the hurting people of the area.

The Relationship

Mother church has a great deal of clout in the Looban community. Mother church leadership continually provides for and nurtures the community, attempting to train Looban Outreach Church to be able to do what mother church does. Simultaneously, they minister to the Looban community in ways that address the issues of their poverty, providing them with feeding programs, relief goods, and other ministries while simultaneously interpolating a gospel message. One member of mother church leadership notes, "if you want to minister to the poor, it must be holistic—they don't buy [accept] spiritual things very easily without something that they can get first."[12] This particular philosophy of "holistic" ministry typically illustrates mother church's approach to inter-socioeconomic ministries in Looban and other less affluent areas around the area.

It is important at this point to consider what is meant by mother church's usage of the term "holistic." To be "holistic" is typically understood to be ministry to the *whole* person. Paul Benefiel, in a paper submitted to the Association of Nazarene Sociologists of Religion, defines "holistic" as considering "the total needs" of a person. To be

11 The World Factbook, CIA.gov. Accessed 16 Sept 2009. Found at: https://Ibid.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rp.html.

12 Mother church pastor, Interview by author, 16 September 2009, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines. Interview Notes.

holistic, by his definition, is not only meeting spiritual needs, but also physical, emotional, social, and other needs as well. [13]

In efforts to be holistic, mother church has not only developed the outreach church, but also tried to help with many of the community's social and economic needs as well. Nearly every step of Looban Outreach Church's development as a church has been guided by mother church. This being the case, Looban Outreach Church has remained closely-tied with its mother-church. The success of mother church's youth ministry, called *Youth Corps* (an alias), has inspired a smaller version of the program at Looban Outreach Church entitled "*Mini-Youth Corps*" which features much of the same music, terminology and catch-phrases that can be found at mother church.

Mother church admits a need to develop indigenous leaders within the Looban community, who will be more capable of understanding the context and sociological themes of the Looban community. Mother church leadership is presently mentoring one young adult perceived to be from the community how to lead mother church's ministries in Looban. The church hopes that this youth will someday be able to lead in place of the mother-church leadership, although the transition of leadership has been slow and still goes unrealized.

Despite all the resources and energy that have been put into the Looban outreach, the leadership feels that its relationship with Looban is not moving forward. Mother church Leadership notes that Looban is dependent upon mother church.[14] Very few of the members of Looban Outreach Church have taken ownership of the ministry efforts of the mother-church. Staff, resources, and funding have been poured into the Looban project from outside the community; however, Looban remains a mission outreach of mother church.

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[13] Paul Benefiel, "The Doctrine of Holiness as a Holistic Philosophy of Ministry" (Paper presented at the Third Annual Meeting of the Association of Nazarene Sociologists of Religion, Kansas City, MO, March 6, 1984).

14 Mother church leader, Interview by author, 10 August 2009, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines. Interview Notes.

One youth minister from mother church who serves in the community comments that Looban Outreach Church seems to be following mother church blindly—readily accepting the forms and patterns presented to them from mother church without developing their own identity.[15] Mother church leadership admits that the Looban community greatly appreciates and accepts the resources of food and support. The youth love the contemporary music at Mini-Youth Corps; however, leadership states that they are not developing into a self-sufficient community. Although, mother church sees Looban as a great ministry opportunity in an underprivileged community, the people of Looban Outreach Church appear to be the receptors of mother church outreach efforts.

Looban Outreach Church is unqualified to be a church on its own for several reasons. District Leadership identifies "the three S's" which are presently required for a church to be officially organized. They must be "self-supporting," or financially able to fund ministries and daily expenses without outside funding. Secondly, Looban Outreach Church must be "self-governing," meaning that they must develop their leadership enough to have a pastor and a full church board. Lastly, they must be "self-propagating," or showing that they are able to reach out to other people and plant new churches.[16] At this point, Looban Outreach Church is unable to meet any of these requirements. Therefore, the Metro-Manila District Church's denomination does not recognize Looban as an organized church. It is only a mission-outreach or a "preaching-point" under the supervision of mother church.

Mother church has been in this mother-daughter relationship with Looban for about 9 years. Both the Denomination's Metro-Manila District and mother church had hoped that Looban could have developed into a sustainable, self-sufficient church community, but the daughter church is not advancing in this direction. Looban's identity

15 Mother church leader, Interview by author, 10 August 2009, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines. Interview Notes.

16 District Leadership, Interview by author, 4 December 2009, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, Interview Transcript.

appears to be meshed with that of mother church. Looban has been unable to become a fully functioning church with its own identity.

Research Problem and Sub-problems

Both the Looban community and mother church have distinctive identities of their own. Each entity is informed by its own indigenous values and worldviews. However, the identity of Looban Outreach Church seems to have been ambiguously intermingled with that of mother church. The people of the Looban Outreach Church are indigenously from Looban, but in many ways they seem to look and act like the people from mother church. Thus, this study asks, "*What is the self-identity of the people of Looban Outreach Church in view of their relationship with mother church?*"

This question focuses on Looban Outreach Church's identity and the understanding of themselves that is created within their present interactions and on-going relationship with mother church. This study understands that identity and interaction are both reciprocal and interrelated. The formation of Looban's self-identity is informed by their interactions with mother church. Similarly, mother church's interactions with Looban are also influenced by the ways that they perceive and identify the people of Looban. It is often the case that one's perception of another becomes the reality in which one relates to that other. Thus, there is a vital importance in understanding the way (or ways) that Looban Outreach Church understands itself because it is upon this self-understanding (or self-identification) that they will live and act.

Theoretical Framework

Much of the theoretical considerations for this study come out of the Social Identity approach of social psychology, culminating largely in the works of Henri Tajfel and John Turner.[17] Simply put, this theoretical approach states that when a person belongs to a group, they are very

17 Michael A. Hogg and R. Scott Tindale, *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Group Processes* (New Jersey: Weliey-Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 433.

likely to derive a significant portion of their self-identity from that group. They also enhance their identities by comparing their own group (the *in-group*) with other groups (*out-groups*) that are not like them.

A group's identity is formed on the basis of "fuzzy" sets of characteristics that "*define* and *prescribe* attitudes, feelings, and behaviors which categorize the one group and distinguish it from the other groups."[18] These categories can be any sort of distinguishing characteristics, such as ethnicity, race, social class, etc. *In-groups* and *out-groups* are formed and defined based upon observed patterns of similarities and differences. By making such categorizations, people sharpen their identities as they compare themselves to out-groups, or those groups with whom they do not identify and assign particular identities to those perceived social groupings.[19]

A great deal of Social Identity theory has to do with inter-group relations. It is concerned with how people understand themselves as members of one group in comparison with other *out-groups*. Specifically, it looks at the particular consequences of such categorizations, such as ethnocentrism and social stereotyping.[20]

Social Identity theory also affirms that social planes are not always level. Certain groups carry more social power and/or influence than others. If given the opportunity, members of less salient social groups are likely to take on the characteristics and likenesses of foreign social identities, for the purpose of achieving a more positive and distinct social identity for themselves.[21] Groups with a stronger or more *salient* social identity often have more social influence, carry a greater social power, and are often ascribed authority.

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18 Michael Hogg, "A Social Identity Theory of Leadership 5," Personality and Social Psychology Review, (2001): 184-200, 187.

19 Naomi Eilmers, Russel Spears, and Bertjan Doosje, *Social Identity: Context, Commitment, Content,* (New Jersey:Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, 1999): 8

20 Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke, "Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory" Vol. 63, *Social Psychology Quarterly,* (2000): 224-237: 226.

21 Turner, J.C. *Social Influence* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991). 171.

Simon and Oakes, two recent proponents of this theory, discuss identity and social power. They distinguish both *conflictual* and *consensual* means of social power. Conflictual power is the power by coercion, which involves one group dominating another and controlling by authority. Consensual power is power by influence. In this kind of power, one group affects another group in such a way that the affected group ascribes power and authority to the group who did the affecting. Most power relationships deal with both conflictual and consensual types of power.[22]

In a Philippine context this is particularly relevant. Philippine culture commonly exhibits a high-power distancing between social groups of unequal power. Geert Hofstede defines power distance as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally."[23] Thus, in contexts with a high power distancing, members of low-status groups accept and expect domination by other high-status groups, and will often concede power to those of a stronger social identity. These concepts of power distancing and the Philippine social hierarchy are important to consider in this particular case. The Looban Community and the Community of which mother church is a part are at great variance with one another in terms of social power. Thus these concepts are important in an effective framework for understanding the relationship between the two entities.

In view of this, it is also significant to mention the Philippine cultural value of Smooth Interpersonal Relations (SIR). This concept is defined as a way of going about interpersonal relationships in such a way that it avoids the outward appearance of conflict.[24] Almost synonymous with this term is the concept of *pakikisama* which is defined as

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[22] Bernd Simon and Penelope Oakes, "Beyond dependence: An identity approach to social power and domination," *Human Relations* 59 (2006), 116.

[23] Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publishing, 2001), 98.

24Frank Lynch. "Social Acceptance Reconsidered," found in *Philippine Society and the Individual,* Edited by Frank Lynch (Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 1984), 36.

"concession" or "going along with" another person or group of people for the purpose of outwardly preserving the "SIR" value system.[25] *Pakikisama* concedes one's personal likes and dislikes in order to identify with another person or group of persons (at least on the surface) for the purpose of maintaining a harmonious relationship. At its best, this cultural value seeks harmony with others and with oneself; however, it is also possible that it can force one to "go along" with other particular social conventions at the expense of one's own identity.[26]

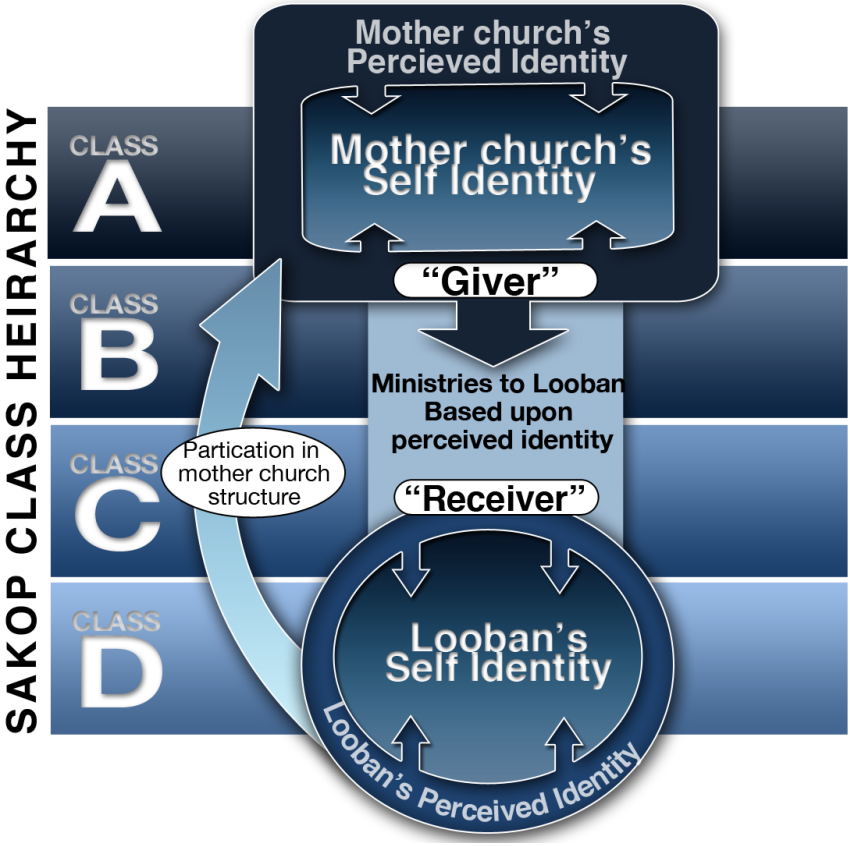
One's group identity is important because it both *describes and prescribes* who a person is and how they will act in that society. Having a strong identification as a part of a group is vital in the creation and maintenance of self-esteem, and the reaffirmation of the self.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the two distinct identities of mother church and Looban Outreach Church. Each group has their own understanding of themselves (Self-Identity). As the groups interact with one another, there are particular perceptions that are formed on the basis of the ways in which the two groups interact with one another, and each group interacts with one another on the basis of those perceived identities. This process takes place within a social class hierarchy which effects the ways in which the two groups interact.

25Frank Lynch, 36.

26Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano. "Filipino Values and Our Christian Faith." (MM: OMF Literature, 1990), 24-25.



Looban and mother church have their own respective self-identities. These self-identities are the ways in which they understand themselves in terms of their qualities and potential. As these contrasting identities of mother church and Looban Outreach Church interact, *perceived* identities are formed of one another based upon the ways in which the two groups interact. The two groups interact by mother church providing ministries to Looban Outreach Church and Looban participating in those ministries that are provided for them.

There are two identity layers defined for both Looban Outreach Church and mother church. There is the inner-layer of self-identity (how

the group perceived themselves) and the outer-layer of perceived identity (how the group perceives the other). There is an interrelation between the inner layer of self-identity and the outer layer of perceived identity.

It is important to note that Looban and mother church exist on greatly differing social and economic planes. In this context, the process of identifying the self and other takes place within a hierarchical class system of *Sakop Values,*[27] which tends to prescribe the nature of interactions between these differing social classes. This value system, in turn, influences the nature of the identities and interactions between the groups.

Presently, Looban Outreach Church seems to be living amid two possibly conflicting identities: one that is truly theirs and another that is borrowed or imposed. Social Identity Theorists affirm this possibility noting that individuals can identify themselves in terms of "a range of identities within which contradictory interests are embedded."[28] The question remains, *What is the self-identity of Looban Outreach Church in view of their relationship with mother church ?*

Significance of the Study

The study of identity is significant because it is foundational in the formation of not only *who we are*, but also *what we can become*. Seriously asking questions of identity and perceived identities within intergroup relationships can be vital to the effectiveness of those relationships. This is especially true when undertaking the difficult task of communicating between starkly contrasted social, cultural, and economic identities. Without critically making such considerations, it is easy to generalize or to assign a particular, *sweeping* identity to a given group of people, and consequently fall short in the assessment of one's own role in relation to that group of people.

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[27] Tomas D. Andres and Pilar B. Ilada-Andres, *Understanding the Filipino* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers), 1987. 56.

28 Simon Bernd and Penelope Oakes, "Beyond dependence: An Identity Approach to Social Power and Domination," *Human Relations* 59 (2006), 127-128.

It is my personal hope that this study will bring about a deeper understanding of marginalized people groups who are often on the receiving end of outreach and humanitarian aid. I hope that this study will be effective in clarifying a positive and distinct identity for the people of Looban. But more importantly, I hope to clarify the strengths and abilities of such groups of people. It is my hope that their story will bring about a sense of respect for the diversity of ideas and perspectives that could be offered by a wide range of social identities. I hope that such an understanding will serve as a tool to better equip and partner with such groups of people so that they can truly be empowered to minister and lead in their own rites and identities in ways that are most effective for them.

More directly, I hope to aid those interested in church planting to understand some of the social dynamics that are taking place between "mother churches" and their outreaches. Looban provides a prime example of these dynamics. I believe that there are important things to be learned by looking in-depth at a relationship such as this.

This study will attempt to investigate some of these very basic questions to aid potential church planters, organizations, and churches to have a fuller understanding of the dynamics in communicating between such diverse cultural and socioeconomic groups.

Scope and Delimitation

The narrative of this study comes from recorded interviews and dialogues that were held January to March 2010. In addition to the interviews, I have sat in on church meetings and fellowships, attended regular church services and participated in activities in the Looban community from January 2009 until March of 2010. This is an etic, qualitative study examining the self-identification of the people of mother church's outreach in the Looban community. Specifically, this research focuses on the roles assumed and the self-identities that are adopted in the relationship between the diverse social and economic entities of mother church and Looban outreach church. The study examines the role that the Philippine social hierarchy (*sakop* values) plays

in the relationship between the two churches. Also, the study considers the implications of the particular attitudes and postures held by the mother church Facilitators in Looban outreach church and the Looban community. In particular, this study hopes to uncover what of these attitudes and postures might prevent Looban outreach church from becoming a self-sufficient church in its own right.

Definition of Terms:

The following a list of several key terms defined as they will be used in this study:

Barkada - A term for a *Filipino* friendship group used to describe a close, intimate group of friends in which the relationships are relaxed, tolerant, and guided by the principle of *pakikisama.*

Church - A community of confessors who gather together for holy fellowship and ministries.[29]

Etic Research - Research that is approached from the "outside," in which the researcher does not share in the direct identity of the context of research. This is contrasted to *emic* research in which the subject of research shares in the identity of the researcher.

***Kasama* / Patron-Client Relationships** - a kind of informal sharecropping agreement between landlords and peasant farmers based on a mutual sense of *utang na loob.* This kind of relationship is characterized by mutual obligation and long-term dependency.[30]

Outreach Church - A group sponsored by the local church or district who meets regularly with the goal of becoming an organized Church.[31]

Pakikisama - a sense of getting along with one another in which the desires of the one are often suppressed for the desires of the group.[32]

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[29] Blevins, Dean G., Charles D. Crow, David E. Downs, Paul W. Thornhill, David P. Wilson, *Manual: Church of the Nazarene, 2009-2013* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 2009), 37

[30] Willem Wolters, *Politics, Patronage and Class Conflict in Central Luzon* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1984), 24.

[31] *Manual: Church of the Nazarene*, 339.

Perceived Identity - one's particular interpretation or understanding of another's potential and qualities.

Priesthood of All Believers - The Christian belief that *all people* who are in Christ are qualified to do the ministry and work of Jesus Christ.

Sakop values - an interpersonal hierarchy of relationships that seem to mimic familial relationships.

Self-Identity - the recognition of one's own potential or qualities.

Utang na loob - A debt of gratitude; A characteristically strong sense of obligation for gratefulness that is treated with great seriousness in Philippine culture. [33]

Values - the principles or standards of a person's behavior which are at the core of one's worldview.

Worldview - the way in which one understands the world and society around oneself. This is the filter through which one interprets the meanings of actions and interactions with others.

Assumptions:

The present study assumes that:

- Every social group in human society has its own unique identity.
- There are an infinite number of differences or variations from one group to the next.
- Differing groups influence each other through interaction.
- Group identity is of great value in that it informs us not only of who we are, but what we can become.
- Group identity inevitably leads us into action in that knowing who we are informs us of what we can do.

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[32] Niels Mulder, *Inside Philippine Society: interpretations of Everyday Life* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1997), 121.

[33] Rolando M. Gripaldo, Ed., "*Filipino cultural traits: Claro R. Ceniza Lectures*," (Washington D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2005), http://books.google.com/books?id=hXJe6vKMjroC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed: January 3, 2011).

- Group identity and its interactions with other groups are both reciprocal and interrelated to one another.

CHAPTER II

NARRATIVE AND ANALYSIS

Looban represents many things to many people. For the uninvolved many, it is just another squatter community where the unnameable "others" of Philippine society find their dwellings. For the visiting relief workers following a recent and disastrous typhoon, "*Kawawa" (pitiful)* became a nearly synonymous term for Looban when the former dumpsite-turned-community became an expansive lake, as flood waters engulfed a massive portion of the area. Investors see the rapidly expanding community as easy cash, while for nearly 100,000 Filipinos, "*bahay ko*" (my home) is a far more fitting nomenclature. What it is to each person, of course, all depends on how each person interacts with it.

Identity and interaction stand at the heart of this study. These two terms are understood to be related and reciprocal. Our identities are formed by how we interact with the people and world around us, and our actions are influenced by who we understand ourselves to be. Thus, if we attempt to answer questions about the reflexive perceived self-identities between mother church and Looban Outreach Church, we must first examine the interactions between the two groups.

The Relationship Between the Churches

The relationship between mother church and Looban Outreach Church is that of parent and child. The parent looks after the needs of the child, including its leadership and financial support based upon the understanding that the child is not yet capable of taking care of itself.[34] The goal, in this model, is that the young and developing church will eventually gain independence. Before it can be independent, the church must be able to generate enough revenue to support its own pastor, pay

[34] District leadership. Interview by author, 19 January 2010, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, Interview Transcript, line 45.

its bills, and maintain its own facilities. Secondly, the church must be able to govern itself, making its own decisions through a church board that it is independent of the parent-church. Lastly, the church must be capable of being a parent-church itself, that is, it must be able to plant other churches. Because of the context of the Looban community, there has been some difficulty in reaching a point where these three goals are able to be sufficiently met. Essentially, the child has had some difficulties in imitating its mother. The turn-over of leadership has not yet happened for Looban Outreach Church, mother church is the parent and Looban is the developing child, learning from the parent how to stand on its own.[35]

Looban Outreach Church began with a simple outreach. This is a typical beginning for most urban poor church plants on this district of the denomination . In this model, a local church will start a church plant by conducting a simple "outreach ministry" which provides something for the community, such as a feeding program, a film-showing, or evangelical outreach program. Once the leadership from the parent-church has made sufficient connection with the community, they will begin holding regular worship services at the site and try to develop a weekly church program with regular attendance. [36]

Once the outreach has formed regular church services, it will be referred to as a "recognized church," or a "mission church." This means that the district recognizes the outreach as a church with a leadership and government in development. It is during this process that the recognized church begins to develop its own offering and begins to support itself; however, it is still an outreach--and not able to officially be a church in the denomination.[37]

The final step, and goal of this process is for the mission-outreach to become an "organized church" which is fully recognized by the district. However, this requires that the church is able to lead and support itself. This was the development model used by mother church.

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[35] District leadership, 47.
[36] Ibid, 99.
[37] Ibid, 100-101.

First, a feeding program was started in the Looban community. Children would gather and eventually the program leaders would get in contact with the parents of the children. After this, a weekly church service, patterned after mother church services was started with similarly styled worship and preaching, and the relationship between the two groups began to form.[38] The hope that somehow throughout this process, the necessary shift from *outreach* to *church* would happen, but it has yet to be seen.

An important leader from the district (*referred to as "District Leadership" from here on*) is in charge of the oversight of "outreach-churches" like Looban Outreach Church.[39] The leadership believes that the Looban Outreach Church is developing, but not in a way that will be beneficial to both the mother church and the local church. The leadership asserts that the way that they are presently developing, "[Looban] will continuously be a burden on the mother church, and it will create a continuous dependency on the part of the local people in [Looban]."

District Leadership has noticed that leadership in Looban always tends to be equated with assistance, such as the feeding program. In other words, the people who are doing the ministry, giving the food, and providing the relief, those are the ones who are in charge of the church. District Leadership feels that the ability to make decisions is a very important factor in leadership. The District is aware that the people of Looban are often assisting with many of the outreach programs, but the decisions of how much money will be spent, what kind of food will be given, those decisions are all made by outsiders--they do not come from Looban. District Leadership says, "I believe, if they will be given the opportunity to decide and be given responsibility and to be accountable for their actions, then they will develop."[40]

In this relationship, it is important to consider a few factors. Mother church and Looban Outreach Church are two entities of greatly

[38] Mother church Leader, 106.
[39] District Leadership, 5.
[40] District Leadership, 81-82.

unequal status and power. Mother church generally represents the upper ranks of Philippine society and Looban is at the very bottom. Mother church has provided land and a building for the people of Looban, as well as utilities. They have staffed the church with workers who regularly provide worship services, food and donations to the people of the community. It is important to ask here what are the outcomes of a relationship such as this? In Philippine society, one almost inevitable outcome in a context such as this is *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude), or the feeling that something is owed in return for a particular favor given.

More specifically, the social context of the relationship between mother church and Looban runs parallel to a particular kind of class relationship, called a "*kasama* relationship" which has been deeply rooted in Philippine society since the 18th century.[41] The center of this kind of relationship was a kind of informal agreement between landlords and peasant farmers. The landlord would supply the peasant farmer with the land, advance seeds and financial help for the planting and harvesting of the field, while the farmer would in turn till and farm the land, often using his tools and animals. In this way, the two would work together each providing a need of the other. In addition, the landlord would often be obliged to help the farmer with his daily needs, often giving him advances without interest.

This kind of relationship pivoted on the concept of *utang na loob*. However, the landlord was the more powerful figure, and was in a position to determine the price of the goods, thus controlling the *utang*. As time went on, problems arose in that issue of *utang* kept the peasant farmer in a constant position of dependency on the landlord.[42] The resulting cultural phenomenon is a system of inter-class relationships that are based on mutual obligation and long-term interdependency.

This is the social background of the *sakop* values system that is seen in Philippine culture. This system stresses an interpersonal hierarchy of social relationships that seem to mimic familial

[41] Willem Wolters, *Politics, Patronage and Class Conflict in Central Luzon* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1984), 24.

[42] Wolters, 25.

relationships.[43] Within the *sakop* understanding, the parents are responsible for the children, and children owe their loyalty and gratitude to the parents, whether they are biological parents, or figurative societal "parents" such as a mayor, pastor, or other form of group leader.

The parent-child model of church planting calls for the parent to initiate, plant, and empower the child to be independent and then move on.[44] The ideal is that the parent and child learn to function independently of one another free of *utang no loob*, or a socially-based debt of gratitude. However, the present social and cultural context may require just the opposite. This could create particular difficulties in constructing a healthy and productive relationship as is ideal in the parent-child model.

The Leadership Team and Their Interactions

The leadership team in Looban (referred to as *Leadership* from here on) consists of 4 members of mother church, who serve in the community on a volunteer basis. The team is composed of a coordinator, a lay pastor, a pulpit-pastor, and a younger member from the mother church youth group who serves as a youth leader in Looban. The coordinator and lay pastor carry a great deal of responsibility for Looban. The coordinator manages the feeding program on Saturdays, while the lay pastor conducts Bible studies in homes, and does pastoral visitation all throughout the week. Pulpit-pastor visits the community once or twice a week ministering and delivering the Sunday sermons on a weekly basis.[45]

The pulpit pastor arrives in the Looban community on his motorcycle every Sunday at about 8am. He is met there by lay-pastor and coordinator, who are brought by a service tricycle which takes them from their home which is outside of the Looban. It takes about 20

[43] Tomas D. Andres and Pilar B. Ilada-Andres, *Understanding the Filipino* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1987), 56.

[44] District Leadership, 44-46.

[45] Pulpit pastor, Interview by Author, 22 February 2010, Interview Transcript, 132.

minutes to travel the long road and through the dry and dusty--or muddy and water-laden streets of Looban (depending, of course, on the season).

Worship usually consists of a mixture of English songs (many of which can be heard at mother church *Youth Corps*) and a small selection of favorite Tagalog songs. Preaching is generally done by Pulpit-pastor, who is in charge of the preaching for the outreach. Only recently has children's Sunday School been offered during the morning worship. These classes are usually led by the older Looban youth, following curriculum and direction of Coordinator, who manages Christian education in Looban. Following the services, three Sunday School/small groups gather: the *Kananayan* (adult women), the *Katatayan* (the adult men), and the *Kabatayan* (the youth). Coordinator serves as the leader for the *Kananayan*, Lay-pastor for the *Katatayan*, and Michael for the *Kabatayan*.

The Youth Leader, Michael (*an alias*), remains quite busy and is in charge of leading the youth and the worship on Sunday Mornings. The other members of the Leadership comment that Michael is unique in that he is perceived as *from* the Looban community where they have been ministering. In regards to identity, this makes Michael quite different, although, is somewhat of a hybrid. Although he lived in Looban briefly, he was initially a member of mother church, has participated in their ministries, been a part of their small groups, and has been under the mentorship of one of their youth pastors. Michael and his mother moved to the Looban area from Laguna, however, Michael only resided in the Looban community for a short while. He has more recently taken employment in mother church.

One member of the lay-leadership comments that the four of them in leadership have been very busy with the ministry in Looban. This is the first time that they have been able to create a full 12-month calendar of events for the church. The leader adds, "I think the leadership inside the church is quite good." She explains the process of decision-making for the leadership team; the four of them will talk together and make plans, after about an hour of deliberations, they will come to an agreement, settle, and commit. She explains the importance,

in this process, of having open communication among the team that is united with a common ambition.[46]

The coordinator boasts that Leadership in the Looban outreach is better and busier than ever. Following a recent typhoon, Leadership, along with the mother church brought relief to many people in Looban. Leadership counts this as a blessing in disguise, as it has increased their attendance and allowed their ministries to flourish. Leadership envisions more livelihood programs for the community, a school, and a greater capacity to develop the Looban community in the near future.[47] This would be in addition to an already busy weekly schedule. Presently, on a weekly basis, the Leadership provides Sunday Morning worship, a youth service ("Mini-Youth Corps") on Sunday afternoons, as well as home Bible studies, a feeding program on Saturdays, and other special events that are scattered throughout the calendar.

The pastoral staff usually wear *Barong Tagalog* or *Camisa de Chino* with black pants as their general Sunday attire, excluding Michael, who dresses much more casually, often sporting a Youth Corps T-shirt and Jeans. During rainy seasons, the Leadership from mother church will often have to either wear boots or change into these clothes upon arrival in the community, since the trip into the community tends to be a muddy one.

Sunday afternoons in Looban belong to the youth. The youth begin gathering for Mini-Youth Corps at or around 2pm. Not too long ago, these services had been led by a youth leader from mother church. However, in more recent day, Michael has entirely taken over the program, leading the songs and giving the message.

The feeding program has been a long-running ministry of mother church. It is supported through a monthly gift of about 14,000PHP (~$300) to mother church from a donor in the United States.[48] Coordinator began working with the feeding program in Looban in 2005.

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[46] Outreach coordinator, Interview by Author, 8 February 2010, Interview Transcript, 118.

[47] Outreach coordinator, 122.

[48] District Leadership, 48.

She would come to the community for several hours every Saturday morning. At this time, they had no tents or buildings and were forced to conduct the simple program under the heat of the morning sun. The ministry was small but rewarding. They would put on a simple program for the children and provide them with a hot meal of rice and *ulam*. Coordinator comments that she loved her ministry with the children, "the children were very eager to smile and to form lines to get their food."[49]

Apart from feeding program and weekly services, Leadership began involving themselves in the community through home Bible studies. Lay-pastor was responsible for the development of many of the home Bible studies that have been done in the ministry. He comments that it has been slow development from the time that he first began ministering in 2000.[50] These Bible studies would often be held in the homes of the local members of Looban Outreach Church, often at the request of the Leadership. Leaders indicate that they had some difficulties in operating a ministry such as this, in that there was poor attendance and a lack of cooperation from the homeowners.[51] Regardless, Leadership felt that bible studies such as this were significant in helping to nurture the spiritual lives of the people in Looban, while keeping them connected with the church.

Aside from ministering within the community, Leadership has also, at times, brought the people of Looban to mother church to join for fellowship and special services. Usually during these times, special programs are held, meals is served, and/or donations of clothing and necessity items are given. Most recently, mother church held a "family day" for the people in Looban. About 500 people from the Looban community were brought to mother church taking multiple trips with one van. Several members from mother church met with the people from Looban, played games with them, and distributed donation packages.

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[49] Coordinator Coding: 16.

[50] Lay pastor, Interview by Author, 8 February 2010, Interview Transcript, 12.

[51] Outreach coordinator, 74; Pulpit pastor, 68.

Through the efforts of the Leadership from mother church, the outreach has been able to expand. The feeding program and surrounding outreach programs were considered a success as people kept returning week after week. Coordinator recalls that several of the regular youth present today were products of that very program.

Development of Local Leadership

There is a unanimous indication from the Leadership that they desire to see strong leadership from the youth, however they show some ambiguity as to whether Looban is capable of such leadership. Coordinator believes that it will be difficult and take a long time to develop lay-leaders in Looban, "it will take time for a *kapwa-Looban* to believe that God can change the lives of some [of the] Looban people. It will take time--except in the case of Michael. Michael is from Looban. Other than Michael, we have no leader any more coming from Looban. So, we are praying for another Michael to be raised up by God."

The Pulpit-pastor indicates that he has tried to aid in the development of leaders from the adult men by assigning them positions in the church, such as chairman, co-chairman, treasurer, and so on. Pulpit-Pastor allowed the men to think of the roles through which they could serve in the church, and then assigned them titles so that they would sense that they were leaders.[52] It might be important to note here that the Leadership still made the decisions and controlled all of the church's funds, despite the assignment of these roles. Preaching-Pastor explains that he did this so that they would realize that one day they would be on their own. He has also instructed for Looban Youth Leader to do similar role assignments with the youth.[53]

When asked about the gifts and abilities of the other youth within the community, Coordinator laughed and jokingly mentioned two particular youth who are believed to be especially unfit to lead. This leader then cites reasons, on the basis of maturity, that would make these

[52] Pulpit pastor, 104.
[53] Pulpit pastor, 105.

persons unsuitable. The leader's list continues, mentioning several more inadequate leaders, and a couple who would be ideal as assistants. After some additional thought, this leader is able to name two youth (present Sunday School teachers) who are believed to have the attitudes of a leader.[54] Coordinator does admit to seeing strong leaders from Looban. She specifies, "specifically leaders with submissive hearts, because every time you talk to them and I name my plans, they are not arguing. They follow."

In addition to this, members of the leadership team list, "cooperation," "willingness to continue what has been planned," and "a willingness to follow commands" as positive characteristics of potential leaders in the community. Mostly these characteristics deal with the fulfillment of the plans of the mother church in the community.

This is a very telling statement made by Coordinator. Coordinator implies that the Leadership is looking for leaders who do not make decisions for themselves. They are looking for leaders who will not stray from the course that the present leadership has set. This would seem to indicate a lack of trust in the abilities of the people of Looban and a fear that they might not continue in the path presently defined for them. Why look for leaders who are defined by their ability to follow? This seems to be a contradiction.

Coordinator indicates that, given a commitment to the ministry, Leadership is able to delegate work to the people in Looban. Coordinator names a few tasks such as the assembling of children for feeding program and cleaning the church. One of the reasons that Coordinator has an aversion to allowing members in Looban to lead is that they lack confidence or have fears of leadership. She mentions two youth who are skilled in music, but states, "they cannot handle Bible studies, because they told us that they are afraid to teach."[55] So far, only Michael has been given the opportunity to lead and make decisions.

One member of the Leadership notes that, as a developing church, it is necessary that the they try to take care of Looban's needs,

[54] Outreach coordinator, 165
[55] Outreach coordinator, 169

improve their living conditions, and help them to take care of their families. She believes that if these needs are addressed, and Looban is given sufficient food on their tables, them they will be able to worship Christ more. By doing these things for them, they are allowing them to worship Christ.[56] This leader sees a great future involvement in the Looban community, including a school and a livelihood program, as well as a bigger church building. [57]

Why Looban is still not ready

Leadership in Looban cite and imply a number of various reasons that make it difficult to raise up a leader from the Looban community:

Looban is poor. Looban leaders have been waiting for the Looban project to generate enough money to support a full-time pastor, but Looban doesn't seem able to bring in enough money in its offerings. One member of the Looban leadership explains that many of the people are dependent upon collecting loose garbage to earn a living, so only a very few people have any money.[58]

Looban is poorly educated. Many of the people in Looban are not fully educated. One leader from Looban explains that Leadership must spend extra time with the people from Looban because of this factor. [59] He adds that it is important that Leadership preaches to them using the simplest Tagalog, because there are many things that they are not able to understand. He says that, "the words [we use] are the simplest Tagalog that we have, but some of them, they do not understand, because some of them stopped school, and never finished; that's why we need to take time, especially with the Bible."[60]

Looban is a big investment. The outreach is the recipient of various funds and assistance from churches abroad, missions teams, and NGO's. District Leadership notes that there is fear that Looban must be

[56] Ibid, 147.
[57] Ibid, 122.
[58] Ibid, 45.
[59] Pulpit pastor, 93.
[60] Pulpit pastor, 99.

able to perform for its sponsors, "If Looban will die, what answer will [the leadership] give to these people who are interested in the development of Looban?"

Looban cannot do it as well as mother church. District Leadership believes that there is a fear that if the leadership would allow Looban to lead, they will not be able to deliver the same results as what the mother church would be able to deliver.[61] Essentially, there is belief that the outreach would be sacrificing quality of work if they would allow Looban to lead. District Leadership believes that Leadership in Looban have fears because they want to ensure that the Looban project is operating well. [62]

In addition to these reasons, Leadership commonly cites numerous social problems in the community such as gambling, drinking, gossip, and violence. They mention that this is a part of the "mindset" of the people in Looban.[63] This is never directly connected to Looban's inability to lead. However, this perception seems to stand forefront in the minds of the Leadership and is presented as a notable part of the identity of the people of Looban.

District Leadership says that the inherent problem here is that Looban is being measured by a foreign standard. Looban Outreach Church is not mother church. But, it seems that they feel that they need to be like mother church in order to be sufficient for self-leadership. District Leadership notes that they should be measured with respect to their own context. He adds, "we might think that if they will take the lead--they are not efficient in doing [the work], but we don't know what the people are thinking. They might see [their work] as 'super-efficient' because that is their level. Point is--they should be given a chance."[64]

[61] District Leadership, 89.
[62] District Leadership, 110-111.
[63] Outreach coordinator, 79.
[64] District Leadership, 92-93.

A Mother Church Leader takes a different approach

One notable leader from mother church (*referred to as "mother church Leader" from here on out*) has been particularly disappointed with the Leadership at Looban Outreach Church. He believes strongly in mother church's responsibility to train and educate the people of Looban to do things for themselves. He believes that the present leadership has failed to do this and that much of the interaction throughout the years has been "ineffective." He says that a great deal of the interaction between the mother church and Looban Outreach Church has been limited to the feeding program, support, and relief work.[65] In the relationship between the two groups, "There is a giver and a receiver—and Looban is always the receiver." He adds, "I think they are dependent, because they have been groomed to be dependent; they were cultured to be dependent, and this is the sad reality of the relationship." [66]

About three years ago, mother church Leader set out to help develop the youth of the church. He wanted to build relationships with the youth of Looban, mentor them, and help empower them to do the ministry for themselves. He committed to go to Looban every Sunday to hang out with the youth there and share the word of God.[67] He indicated that this kind of interaction was qualitatively different from what had been done previously. Each week, he would bring some of the other mother church youth with him and they would play guitars and share Christ with the youth of the community. It was not easy at first, the leader says that it took a while for him to "break through" to the youth in Looban. He recalls how shy they were at first. Their self-esteem seemed very low. He recalls that most of his conversations were "one way"; he would talk to them and they would answer back, but there seemed to be very little connection beyond that.

Mother church Leader observed that social class had much to do with the difficulties in his interactions. Mother church Leader and the

[65] Mother church leader, Interview by Author, 27 January, 2010, Interview Transcript, 74.

[66] Mother church leader, 76.

[67] Ibid, 15.

youth from mother church would often relate with the youth in Looban as elder siblings or mentors, giving the youth encouragement and support. He notes that it was during these early interactions that the people of Looban began to take note of the living standard of the people at mother church in comparison to themselves. "They knew about who we are, about how we are living--you know, our status is kinda way better than theirs," the leader commented. "I think that's when they realized how far [apart] 'we' and 'they' are, in regards to status." [68] The youth make reference to the trips that they have made to mother church. They indicate that they are happy to be a part of *Youth Corps*, but simultaneously ashamed because they feel poor and *pangit* (ugly) in comparison with the other youth at mother church.[69]

It took nearly two years until mother church Leader began to see this pattern of one-way, question-response communication to change. Eventually, these awkward interactions began to seem more like friendship, however their self-esteem still seemed to remain low.[70] Mother church Leader recognizes the issue of their self-esteem and notes that this makes the delegation of leadership very difficult in that the youth often doubt their ability to lead. He believes that empowerment must come though encouraging them, and allowing them to realize that they can do it too. Mother church Leader believes that mother church presence in the community is vitally important to encourage the people of Looban and show them how to minister, however the people in Looban should be the one's to do the ministry. [71]

Mother church Leader indicates that leadership in Looban should empower the local people to do things for themselves—given that they have been provided with adequate training and education. He adds that the Leadership should have a strong involvement and interaction in the lives of the people in Looban, so that they can learn to teach, preach and organize themselves. Then, Leadership should let go and allow the

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[68] Ibid, 23-24.

[69] "Michael," Interview with author, 28 January 2010, Interview transcript, 336.

[70] Mother church leader, 18-20.

[71] Mother church leader, 84-86.

people to continue using the skills that they have been given by mother church to continue the ministry.[72] In regards to livelihood and community development, he indicates that there is a time and a place in which it is good to give relief, but the more important thing is that the people are trained to graduate and have jobs.[73]

Mother church Leader critiques the present leadership saying that they do not fully trust the people in Looban and that prejudice against education and status are largely why they are not accepted. He then gives his own requirements for leadership, and adds a very telling qualification. He comments that, "as long as they have a relationship with Jesus and *they have gone back to work or school*, then they are ready to lead."[74] The leader critiques the Leadership for their prejudice against the people in Looban, only to supplant another qualification based upon education and economics!

Mother church leader vies for the liberation of the people in Looban. He believes strongly in their empowerment, however he gives a very salient point. His foremost requirements for leadership are having a job or enrollment in school, following their relationship with Jesus. By "work" and by "school" the leader once again implies that their poverty and education stand in the way of them being able to lead themselves. What is mother church leader's answer to this dilemma? The mother church must help fix the poverty and the poor education, then Looban will be able to lead.

The implied message here is that the people in Looban are not able to manage themselves in a full sense without outside help. Before they can lead themselves they must first be able to rise to meet the standards set by the mother church. However, the very structure of the mother church requires well-organized finances, programs and staff, which are not readily available to the Looban community. Thus these resources must be brought from the outside in order to help Looban to fit the imposed structure.

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[72] Ibid, 78-79.
[73] Ibid, 132.
[74] Ibid, 71.

It is important to consider the expectations placed onto the people of Looban at this point. If they are to be empowered, what are they to be empowered to do? The imposition here is that mother church gives the structure, sets the programs, and Looban is then "freed" to follow the course that has been set for them by the mother church. But, what is their destination? If they are given a "Mini-Youth Corps," what is its end goals? No doubt to be like the real *Youth Corps*. If they are given the blueprints for the mother church's administration and structure, what will they build? No doubt, they will attempt to build another mother-church. This is not something that they are prepared to do, nor does it fit the community of Looban.

What Makes Michael So Different?

Mother church Leader notes that he had spent years in Looban, looking for the right person to lead in Looban. His search came to an end when he found Michael (who currently is the youth leader in Looban). He says that, with Michael, he knew "this is the person." Michael was perceived to be from Looban, but had already been attending church at mother church.[75] Michael recalls that it was the mother church Leader who "fully integrated" him into the life of the mother-church. Michael started attending Youth Corps and before long, Michael was also a part of the small group ministry at mother church. Membership in this ministry is requisite for people who wish to be in leadership at *Youth Corps*. Michael faithfully attended both of these ministries, and became a part of the youth group at mother church.

Several of the Leadership cite Michael as standing out among the other Looban youth. They indicate that Michael is unique, and "has a different kind of life from the ordinary Looban youth," they cite that he "is working for his family," he is putting himself through school, he is respected by the other youth, and he does not join with *barkadas* (tight social grouping) in Looban.[76]

[75] Ibid, 55.

[76] Outreach coordinator, 158.

Michael is doing something that many of the youth in Looban have not been able to do. He is living outside of the perceived identity that it commonly held for the other youth in Looban. Michael carries a different social identity from the other youth. The Leadership points out that Michael did not join with the *barkadas* in Looban. This indicates that Michael might not have had strong relationships or a solid identification with Looban at the beginning. Michael confirms that he had an early dissociation from the Looban community. He did not want to attend church in Looban, because it was a slum area and he did not like the community when he first moved there. Michael recalls that he knew about the church which met in Looban, but he notes, "I didn't like going to church there in Looban because it is *pangit* (ugly)," citing the broken shacks and the people standing by, playing cards and discussing with one another.[77] It was on the basis of his dissociation from the Looban community, that he began attending church at mother church.

This is another important factor to consider, unlike the other youth in Looban, Michael did not start at Looban Outreach Church. Before ever entering the church in Looban, Michael was a member of the youth group at mother church.[78] He started attending mother church in Taytay, shortly after moving to the Looban area from Laguna.[79] It was during this time that the Looban lay-pastor and coordinator noticed Michael, and began to build a relationship with him. Michael says, "They introduced themselves to me and tried to build their rapport." He notes that he was not aware of it at the time, but they were starting to "disciple" him to lead in Looban.[80] At mother church, Michael became involved in *Youth Corps* as well as the *Youth Corps* small-group ministry at mother church. Michael's membership in this small group ministry is significant in that is serves as the training ground for all *Youth Corps* leaders. Membership in these small groups is required for all potential youth leaders at mother church.

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[77] "Michael," 39.

[78] A common term used for someone who is a regular attender of *Youth Corps*.

[79] "Michael," 38

[80] "Michael," 50.

One great factor that made Michael so different was that he did not carry the common identity of Looban, rather, he had taken on the identity of the mother church--at least to some extent.. Michael kept regular attendance in the programs and services at the mother-church, joined in its small groups, and had been taken under the mentorship of one of their pastors. It is possible that what made Michael ideal for leadership, was his likeness and identification with the image and structure of the mother church.

This is significant in that Michael did not initially see himself as coming from Looban. Michael had only recently moved to the area, so his identity was not strongly that of either Looban or the mother church. Because of Michael's ambiguous identification, he was given a social mobility that the other Looban Youth, would not have been able to have. Michael was able to at least marginally identify himself with both the mother church and with Looban and thus it was possible for him to "pass" as a potential leader.

Michael Starts His Ministry in Looban

On August 6, 2006, Looban Outreach Church celebrated its first service in the new building. This was Michael's first time to attend church in the Looban community. Michael indicates that he was immediately asked to be involved with the work in Looban. He started his ministry in Looban Outreach Church by managing the overhead projector during worship services. Michael notes that it was in these early days of standing in front of the church that he was deeply affected. He had been reading his Bible and listening to the words of the songs. He notes that it was during one of those moments that he was standing before the church, singing and managing the transparencies, that God spoke to him, and he began to cry. Michael recalls, "I think that, at that moment, God spoke to me clearly, saying 'that was you before' and 'this is you now' and I felt comforted. Maybe that is the reason that I kept on going.[81] Michael notes that what happened during that service was something that had been building between he and God—something that

[81] Ibid, 71.

was not directly connected with the service itself or with the ministers of the church.[82]

Along with Michael, mother church Leader was able to start a new Sunday Afternoon youth service in Looban Outreach Church, called "*Mini-Youth Corps*." mother church Leader indicates that he leads by example. At first, He would lead the youth gatherings, preach, and play the guitar during worship, while Michael served as the song leader. He served as the leader of the gatherings for some time before he and Michael "swapped places." Mother church Leader recalls that, at first, Michael was uncomfortable with standing in front and speaking because mother church Leader was there listening. The youth leader reassured him, "I'm here. I'm your *kuya* (older brother), your mentor. You don't have to be shy." Mother church Leader recalls that after Michael would finish giving the message, he would always complement him and then give him some tips on public speaking and structuring his sermons. Mother church Leader also trained Michael how to take down notes from sermons and how to lead devotions. Eventually, this led to Michael taking some subjects at the bible school extension which met at mother church.[83]

"Modeling Leadership" for Looban

Mother church Leader's approach to leadership seems to fit well within the ideals of leadership described by the District Leadership. District Leadership suggests that the mother church should "little by little" expose the people of Looban to the leadership, so that they feel that they are in control, noting the importance that they feel that control is coming from within the community, rather than from the outside.[84] The mother church Leader sees a great importance in modeling leadership, teaching and training the people of Looban to do the ministry. Mother church Leader notes that he is committed to

[82] Ibid, 72.
[83] Mother church leader, 48-49.
[84] District Leadership: 39-40.

empowering the youth for leadership, and helping them to see that they can to it too.

As a part of the developing relationship between the youth of Looban and mother church, the mother church Leader would often bring the large yellow cargo truck from mother church into the Looban community so that after the *Mini-Youth Corps* meeting, the youth could load into the truck and attend the main *Youth Corps* at mother church. Mother church Leader and the Looban missionaries seem to be in agreement that these kinds of excursions are useful in building a strong relationship between mother church and Looban Outreach Church.

The Looban youth indicate that they greatly enjoy going to *Youth Corps*, however they indicate that it is a mixture of joy and envy. Many of these youth consider *Youth Corps* to be their "inspiration" in what they do at Looban Outreach Church. The Looban youth want to be able to replicate the style of mother church, but they are not fully able to. One youth admits, "one of the reasons that I go to *Youth Corps* is to get their style and to learn how they do what they do and why there are so many people going there, but they are not answering my questions of how they do things. I want to know what they are doing to have so many youth."[85] This comparison of abilities and seeming inabilities leads to envy in the youth. One comments, "It creates in us envy because their program is well done, and they are doing things well, like how they play music."[86]

Whether they have intended it or not, mother church has set a particular standard for ministry. The implication here is that the youth are coming to mother church to see how to do the ministry and it is this

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[85] Focus group of 10 Looban youth, Interview by Author, 14 April 2010, Interview Transcript, 15.

Original Tagalog: *"isa sa mga hangarin ko kung bakit ako nag-je-Youth Corps ditto kasi kumukuha rin ako ng style nila kung paano yungj ano, kung paano yung ginawa nila kung bakit nagging ganoon karami yung ano, minsan tinatanong ko yung ibang ano kasi iba yung sinasagot sa akin e, hindi ako sinasagot ng mga tinatanong ko e. Kaya ayun, gusto ko malaman sana kung ano yung ginawa nila bakit nagging ganoon karami iyong youth nila."*

[86] Focus group of 10 Looban youth, 13.

Original Tagalog: *Parang nakakainggit kasi parang maayos naka program lahat ng ginagawa nila mas maganda iyong tugtugan siempre mga music lover maganda talaga.*

implied standard that they are following at Looban Outreach Church. The youth openly comment that *Youth Corps* is their inspiration, they state that they go to mother church to get their style.[87]

Let us return for a moment to Social Identity Theory. It is natural that people organize themselves into individual groupings, based upon similarities in characteristics, which serve to increase their *self-esteem.*[88] *Self-esteem* is an important concept here, simply for the fact that mother church has much, and Looban Outreach Church has very little. Social Identity theory also affirms that people will do whatever it takes to negotiate a "positive and distinct" identity for their own group, even if it means adopting someone else's identity. The youth in Looban indicate an attempt at such a shift in identity. They would like to join and be a part of the more salient social identity, but they cannot do it fully.

Michael "Connects"

Michael offers something unique. There is a mutuality in the way that he relates with the youth in the community. At the same time, he indicates somewhat of an ideological separation from the goals of mother church in his leadership of the youth, and is very clear in asserting his identity apart from the Leadership.[89] He indicates that much has changed within *himself* from those early days when he was attending mother church. Before he started working in Looban, he recalls that he avoided Looban Outreach Church altogether (even though his mother lived there) because of the low-status of the community. He notes that God put compassion in his heart to feel what the youth in Looban feel, to live like them, to share and to help physically. He notes that he used be full of pride, but it has lessened through his work in the Looban Community.

Michael critiques the leadership style of the Leadership noting that they have a strong tendency to be very controlling. "[Lay-pastor]

[87] Ibid, 13.

[88] Michael Hogg, "A Social Identity Theory of Leadership 5," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* (2001): 184-200, 187.

[89] "Michael," 135.

just keeps on commanding the youth, 'kailangan gantio, kailangan ganito' (you have to do this, you have to do that). This troubles Michael, because he fears that young christians will see this kind of behavior from the more mature christians, and they will think that it is proper behavior. Michael indicates that he is troubled by the example that this leadership style might be setting. He comments that the people in Looban automatically think that whatever mother church does is the best thing for them. They expect that everyone who comes from mother church is skilled in what they do and are equipped in God's word, "but they are wrong,"[90] he adds. Michael quite frankly states that it all comes down to a matter of respect for the people in Looban.

Michael notes that he does not point his youth to the leadership of the church, but he points them to God. Michael counsels, "you know you don't have to look up to people, to the ministers, or even to me; you just need to look up to God and pray, read his word and God will bless you." Michael notes that many people seem to naturally follow the people of mother church, assuming that they know best. He indicates that they do this because of the differences in social position; because the people of mother church are from a higher social class, they are automatically assigned respect. He indicates this social structuring is the reason for their low-self esteem.[91]

Michael sees a lot of leadership potential coming from the youth in Looban. He states this frankly and without a moment's hesitation. Just as plainly, he admits that the leadership from mother church do not see that potential. In regards to the youth's capabilities for leadership, he responds, "I think [they can], because it emanates." He believes that their leadership abilities are demonstrated by their actions, and by the passion with which they serve. Immediately Michael launches into a story about one of the youth. "Like Lenny, he is a speechless person (he is shy, speaks very little). He doesn't talk well or keep on speaking, but when he speaks. . . everybody listens." Michael recounts a particular instance in which a conflict had arisen between the youth and the

[90] "Michael," 315.
[91] Ibid, 305.

Leadership of the church, regarding how funds would be spent. The Leadership had one opinion and the youth had another, at that moment this particular youth, one who usually never speaks, spoke up and offered some common grounds on with the two groups could agree. He settled everything with just a few words.[92] Michael adds, "And I know that they are blessed with Lenny."

As for the abilities and maturity of the other youth. Michael seems to nearly get lost in telling stories of their qualities. "And I saw a very good thing in Herbie," Michael continues, "He is really obedient to God. You know what happened to him? His brother is in jail and he is really hurt because of that. He feels so sad. On top of that, his brother's wife just died. He has been carrying all of the burden."[93] Michael recalls the previous Sunday when Herbie stood up to speak in church. He tells that Herbie began to open up to the church, telling the biblical story of Job, referencing all of the tests and trials that he had been experiencing in his life. Herbie began, "I really thank God that I have been here in this church,"[94] and he told everyone that he saw love there. Herbie exhorted the congregation from the story of his life and told the crowd that they must all be like Job and remain faithful to God even when it feels that we are carrying all of the burdens in the world. Michael recounts, "I think that was not just a testimony—it was a sermon—because he explained why it happened, why God allowed it [to happen] in order to make us stronger. He allows [things like this] to test if we really trust him."[95] Michael warmly reminisced about the spiritual maturity that he had seen in his friend, "and at that moment that he spoke to us teary-eyed, and then when he sat down, he cried. Michael recalls many times that the two of them have shared with one another, they would always close in prayer. "My heart broke every time that I talked to him," Michael said, "because I could feel the experience in him, and I cried. I cried, a lot."[96]

[92] Ibid, 184.
[93] Ibid, 188.
[94] Ibid, 194.
[95] Ibid, 196.
[96] Ibid, 198.

During one of their meetings together, Herbie said to Michael, "you know, *Kuya* Michael, I don't know why I am here. You know, I don't know why I am still here. Even though, I don't have money, I don't get anything from this church, but I am still here."[97] Michael then turned to Herbie and said that it was because of God's Love that he came and continued to come. Michael recalls, that at that moment Herbie slowly bowed his head in silence. As Herbie's hand began to clench into a tight fist, Michael saw the tears beginning to fall to the table. "Shocking," Michael recalls, "Herbie did the very, very good cry—from deep within—the table was almost completely wet." As he recalled the stories of the young people in his group he kept interjecting how blessed he was with each one.

Michael has also been building a fruitful relationship with one new youth at Looban Outreach Church who struggles with gender identity issues. Michael notes a particular softness in this young person's heart and a sensitivity to God. He notes that transformation is becoming evident in his life. Michael comments, "[He] is Amazing. Every night, he keeps on sleeping in the church, because he wants to read the Bible every night."[98]

Michael recalls one particular conversation that he had with this youth. The youth had texted Michael asking, "*Kuya* Michael, How can I have faith in God? You see, I keep committing all these sins. Will God forgive me?"[99] Michael notes that he was blessed to be asked such a question. He is blessed that the youth entrust him with the struggles of their spiritual lives. Michael says that he was blessed because he can see that there is a real change in in this youth. He is feeling a conviction that was not there before. "Michael texted him saying, ". . .God can forgive every sin, as long as we repent and we ask for forgiveness within—deep within our heart."[100] He has asked them to start journaling, and they talk and share together about what is going on in their lives.

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[97] Ibid, 217.

[98] Ibid, 224.

[99] Original: *"Mapapatawad paba ako ng diyos?" "kasi nagagawa---maraming din naman akong nagagawang kasalanan.*

[100] "Michael," 219.

Michael's approach is different. He has connected with the youth of Looban in a way that no other leader from mother church has been able to connect. He sees strong leadership qualities in the youth of Looban as they are now. He tells them that they are the channel through which God's can bless others.[101] This is significant because it focuses on the youth as the doers and the minsters. They are the ones through whom God's blessing is known—rather than placing that identity on the leadership. He cites the qualities of their passion, their genuineness, and their love, which he believes makes them ready to lead themselves. He does not seem to refer to the mother church for leadership and development.

Michael is greatly pleased with the honesty and openness of the people that he has encountered in Looban. Over and over he comments on how blessed he is by the youth in the community. He cites a time when he told the youth, "You know guys, you think that I am the blessing for all of you, but you're wrong. You are all the blessing for me."[102] It is because of these relationships that he continues to minister in Looban. He adds that he cannot find relationships he has found in Looban at mother church. He comments, "They (mother church) have money, they have everything, but I feel the compassion, the passion of being a Christian here in Looban. Every time I talk to the youth, I cry. Actually, I told God, 'Lord, even though you gave me this responsibility—a very huge responsibility, I don't doubt to obey. Because of them, I am blessed. I am really blessed.'"[103] He notes that he would much rather serve in Looban than at the mother church.

Michael indicates a particular sense of pride in the qualities of the people in Looban, however, the youth do not seem to see the same qualities in themselves in comparison with the mother church. The Looban youth greatly admire the people from mother church. They especially admire the passion, organization, and talent that go into the *Youth Corps* program. Reciprocally, they comment on their own

[101] "Michael," 215.
[102] Ibid, 256.
[103] Ibid, 250.

inabilities to produce such a program. They very readily note that people from mother church are "respectable."[104] However, they often find it difficult to really connect with the youth at mother church and sometimes they even feel rejected. [105]

The youth seem to readily defer their identity as a church to mother church, indicating that Looban is only a piece of the mother-church. Oftentimes, it seems that the youth are unable to talk about Looban, without also comparing themselves to mother church. One youth directly comments, "mother church is the main [vine] of Looban and Looban is its branch. Looban still can't stand on its own, so it depends on mother church."[106]

The youth indicate that in order for Looban to stand on its own, it must be able to do what the mother church is doing. Mother church is the church model for Looban Outreach Church, however, Looban is unable to be like the mother church because they lack the resources, namely money. One male in the group comments, "mother church supports Looban because the people in Looban can't run the church yet, they can't do it yet, and mother church helps Looban grow."[107] One youth indicates that mother church built a branch of itself in Looban for the purpose of "helping people and saving them and so that many people can go to church."[108]

The youth indicate doubt in their ability to stand on their own for several reasons. One significant reason is that they lack money. They cite issues such as the inability to pay for the church's electric bill, and so forth. They indicate that it is their lack of money that keeps them from

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[104] Original: *"titignan mo yung mga tao doon talagang karespe-respeto."*

[105] Focus group of 10 Looban youth, 147-150.

[106] Focus group of 10 Looban youth, 21.

Original Tagalog: *Kasi iyong ano e, mother church diba, iyon ang main ng Looban, tapos branch lang iyong Looban, kasi iyong Looban hindi niya pa kayang mag-isa, tapos dumedepende pa siya doon sa main.*

[107] Original Tagalog: *mother church iyong tumutulong sa Looban iyong parangsumusoporta, kasi iyong tao sa Looban hindi pa nila kayang magsarili na sila na iyong magpatakbo ng church, hindi pa nila kaya iyon.*

[108] Ibid, 45.

growing. One youth comments, "what makes mother church grow is their money and their offering."[109] Aside from money, several of the youth indicate that large attendance is prerequisite to becoming a church on their own mother church has provided feeding programs and relief work which has generated a large attendance for the church. Looban youth indicate that without mother church, this attendance would not be possible, and the ministry in Looban would not be able to stand on its own. The youth are aware of the implied requirements for standing on their own, but they are often frustrated with their own abilities at meeting these requirements. The youth note that they are markedly less organized than mother church. The comment was that they lack unity and are "lazy" at times.[110] They note that they sometimes have devotions scheduled for 6, but no one shows up until 7:30. Looban youth comment that they get frustrated with one another when they are not able to maintain such organization. However, they add, "something good is also happening; when we are together, we have bonding, and we get to understand each other why one can't attend and we correct the negative thoughts we had of one another." [111] Another youth comments, "Yes, it can stand," he says. "If [mother church] is gone, of course [Looban] Church would 'lie low', but it'll keep pushing even though it's hard. It is hard, but it can be done."[112] One youth concludes, "I can see in the youth that we are happy when we are together and that is what we want."[113]

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[109] "Michael," 102-103.

[110] Focus group of 10 Looban youth, 183.

[111] Focus group of 10 Looban youth, 179.

Original: *pero mayroon ding magandang nangyayari kung magkakasama kami. Kasi pag nagkakasama kami nagkakaroon kami ng bonding-bonding nalalaman namin yung mga dapat, parang naiintindihan namin yung mga dahilan niya kung bakit siya nagiging ganoon. O, nagkakaintindihan kami kung minsan kasi nga nagkakausap-usap kami na minsan nakikita namin bakit kaya 'di nakaattend si ganito na minsan nag-iisip agad kami ng mali para sa kanya, negatibo para sa kanya.*

[112] Ibid, 113.

Original: *pag nawala iyong mother church syempre iyong Looban Outreach Church talagang mag la-lie low lie low yan pero pipilitin pang bumangon kahit na mahirap kakayanin.*

[113] Ibid, 181.

Several of the youth were appointed as "leaders" to teach children's Sunday school classes and lead their own Bible studies.[114] Michael and these youth have kept regular fellowship together. They indicate that something genuine and of their own identity is developing among them. One youth narrates:

> before knowing the Lord while I was still in the province, my life was very different from now, because I hadn't yet realized what God's plan for me was. But, when I went to the Church, I realized slowly that I can teach children, or I can lead a Bible study, things like that. I realized I can share the word of God to other people. Before, I was ashamed to carry the Bible. That's why my life was different before, because I have really gotten to know the Lord in the Church. I really cry hard whenever we pray, and I tell the Lord: 'Lord, please take control of my life, develop in me what I can do to serve you.' I said that and it's like the doors are being opened so I can serve Him more. There is happiness in serving Him with friends whom you know are concerned for you.[115]

Original: *nakikita ko lang sa mga youth masaya lang kami 'pag magkakasama kami at pag iyong hangarin namin iisa lang...masaya.*

[114] "Michael," 198.

[115] Female youth, Interview by author, 14 April 2010, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, Interview Transcript, 7-10.

Original: yung buhay ko dati, na nakakilala sa Panginoon sa province, ibang iba sa buhay ko ngayon na diyan sa Church, kasi dati hindi ko pa ano, hindi ko pa, parang hindi ko pa nadedevelop kung ano ba talaga yung plano sa akin ni God kung ano ba talaga iyong gusto Niyang mangyari sa akin, pero noong napunta ako sa Church, parang unti-unting nabuksan iyong ano, na kaya ko palang magturo sa bata, na kayak o pa lang maglead ng Bible study, iyong mga ganoon? Na kaya ko pa lang magshare ng word of God sa ibang tao na dati, pag dala dala lang ng Bible, hiyang hiya na ako. Iyon! So sabi kong ganyan, ano e, iyong buhay ko dati ibang iba, iyong nakilala ko talaga Siya diyan sa Church, todo iyak talaga ako niyan kada may prayer, iyak talaga ako, tapos sabi ko, "Lord ano..," sa prayer ko, sabi ko, "Lord, Ikaw na po bahalang mag ano sa buhay ko, mag control," tapos sabi ko, "i-develop Niyo pa yung kung ano pa iyong kaya ko, se-serve ko sa Iyo." Sabi kong ganyan, hanggang sa unti-unting nabubuksan iyong ano, iyong parang mga pinto, something na mga ganoon, para makapag serve pa ako lalo sa Kanya, tapos mas masaya iyong feeling na nagseserve ka sa Kanya na kasama mo iyong mga kaibigan mo na ano, alam mo naman na may concern sa iyo, di ba?

Many of the youth tell similar stories, indicating a firm faith in God, good deal of capability to lead among themselves, and comfort in the support of the fellowship that surrounds them. However, when they are asked about Looban's ability to be a church apart from mother church, their self-concept seems to immediately lessen. They seem to realize that something good is happening in their midst, yet, forefront in their analysis of themselves is the fact that that they still do not match up with the abilities of mother church. Michael also indicates that something genuine seems to be developing among the youth. They indicate frustration with themselves that they are not able to hold service on time, and maintain the organization and unity that they see in mother church. Looban seems to be in an awkward and potentially unhealthy position of straddling the line between two social identities.

A Matter of Oppression?

The youth feel that they should be able to imitate the programs and style of mother church. The youth indicate that this imitation of the mother church is somewhat prerequisite to being able to stand on their own as a church. The thought here is that Looban came from mother church, it is a branch off of a central root, a part of a greater whole. They have been modeled community development projects that they cannot afford without outside help. Thus, until they are able to imitate the mother church, they feel that their programs and development must be controlled by administrators from the mother church.

Once again, if Looban is going to be empowered, what will they be empowered to do? In the present model, mother church gives Looban it's structure, they develop its programs and model the mother church ideal for ministry. Looban is then "freed" to follow the course that has been prescribed for them. But is this freedom at all? Sociologist Paulo Freire would define this as "oppression."

Freire asserts that there is a fascinating tendency in the dynamic struggle of the oppressed toward liberation that rather than fighting for liberation from the system that holds them, the oppressed will instead adopt the ways of the oppressors and become oppressors themselves.

The belief here is that the oppressed develop a certain level of adhesion to the oppressors. Their very structure of thinking about themselves and the greater system of which they are apart has been conditioned *by* the oppressors. Essentially the oppressed internalize the image of the oppressor and adopt its guidelines for living.[116] Apart from this, the system of the oppressor is all that they know. Walking away from the system and doing something entirely indigenous is frightening for those seeking liberation. At the same time, the way of the oppressor is a strong social convention, thus the image of the oppressor becomes the standard toward which the oppressed strive in their development.

We can take an example from the *Kasama* relationships that were previously described. A peasant farmer, living in an *utang na loob*-driven *kasama relationship* with a landlord, does not dream of a life removed from the oppressive *kasama* system itself, rather he dreams to one day be a landlord who also has farmers working under him, who are also oppressed. This seems like liberation, but it is only a shifting of positions from being oppressed to being an oppressor. Freire argues that is it not directly the oppressor who oppresses, rather, oppression comes from a greater system of oppression of which both the oppressor and the oppressed are apart. Liberation, in Freire's terms, is being able to live outside of the system, seeking true autonomy and responsibility. If Looban must lead, it cannot be done on the basis of the blueprints that have been given to them, but it must be on their own terms.

One of the very basic elements of an oppressive relationship is *prescription.* [117] The behavior of the oppressed is a prescribed behavior, following guidelines that have been set out by the oppressor. Mother church Leader notes that Looban is capable of leadership provided that they are also educated by the mother church. They see a great benefit in modeling leadership for the people in Looban, but this raises a few questions. Looban has been given models, ideas, and guidelines from a stronger social identity. If they are empowered to lead themselves, they will merely continue on in the foreign identity which they have adopted.

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[116] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1970), 46-47.

[117] Freire, 47.

Freire believes that, until the oppressed find liberation, they cannot live authentically. They suffer from a "duality" or split-identity that sinks down to their very inmost being.[118] Looban is presently "stuck" between two identities. They are Looban in a very deep sense, yet they feel that they need to be (and want to be) mother church. Looban must figure out what it means to be Looban Outreach Church for themselves. They cannot follow someone else's blueprint. Liberation must rise up out of the oppressed and provide true autonomy and responsibility.

The youth recall that during *Ondoy* their church became something like a bustling depot or trading post with people standing around everywhere, but when the relief was gone, so were the people. The only ones remaining now are the ones who are under sponsorship. He guesses that if those sponsorships are gone, they might lose as much as half of the congregation.[119]

This bears some striking resemblance to the experiences American Missionary, Michael Duncan recorded in his book, *Costly Mission*. Duncan narrates the story of their community development mission among the urban poor of Metro Manila in 1988. The Duncans, through their mission organization provided loans and micro-enterprise financing to people living in the slums. They wanted their ministry to be "holistic" and to meet the physical and developmental needs of the community alongside of their spiritual needs. Therefore, they began simple church gatherings which met separately, and in a separate location from their livelihood ministry. Duncan notes that they did their best to keep these two ministries separate. The church gatherings were kept solely for the purpose of church alone, not livelihood or community development work.

Duncan notes that their livelihood ministries quickly gained popularity in the community. Duncan recalls that his church plants seemed to keep growing, quickly expanding beyond what their small

[118] Ibid, 48.
[119] "Michael," 123.

meeting places could hold[120]. However, Duncan cites a problem, he writes,

We were worried. We would sing the praise songs but it seemed there was little worship. I felt I had been preaching to myself. There was no sense of involvement in the service. We were going through the motions, doing what was expected, adhering to form, but despite the encouraging numbers, I felt that all was not well.[121]

Surveying the mature believers in his church fellowships, he found similar responses as what has been recorded from the youth in Looban. "There are only a few genuine Christians," Duncan records. The members of his congregation informed him that it was *utang na loob* (a debt of gratitude). The people attended because they felt that they were indebted to attend. They asked those that they had been helping what they should do. The response: *"Stop the loans and mercy ministries!"*[122] This came as a shock to the missionaries. Puzzled, they inquired to the people that they had been helping and found that not only were their ministries creating a mass of "rice Christians," but it was also bringing about communal break-down. Duncan writes,

"The very fact that we had to choose one person over another when giving loans was leading to misunderstanding, jealously, and strained relationships in the community. In other words, the social cost of all our giving was too high. Even though they were poor, these people preferred relational harmony over material gain."[123]

Michael notes many of the cultural implications that come along with such giving. Many of the people who have received relief from the church feel pressured to continue attending. Michael notes frustration with members of Missionary leadership who monitor the attendance of

[120] Michael Duncan, *Costly Mission: Following Christ into the Slums,* (City: MARC, 1996), 39.

[121] Duncan, 40.

[122] Duncan, 41.

[123] Ibid, 40.

those who have received support, indicating that it creates a kind of angst based on *utang na loob.*[124]

Michael indicates that many of the families in Looban Outreach Church have felt pressure to attend church. Following the typhoon, around the same time that relief was being given, Leadership began a new scholarship program to help families in Looban to send their children back to school. This is a help to many families that otherwise might not be able to send their children to school. The scholarship support is only for members of Looban Outreach Church, so attendance is monitored weekly. Michael say, "If the parents miss one Sunday. They will confront them, '*Hoy! Bakit hindi ka nakakapag-church on Sunday?*'" ('Hey, why weren't you at church last Sunday?') Michael is disappointed in the Leadership because church has become an obligation.

The youth indicate that something genuine is forming among them, yet they are discouraged to see that a large portion of their church is largely disingenuous in their attendance. Michael calls it "*hinog sa pilit,"* that is, the people are "forced to be ripe." He believes that Leadership is forcing the people of Looban into church and faith before they are ready. The people are attending not because they want to but out of social and cultural obligation.[125]

It is important, at this point, to consider the interactions between the Missionary leadership and the people of Looban Outreach Church. Even before *Ondoy*, Leadership interacted with the people of Looban as outreach facilitators. Leadership refers to themselves as pastors and church planters, but they concern themselves with providing help, support, and leadership to the Looban community, in a way that an outreach would. But is Looban an outreach or a church?

It is important to consider the separate the identities of a "Church" and an "outreach." The 2009-2013 manual of mother church's denomination describes the General Church as a community of confessors. The Manual affirms:

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[124] "Michael," 285-287.

[125] "Michael," 269-287.

> We believe in the Church, the community that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord, the covenant people of God made new in Christ, the Body of Christ called together by the Holy Spirit through the Word.[126]

Beyond this definition, the constitution of the denomination states that the church ". . . organizes itself in culturally conditioned forms; exists both as local congregations and as a universal body; [and] sets apart persons called of God for specific ministries."[127] In either of these definitions, the church's identity is namely held in its fellowship, and ways of living and relating with one another and with God. A church is composed of people, and carries its own sense of "being." It has its own unique identity.

An outreach is different, and features a different set of goals and ambitions. "Outreach" is mentioned three times in the denominational Manual. Each time, it is mentioned as an action that is done *by* one entity *for the benefit of* another entity. In this case, Looban Outreach Church is the entity which is being reached; they do not carry the identity of the outreach. The outreach in Looban is a part of mother church's identity. It extends from mother church's identity as an outreach. As long as the church in Looban is a an outreach church they will always, definitionally, be an extension of the mother church's identity. Outreach can be done *by* a church, but being *reached out to* does not constitute that a group of people is therefore a church. Until now, Looban Outreach Church remains ambiguously identified as an outreach church.

Another important consideration here is that Looban is not reaching out for themselves. They are still being reached out to, by mother church. The outreach is an outgrowth of the identity of mother church, Looban is merely the object of that endeavor.

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[126] *Manual: Church of the Nazarene*, 339.
[127] *Manual: Church of the Nazarene*, 37.

Looban Youth Leader Offers a Solution

The question now becomes, "in what ways *should* the mother church interact with the people of Looban?" The interactions of the Leadership are largely addressing the physical, structural, and administrative needs of the community. Mother church Leader's interactions are largely focused on educating and training the people of Looban to rise above their present life situation by modeling mother church's Leadership and encouraging the people that they can all do likewise. In both of these scenarios, low self-esteem seems to be a common characteristic among the general youth of Looban throughout their interactions with mother church. Michael feels that mother church's difficulty in connecting with Looban is one central need that is not being addressed. He believes that real relationships and communication is key in the relationship between the two groups. Michael indicates that the social leveling that took place with his own *barkada* at mother church was a significant part in the process of lifting his own self-esteem.[128] Michael adds that, "if the people of Looban will become *barkada* with the people of mother church, that boulder [of division] will be gone."[129]

It is important, at this point, to consider the implications of this word. *Barkada* is a *Filipino* word used to describe a close, intimate group of friends. The word refers to a kind of close-knit group with whom one shares a common or equal identity. Relationships in the *barkada* are relaxed, tolerant, and guided by the principle of *pakikisama.*[130] That is, people in the group meet on equal terms and are motivated to minimize the importance of that which holds them apart--in this case, economic status and social influence.

Returning to Social Identity theory, a *barkada* is a kind of powerful in-group which is held together based upon perceived

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[128] "Michael," 332.

[129] "Michael," 334.

[130] Neil Mulder, *Inside Philippine Society* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1997), 41.

similarities in the characteristics of the people which compose it. Groups such as this serve to increase the self-esteem of the people in the group by giving them a particular place and social identity. This would imply that, if mother church were to truly become the *barkada* of Looban, the shared characteristics that held the groups together would have to be greater than the characteristics that held them apart. Factors in the relationship such as education, social status, and personal finances would have to be minimized and the groups would have to find a shared social plane upon which they can meet.

Michael envisions strong and socially-leveled interactions between the mother-church and its daughter.[131] However, many of the interactions between mother church and Looban seem to have accentuated the social and economic gap that separates the two groups. Michael suggests that Leadership might invite some of the *katatayan* (adult men) from mother church to fellowship and share testimonies with the *katatayan* of Looban. He believes that something like this would be a great encouragement to the men of Looban. He says, "If the people can be inspired, our imagination works. Then, the positive thinking and the optimism will come."[132] Michael indicates that, if the people of Looban will be given their self-esteem through such positive and encouraging interactions with people who see themselves as the *barkada* (or equals) of Looban, then change will come. What is interesting about the change that Michael describes is that it is not change that is prescribed from the outside. This is change that rises up from within the people of Looban, and he believes that change begins with Looban's self-esteem.

Can Looban Lead?

The youth have demonstrated the beginnings of an identity all their own. They connect deeply with one another. They have their own

131 "Michael," 332-345.
132 "Michael," 344.

networks of support and trust that have developed among them. They lead themselves in prayer and devotions and keep one another accountable to God. However, foremost in their evaluations of themselves is the fact that they do not match up with the mother church. They still cleave to an identity that is not their own.

Michael, however, has developed a strong sense of independence apart from the mother-church. He says that his leadership style is completely his own. He takes full responsibility for the leadership and development of the youth, and does it outside of the auspices of the Missionary leadership. However, Michael still indicates a cleaving to the mother-church as well. He indicates disappointment that the youth of mother church "don't do their part" in evangelizing the people of Looban and still hopes for mother church to be the *barkada* of Looban to aid in the development of Looban Outreach Church.[133] He is independent to an extent, but still relies on an external system of support.

The construction of this relationship raises a few questions. Michael wants a *barkada* with mother church, but is this a realistic endeavor? Is it possible for mother church to genuinely be the *barkada* of Looban? Or does the social situation dictate that mother church be the gracious patron-landlord who gives and supports a markedly poorer group in exchange for the loyalty of its people? If mother church would become the *barkada* of Looban, this would require a major renegotiation of their own identity in relation to Looban.

Barkada is defined in terms of mutual trust and support, it is guided by a principal of *pakikisama.* This means that there must be some sort of social leveling to take place in order for the *barkada* to function. According to Social Identity theory, if they are going to share the same in-group, they must be able to negotiate a common identity in which they share a sufficient amount of similarities. However, the stark differences in social class between the groups make this almost impossible. Mother church and Looban would have to meet on terms that do not accentuate

[133] Ibid, 324.

the great chasm of socio-economic differences that separate them, such as education, organizational abilities, and economic status. At present, almost all of the interactions between the two groups continue to accentuate all of these differences.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Identifying Looban

In view of their relationship with mother church, Looban's self-identity is this: Looban is poor and poorly educated. They are a progeny that is unable to live in the image of their progenitor in terms of both economics and ability. This self-identification has been largely molded by the group's interaction with mother church. The basis of their interactions has been that the mother church *has*, and Looban *has not.* Mother church *knows,* and Looban *knows not.* This implies that mother church must give and Looban must receive. Mother church must teach and Looban must learn. These are the foundational interactions of the relationship, thus these interactions quickly and readily become the very identities and realities in which the two groups interact.

While the community's poverty and lack of education may be true to some extent, these factors cannot be the basis upon which mother church understands the community of Looban. There has to be a foundation of mutual respect and trust in the ability of the indigenous to figure things out for themselves and negotiate their *own* positive and distinct identity. If mother church solely interacts with Looban on the basis of its poverty, lack of education, and inabilities, Social Identity theory affirms that this is the reality in which both groups will live.

Carl Rogers understands that human beings are multi-faceted and infinitely complex. He pioneered the person-centered approach to psychotherapy which is founded on maintaining *unconditional positive regard* for the self and the other person in relationships with people. He believes that an environment such as this creates a threat-free and fertile context for growth and development. Rogers believes that creating this kind of environment is key to creating healthy and productive relationships that are based upon a sense of mutual trust, honesty, and

acceptance.[134] People in such environments are given the opportunities and encouragement for creativity and expression of their own self-identity. People brought up in an environment such as this are given the opportunity to fully actualize themselves.

The self-actualization of indigenous leadership at Looban Outreach Church *can* happen, however it must happen independent of the mother church. Filipino self-actualization is deeply rooted in the *interdependency* of a collective group. In other words, self-actualization must begin with the "*tayo*" (Filipino collective pronoun: "we, us").[135] S*elf-identity* in a Philippine context is understood in terms of a similar interdependency of persons. "We are in this together" is the driving force behind the self and its actualization. Thus, if Looban will lead, it must happen with the church community as a collective whole. Such a notion is seen in the Philippine cultural value of *bayanihan*, which carries a distinct pride in the interdependence of the collective whole. It is important to realize that self-actualization may not likely happen with the naming of a single rogue leader (such as Michael), or by appointing a talented leader from the outside who is able to "appear" indigenous. Culturally speaking, Looban's self-actualization must rise up from within itself as it negotiates its own identity.

Social Identity theory holds that identity is created and maintained through social interaction. People naturally organize themselves into groups with the implicit goal of achieving a "positive and distinct position for the in-group."[136] Looban's identity is presently spread across a broad social and economic divide, including both mother church and Looban. Until Looban can understand themselves as Looban alone, it will never develop its own positive and distinct self identity. Looban must come to a self-realization and negotiate its own identity as Looban *Church* (as opposed to Looban Outreach Church). If

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[134] Rogers, Carl, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1961), 283-284.

[135] Jamie Bulatao, *Phenomena and Their Interpretation* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1992), 276.

[136] Turner, J.C. *Social Influence* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991), 171.

this does not happen, its split identity will continue to be an obstacle for its development.

Recommendations

The identities of mother church and Looban Outreach Church need to be separate, distinct, and respected for what they are in their own right. However, because of the dependency dictated by the present structure of the relationship, I do not believe that this kind of separation is immediately possible. Looban is not only dependent on mother church for its finances, and leadership, but also for it's very identity. They understand themselves as a branch, a fragment of a greater whole. This calls for a serious (and difficult) process of renegotiating identities.

Renegotiating the identity of Looban Outreach Church may require several steps backward, and a renegotiation of the foreign church structure that is imposed upon them. There is presently a fear that, if mother church will leave Looban Outreach Church, it will fail. This might be true, to some extent. The present structure of Looban Outreach Church (its programs, administration, and facilities) is not that of the indigenous people. The structure was designed for a church that is able to meet certain social and economic requirements. It requires staff, resources, and consistent revenue in order to maintain the building, pay the electric bill, meet the living expenses of a pastor, and continue the expensive outreach programs. If Looban negotiates is own indigenous identity as a church, it will also need to renegotiate its own external structures. Looban was planted as the outreach ministry of a more affluent group of people. It was planted with foreigner leaders in mind. They can manage it, but the people of Looban cannot.

Both mother church and Looban must realize that neither identity nor liberation can be given to Looban by the mother church. These realities must *rise up* from within the people of Looban themselves to provide true autonomy and responsibility.[137] This must happen in a *deep* sense. The church must be *theirs*. Not only in it's funding and its

[137] Freire, 48.

leadership, but its very identity and the actualization of indigenous leadership must be its own.

Both mother church and Looban Outreach Church must focus on what Looban does have, and what they can do, rather than what it does not have, and what it cannot do. As affirmed by Social Identity theory, Looban must establish a "positive and distinct" position for itself as a church community, which distinguishes it from other church communities. Mother church has the opportunity to greatly help Looban, by encouraging and reaffirming Looban in *who they are*, rather than trying to "pull them up" to something higher or better. They must understand each other, and themselves, as full and complex human beings, rather than interacting with the community on the basis of their social and/or economic statuses.

Economics and education are greatly useful to those in ministry, however they should not be prerequisite for leaders in the church. I recommend that mother church seriously affirm a shared belief in the "priesthood of all believers." If someone's life has been changed by Christ, and they have the desire and ability to assemble a community of the regenerate who meet for holy fellowship and ministry[138] then we should encourage them in that endeavor. We must seriously believe that all people in Christ are capable, because Christ makes them capable. Looban Outreach Church cannot be measured by a foreign standard.

Looban church must know deeply who they are as a people, but even more so, they must know who Christ is. Mother church Leaders must be descriptive of *who God is,* rather than *prescriptive* of how Looban church should live and act. Mother church Leaders must strongly encourage the indigenous to figure out who they are and what it means to live in the way of Christ in their own particular indigenous identity. Looban cannot be themselves and someone else at the same time.

Based on the findings of the study, I recommend that mother church be cautious to ensure that they are connecting the people of Looban to God, and not to the mother church. The daughter-church model of church planting tends to place a strong emphasis on the

[138]*Manual: Church of the Nazarene, 2009-2013*, 37.

mother church as the source for everything that the aspiring daughter church might need. The daughter looks to the mother church for teaching, preaching, and theological insights. Rather than living like Christ, the daughter church lives like the mother church, trusting that it is a reliable source for Christian living. The danger here is that the mother church can become a kind of intermediary between the daughter church and God. Such a phenomenon is especially true in inter-socioeconomic contexts such as with mother church and Looban. It is not so much that the mother church intends to be an intermediary, but that the social positioning between the groups requires it.

This being the case, I recommend that the district add one more requirement to their list of essential characteristics for their "recognized churches." Churches on the district should not only be capable of self-support, self-governance, and self-propagation, but that they should also be capable of "self-theologization."[139] They must be allowed to interpret for themselves what it means to live in the way of Jesus as Looban church, in Looban's context. Beyond this, it is important that the local indigenous context defines what it means to fulfill these four requirements, rather than allowing the requirements to function as a set of prescribed socio-economic mandates and expectations.

Lastly, It is important that mother church make a healthy separation between social and economic assistance, and church development. It is important to note that these two identities must be separate. A church is a community of faith, a body of confessors, a fellowship of believers that have been unified by their faith in God. A church is a living entity, and carries a sense of "being." "Outreach" is based on transitive verb. There is a doer of the action, and there is a receiver of the action. There are those who are reaching out and those to whom the reaching is done. This is not a church. It is possible, however, that a church (as a community of faith) does outreach. But an outreach cannot, also, be a church. By definition, an outreach is one-way, it lacks mutuality, and cannot be a church. Outreach can be done *by*

[139] Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Baker: Grand Rapids, MI, 1985), 196.

a church, but being *reached out to* does not constitute a group of people as a church.

To aspiring church planters and out-reachers, I recommend: if you want to plant a church, then plant a church; if you want to reach out, then reach out, but it is important that the two are not confused or mixed. I strongly believe that a church is capable of doing outreach, but an outreach is not capable of becoming a church. If an outreach is to ever become a "community of confessors" (a church) then it must rise up from within the people of the outreach and be authentically theirs. An outreach can touch lives, who then go on to become a church, but it is important that its identity is its own, belong to the community of confessors, those sharing in faith who identify themselves with Christ. It is from here that this indigenous faith community can reach out and touch the surrounding indigenous culture and community. In this regard, it would be helpful for mother church to withdraw from the outreach activity in Looban, so that Looban can develop this kind of identity as a fully responsible and functioning church.

I believe that it is important that we define the church as a living organism. The church is not an organizational franchise; it is people. If we define the church in terms of an organization rather than an organism, then we are apt to be more concerned with its function than its life. If the church is seen as a business, there is a strong tendency to focus more on the success of the business than the relationships of the people within it. When planting a church, we must start with people and allow them to figure out what it means to be the people of Christ in their own particular context.

Beyond this, Trueblood brings attention to what seems to be a present obsession with "marketing" the church. He describes a paradigm in which the Church is presented with banners, billboards, and advertisements, making the church appear more as a "thriving business, of which the pastor is the CEO."[140] The question then becomes, if the church participates in an identity such as this what might this communicate to people living in an area such as Looban? What does an

[140] Trueblood, 28.

image such as this have to communicate sociologically? He notes that such a business model is an impediment to the central message of Christ.

This is why it is important that Looban break away. It must negotiate is *own* identity apart from the mother church. Until it is able to do this, it will not be able to live authentically. It will continue to suffer from a split-identity that will continue to make it dependent on the mother church.

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