

MY RESPONSE TO “CHANGING GLOBAL MISSION CULTURE IN THE UK CHURCH”

(Presented at Global Connections’ Global Interface Consultation May 2004)

We need to see the “signs of the times” The church in the UK is grappling with issues of IDENTITY (as community rooted in Jesus) and MISSION (as the purpose of existence). Graham Cray posed the question “is mission shaping our ecclesiology or ecclesiology shaping mission?”

Global Connections is addressing issues and challenges of globalisation and post- modernity. These include challenges of how to overcome an enervating syncretism of western culture and engage with themes from Asia, Africa, and South America.

I believe we need to see churches totally God centred, Christ exalted, mission mobilizing.....and seeing the fullness of God in all creation and in every sphere.

To restructure church to be missional community needs a change of worldview...

We face issues of

- Apathy
- Overload
- Ethno-centrism mindsets
- Disillusionment

Can we see Acts 10 as a paradigm for today? It was a huge step for Peter but something broke in mission terms. In 21st century Britain we need to recognise the imbalance of church resources that focus on being blessed to be blessed rather than blessed to be a blessing to ALL peoples

But there are signs of hope:

- Younger generations and their passion
- A recognition of the Market place and the significance of the “Trade routes” in mission history, in seeing business and mission together
- Seeing Unity not as a method but a value. Bro Yun brought us the challenge that we will never reach unity until we focus on the unreached
- An understanding of the redemptive gifting on Cities and nations
- A growth in prayer initiatives

We don’t need a whole load of new ideas, but new thinking!

This is time to target whole churches for a radical rethink to see mission as the basis of the Bible rather than an add-on at the end of Jesus ministry AND to see mission at the centre of discipleship of new believers. For those disillusioned and marginalised by church I believe fresh understanding of mission could fan the flame of faith.

We need mobilisation to awaken Gods people and keep them moving forward to stem the decline and even terminal state of the church.

Co: mission is one tool that could help orientate and mobilise the church for strategic global mission for the 21st century. **Co:mission** aims to change worldview and provokes new understanding and models of mission to respond to the challenges of post-Christian multi-faith Europe. Run over 6 days, or 3 weekends, or 10 evenings, it provides equipping for cross-cultural mission and is a relevant resource for every Christian in every place, not just those called to “go” cross-culturally. It recognises the need to envision, equip and release people to be effective senders; mobilisers, supporters; pray-ers and welcomers.

Participants can go on to become trained facilitators and use the materials through whole communities. The material can be used with opportunities for fieldwork and mentoring, and is effective as preparation for short-term mission teams or for those working in a cross-cultural context.

Outcomes in churches to date:

- Focus and prayer on world issues and nations every week in all cells/meetings
- Endorsement of hospitality, business trips even holidays as mission
- New models of “sending” people not just on “overseas mission” but to “every place”
- New cells and home churches started with international students and with immigrants
- Adoption of unreached people groups
- Increase of numbers of young people and business people sent on short and longer term mission

Other tools

Caleb Project Europe are a wonderful resource in mobilizing and equipping church, especially in researching, befriending and praying for ethnic peoples in our communities. This year they are piloting a short-term research team in Bradford and a crossing cultures workshop. Both will link in with **co:mission**. For further details please look on www.calebprojecteurope.com

Linda Harding
21.5.04

Further information on **co:mission** is below



History and background

The Filipino church using materials from “Perspectives on the World Christian Movement” developed the “Condensed World Mission Course” to be accessible to the whole church. It has facilitated a major momentum of mission advance in the Filipino church with many of the unreached Muslim groups now with groups of worshipping believers, with scores of local churches focused on mission and many Filipino missionaries working overseas.

- I participated in the first Condensed World Mission Course run in Japan in 1999, and immediately saw the value of this course for the UK and for Europe.
- Sponsored by Pioneer Trust, I spent a month in the Philippines in 2000 to train, in 2001 visited similar courses run in South Africa and attended the 1st international directors consultation in 2003 for those running the course in 18 different nations.
- Pilot courses have run with church leaders; mission co-ordinators; university students; business people; year-out trainees; sending teams; those preparing to go overseas; Brazilian and Korean missionaries; Feedback has been unanimous that this course is a relevant tool for mission in the UK.

Content

The course includes 5 areas: Biblical; Historical; Strategic; Cross-cultural; Teamwork. Participants learn through Videos; Prayer; Worship; Devotions; Discussion; Presentation; Journaling; Reading and Study.

Material is being adapted to include case studies of partnerships with those from the non-Western world, and contextualising sections to include “Specific challenges of Europe” “UK cities as today’s mission fields” “Effective sending bases”

Current plans : 2004-2005

- To see partnerships developing with mission agencies and church groups to enable Co: mission to be a resource e.g. 24/7; Crusaders; Catalyst Ministries
- To see pathways of training that can link with other discipleship and mission courses e.g. Perspectives; DNA; YWAM; CalebProjectEurope
- To pilot a new course, developed in the Philippines, for youth aged 13-16, and to develop specific adaptation for use with 17-20 year olds
- To pilot a course developed in Singapore for use among business people
- To develop a 2-3 hour taster presentation
- To continue liaison with the mission base in the Philippines concerning the adaptation and contextualisation of materials, and to represent the UK and Europe at a follow up consultation in the Philippines in October 2004

For further information email info@comission.co.uk

Linda Harding
June 2004