

## Engage Global Diasporas for Glocal Missions

*Dr. Juno Wang<sup>1</sup>, © 2022*

Globalization provides us with the opportunities to evangelize and disciple global diasporas who live in our community. We can share salvation openly with global diasporas, particularly with people who are from the restricted countries. Some diasporas become permanent residents or even citizens in their host country, some are temporary diasporas such as international students, business people, contract workers, and travelers, and others are displaced people who are refugees or asylum seekers. It is God who controls movements of people and uses them for his purposes,<sup>2</sup> and it is he who brings them here. He has turned the magnitude of the diaspora population into a mission opportunity,<sup>3</sup> and it is a foremost part of God's mission and redemptive purposes.<sup>4</sup> We need to rely on our relationship with God to manifest his nature of love, glory, and sending for our engagement with global diasporas.<sup>5</sup>

Today, the world has blurred the boundaries between the local and the global. Glocalization means the interconnection of the local, contextual, and homogenous with the global, universal, and heterogenous. The global and local enable each other, and reciprocally form each other. They are deeply and inextricably connected, are interdependent, and are not opposing forces.<sup>6</sup> Glocalization is the interdependent relationship between the local and the global. It is global realities that shape local contexts.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization Issue Group No. 26 A and B: Diasporas and International Students. "Lausanne Occasional Paper 55: The New People Next Door." In 2004 *Forum Occasional Papers*, (September 29-October 5, 2004), under "missional content," edited by David Clayton, 2005, <https://lausanne.org/content/lop/diasporas-and-international-students-the-new-people-next-door-lop-55> (accessed October 27, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Sam George, "Is God Reviving Europe Through Refugees: Turning the Greatest Humanitarian Crisis of Our Times into One of the Greatest Mission Opportunities," *Lausanne Global Analysis* 6, no. 3 (April 28, 2017), under "Missional Content," <https://www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2017-05/god-reviving-europe-refugees> (accessed October 27, 2021).

<sup>4</sup> Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, "The Seoul Declaration on Diaspora Missiology," (November 14, 2009), LCWE Diaspora Educators Consultation 2009, under "Missional Content," <https://www.lausanne.org/content/statement/the-seoul-declaration-on-diaspora-missiology> (accessed October 27, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Enoch Wan, "Relational Theology and Relational Missiology," *Occasional Bulletin* 21, no. 1 (Fall 2007), [https://www.westernseminary.edu/files/documents/faculty/wan/Relat\\_theol\\_missio\\_OB\\_21\\_1.pdf](https://www.westernseminary.edu/files/documents/faculty/wan/Relat_theol_missio_OB_21_1.pdf) (accessed October 27, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> Graham Hill, *Global Church: Reshaping Our Conversations, Renewing Our Mission, Revitalizing Our Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 26.

<sup>7</sup> Hill, *Global Church*, 27.

As the world has become glocal, so must our missions. Will our local missions to our diverse community have a rippling effect on global missions? The purpose of this paper is to present how churches around the world can be involved in glocal missions by engaging global diasporas and mobilizing diaspora Christians in their own context.

### **Definition of Key Terms:**

**Diaspora:** Diaspora means “a scattering,” used to describe the large-scale movement of people from their homeland to settle permanently or temporarily in other countries.<sup>8</sup>

**Glocal Missions:** Global in scope but local in action and in sequence<sup>9</sup> because of the seamless integration between the local and the global,<sup>10</sup> which means local evangelistic outreaches have global ripple effects.<sup>11</sup>

**Missions:** Ways and means of accomplishing “the mission” which has been entrusted by the Triune God to the Church and Christians.<sup>12</sup>

### **Theology**

Our God is a missional God, and mission is “*missio Dei* within the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” The foundation of missions begins with sending among the Trinity, where the Father sends the Son to all peoples (Rom 10) who are created in his image, and the Holy Spirit he sends in Christ’s name (John 14) to all believers. That mission is now extended to us (John 17:4). We need to see diasporas from God’s perspective, recognizing that it is he who has moved our diaspora neighbors here so that they might know him.

The Great Commission clearly includes Church mission to win people into the Kingdom everywhere in the world, and the work is beyond the Church and missions to see that God’s will is done on earth outside the Church and to declare his glory among all peoples.<sup>13</sup> The promise of the presence of the Holy Spirit after the Great Commission is to obey his commandments (Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus models his life to the disciples, but they were not transformed to be his witnesses until the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2) after they have obeyed his

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<sup>8</sup> Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization Issue Group No. 26 A and B, “Lausanne Occasional Paper 55.”

<sup>9</sup> Enoch Wan, written comments on my first proposal draft, Portland, OR, December, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Bob Roberts Jr., *Glocalization: How Followers of Jesus Engage a Flat World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 24.

<sup>11</sup> Sadiri Joy Tira, “Glocal Evangelism: Jesus Christ, Magdalena, and Damascus in Greater Toronto Area,” *Lausanne World Pulse*, (June 2010), <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives-php/1291/06-2010> (accessed October 27, 2021).

<sup>12</sup> Enoch Wan, “Rethinking Missiological Research Methodology: Exploring a New Direction,” *Global Missiology*, (October 2003), <http://www.enochwan.com/english/articles/pdf/Rethinking%20Missiological%20Research%20Methodology.pdf> (accessed October 27, 2021).

<sup>13</sup> Ralph D. Winter, “Three Mission Eras: And the Loss and Recovery of Kingdom Mission, 1800-2000,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 264.

command (Acts 1:4). God gives us a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline (2 Tim. 1:7) to extend his Kingdom.

God has sent us among diasporas, empowered by his Spirit to bring the Gospel to them through our witness for him (Isaiah 43:10-12; Acts 1:8). A Spirit-filled church is a mission-minded church that evangelism should arise from spontaneously.<sup>14</sup> The Church is to be a radical presence in society that is to witness to or demonstrate the power of the good news<sup>15</sup> and the signs of the Kingdom.<sup>16</sup> In the New Testament, several words for witness mean martyr, showing the ultimate form of witness is to lay down our life as a witness for Christ.<sup>17</sup> The fundamental characteristic of Apostolic mission that made them witnesses of Jesus is that he will come again as King of his Kingdom.<sup>18</sup>

Our first calling is to worship God,<sup>19</sup> and Church's mission is to proclaim the Gospel across all of the creation that he is the Lord.<sup>20</sup> The eschatological home keeps us from becoming too at home in this world and too institutionalized in the Church.<sup>21</sup> Once we understand that our identity in the Kingdom transcends beyond any worldly identities, we will be transformed into disciples and missionaries.<sup>22</sup> We need to think theologically, that is, to relate all our thinking to God, who is behind everything.<sup>23</sup>

### **Diaspora Missiology in Brief**

As the creation in the image of God, our existence, ability to know and undertaking in missions are all dependent on God (Acts 17:28) who is the great I AM (Exod. 3), and it is God-centered.<sup>24</sup> What people most desperately need is peace with God,<sup>25</sup> and what can be powerful enough to carry us far away from our comfort zones to be his witnesses is a deep sense of divine calling.<sup>26</sup> When we know who God is, and who Jesus is, we would want to witness for our

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<sup>14</sup> The Lausanne Covenant, *The Lausanne Legacy: Landmarks in Global Mission*, ed. Judith E. M. Cameron (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2016), 48.

<sup>15</sup> Arthur F. Glasser et al., *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 339-40.

<sup>16</sup> Glasser et al., *Announcing the Kingdom*, 355.

<sup>17</sup> Walter A. Elwell, et al., *Encyclopedia of the Bible*, no. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 2155.

<sup>18</sup> David J. Cho, "Kingdom Mission: DNA of the Missionary Task" (plenary paper presented at Tokyo 2010 Global Mission Conference, Tokyo, Japan, May 11-14, 2010), under "Conference Details," [http://www.tokyo2010.org/resources/Tokyo2010\\_Plenary\\_David\\_Cho.pdf](http://www.tokyo2010.org/resources/Tokyo2010_Plenary_David_Cho.pdf) (accessed November 11, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> The Lausanne Covenant, *The Lausanne Legacy*, 15.

<sup>20</sup> Bruce Riley Ashford, "The Gospel and Culture," in *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations*, ed. Bruce Riley Ashford, rev. ed. (Nashville: Academic, 2011), 125-7.

<sup>21</sup> Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 279.

<sup>22</sup> Stan Nussbaum, *A Reader's Guide to Transforming Mission: A Concise, Accessible Companion to David Bosch's Classic Book* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 23.

<sup>23</sup> The Lausanne Covenant, *The Lausanne Legacy*, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Enoch Wan, "Relational Paradigm for Practicing Diaspora Missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," in *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice*, ed. Enoch Wan, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Portland: IDS-USA, 2014), 192-3.

<sup>25</sup> Cody C. Lorance, "Case Study 4: Reflections of a Church Planter Among Diaspora Groups in Metro-Chicago: Pursuing Cruciformity in Diaspora Missions," in *Diaspora Missiology: Reflections on Reaching the Scattered Peoples of the World*, eds. Michael Pocock and Enoch Wan, Evangelical Missiological Society Series no 23 (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2015), 260.

<sup>26</sup> Lorance, "Reflections of a Church Planter Among Diaspora Groups in Metro-Chicago," in Pocock and Wan, 277.

God.<sup>27</sup> Our Triune God is relational, and we are created as relational beings. Wan calls for action to engage in diaspora missions and to integrate the Great Commission with the great commandment relationally.<sup>28</sup>

The greatest commandments that Jesus spoke of is to love God and to love our neighbors. We are to first love God through our vertical relationship with him, and then to love our neighbors through our horizontal relationships with them. In addition, we are sent to invite all peoples to enter his diverse Kingdom. When we do that in obedience, we glorify him who sends us through the allegiance to his lordship. Diaspora missions requires us to practice strategic stewardship for our relational accountability to God and the unsaved.<sup>29</sup> It is missions to every person outside his Kingdom everywhere, and it supplements traditional missiology.<sup>30</sup> Wan calls for rethinking missiology in the context of globalization.<sup>31</sup>

Traditional missions is polarized or dichotomized in focus and territorial with a sharp distinction between here and there; and movement is lineal, meaning it goes one way. It is geographically divided and compartmentalized as a discipline. In this paradigm, the priority is the unreached people groups in the most unreached regions of the world; however, globalization moves the traditional sense of missions from going out to the missions of coming in.<sup>32</sup> The true nature of the Gospel is more lucidly represented on a global scale and in diverse local expressions of Christianity.<sup>33</sup> Diaspora missions focuses on holistic missions and contextualization integrating evangelism and social concern. It is de-territorialized and simultaneously local and global conceptually. In perspective, it is not geographically divided but borderless, and it is transnational and global.<sup>34</sup>

The links with the homeland imply dual nationality that is to maintain a presence abroad as well as attachment to home which did not necessary mean definitive departure nor definitive return in the minds of diasporas.<sup>35</sup> Transnationalism is liminal, in between, and not bi-cultural in the assimilation model.<sup>36</sup> It is acculturation of selection and integration of traits in the host

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<sup>27</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 66-7.

<sup>28</sup> Enoch Wan, "Global People and Diaspora Missiology" (plenary paper presented at Tokyo 2010 Global Mission Conference, Japan, May 11-14, 2010), under "Conference Details," [http://tokyo2010.org/resources/Tokyo2010\\_Plenary\\_Enoch\\_Wan.pdf](http://tokyo2010.org/resources/Tokyo2010_Plenary_Enoch_Wan.pdf) (accessed November 11, 2017).

<sup>29</sup> Enoch Wan, "Rethinking Missiology in the Context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Global Demographic Trends and Diaspora Missiology," *Great Commission Research Journal*, 2 no. 1 (Summer 2010), under "Journal Publications," <http://journals.biola.edu/gcr/volumes/2/issues/1/articles/7> (accessed November 11, 2017)."

<sup>30</sup> Enoch Wan and Sadiri Joy Tira, "Diaspora Missiology and Mission in the Context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Global Missiology English* 1, no. 8 (October 2010), 5, under "Diaspora Studies," <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/viewFile/383/994> (accessed October 27, 2021).

<sup>31</sup> Wan, "Rethinking Missiology in the Context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."

<sup>32</sup> David J. Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2005), 348.

<sup>33</sup> Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict*, 92.

<sup>34</sup> Wan and Tira, "Diaspora Missiology and Mission in the Context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," 4.

<sup>35</sup> Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, eds. "Introduction," *Migration Theory: Taking Across Disciplines*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 17.

<sup>36</sup> Enoch Wan, "Theorizing Diaspora," in Wan, 32.

culture,<sup>37</sup> and both cultures mutually influence each other on the group level while the reasons for migration influence acculturation on the individual level. Levels of acculturation are different among adult and children diasporas, and those who are born in the host country to parents of first- or second- generation diasporas.<sup>38</sup> The apostle Paul used his bi-cultural diasporic roots to be sensitive both to the ministry and message contexts.<sup>39</sup> The shared memory of the diaspora experience can give all diasporas a shared unity of identity and experience.<sup>40</sup> Diaspora Christians need to be like the apostle to embrace and use their bi-culturalism for today's diaspora missions.<sup>41</sup>

As the majority of refugees who came to the United States in 2016 were Christians, and the majority of global migrants are Christians, the diaspora Christian communities have the opportunities to be involved in missions.<sup>42</sup> Missions is at the institutional career missionaries level and personal level of all believers, and it is not a matter of either-or.<sup>43</sup> When diasporic individuals and congregations are to be mobilized and empowered to fulfill the Great Commission in their homeland and elsewhere, it is "missions through the diaspora."<sup>44</sup> When diaspora believers have acquired the language and are adjusted to the host culture with the shared migrant experience, they are the natural bridge for "missions by and beyond the diaspora" to reach out to other ethnic groups in host society and beyond.<sup>45</sup> Through partnership between diaspora and others focusing beyond diaspora to serve other diaspora people or non-diaspora is "missions with the diaspora" in Kingdom ministry.<sup>46</sup> Diaspora missions begins at a local level and proceeds to be global in perspective.<sup>47</sup>

The approaches in diaspora missions are all relational in nature. The activities, attitudes, lifestyle, and methods Jesus modeled in fulfilling his mission are worth emulating in missions ministry today. We should think as he thought, say what he said, and do what he did to continue his ministry.<sup>48</sup> Living in a diverse community adds a missional perspective<sup>49</sup> and a new

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<sup>37</sup> David Scott, "That Event, This Memory: Notes on the Anthropology of African Diasporas in the New World," *Diaspora* 1:3 (1991), 275-6.

<sup>38</sup> David R. Dunaetz, "Three Models of Acculturation: Applications for Developing a Church Planting Strategy Among Diaspora Populations," in Pocock and Wan, 130-1.

<sup>39</sup> Larry W. Caldwell, "Diaspora Ministry in the Book of Acts: Insights From Two Speeches of the Apostle Paul to Help Guide Diaspora Ministry Today," in Pocock and Wan, 93-4.

<sup>40</sup> Ted Rubesh, "Diaspora Distinctives: The Jewish Diaspora Experience in the Old Testament," *Torch Trinity Journal* 13, no. 2 (November 30, 2010), 136.

<sup>41</sup> Caldwell, "Diaspora Ministry in the Book of Acts," 103.

<sup>42</sup> Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, "Lausanne Occasional Paper 55."

<sup>43</sup> Enoch Wan, "'Mission' and 'Missio Dei': Response to Charles Van Engen's 'Mission Defined and Described,'" in *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 45.

<sup>44</sup> Wan and Tira, "Diaspora Missiology and Mission in the Context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," 11.

<sup>45</sup> Stan Downes, "Mission by and Beyond the Diaspora: Partnering With Diaspora Believers to Reach Other Immigrants and the Local People," in Pocock and Wan, 83.

<sup>46</sup> Enoch Wan, "Introduction," in Wan, 8.

<sup>47</sup> Wan, "Rethinking Missiology in the Context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."

<sup>48</sup> Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict*, 150.

<sup>49</sup> Hyung Jin Park, "The Journey of the Gospel and Being a World Christian," in *Torch Trinity Journal* 13, no. 1 (May 30, 2010), 94.

dimension to our Christian identity as a World Christian, which means to have a global perspective with local and cultural awareness.<sup>50</sup>

A missional church is another global and missional city constituted by every tribe, language, people, and nation,<sup>51</sup> and Christians are meant to be faithful in worldwide glocal missions.<sup>52</sup> Missions without an orientation outward and to others conceives an ingrown, complacent, and ethnocentric church.<sup>53</sup> Being a missional church is an obedience issue because we will get out of our comfort and safety zones and engage the world as Jesus did if we love like Jesus.<sup>54</sup>

### **The Global Situation**

What is trending right now is the fact that people are on the move around the world. According to the World Migration Report 2020, the estimated all international migrants worldwide in 2020 were around 281 million which was 51 million more than in 2010, and 36 million of them were children. That means 1 in 30 people in the world was a migrant, and more than 40% were born in Asia. The largest country of origin was India, followed by Mexico, the Russian Federation, China, and Syria. In major geographical regions, Asia and Europe comprised 61% of the global international migrant stock, North America at 21%, Africa at 9%, Latin America and the Caribbean at 5%, and Oceania at 3%. Asia experienced 74% growth of international migrants from 2000 to 2020, and Europe experienced the second largest growth during this period. Migration has been a key factor of population change in several countries. With South-to-North, and East-to-West moving trends, the United States was the primary migration destination, and Germany was the second.<sup>55</sup> In the United States, at least 31 ethnicities have over one million people in each, according to Operation World.<sup>56</sup>

International migration is shaped by economic, geographic, demographic, and other factors resulting in recognizable migration patterns, and the largest migrant corridors tend to be from developing countries to large economies.<sup>57</sup> It could well be that if we live in communities where higher education, technology, or commercial centers are, our neighborhood is diverse. With only 18.2% of non-Christians around the world knew a Christian in mid-2021,<sup>58</sup> we could be the first Christian friend to our global diaspora neighbors. On the other hand, the Global South including Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania had 67% of the world Christian population.<sup>59</sup> Christians are among global diasporas. As such, the need is for us to reorientate our missional

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<sup>50</sup> Park, "The Journey of the Gospel and Being a World Christian," 92.

<sup>51</sup> Hill, *Global Church*, 15-6.

<sup>52</sup> C.G. Seerveld, "A Christian Mission of Glocal Culture Within Riven Societies in God's World," *Bulletin for Christian Scholarship*. 75:1 (2010), 128.

<sup>53</sup> Lianne Roembke, *Building Credible Multicultural Teams* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2000), 1.

<sup>54</sup> Roberts, *Glocalization*, 146.

<sup>55</sup> International Organization for Migration, "World Migration Report 2020," <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2020-interactive/> (accessed October 25, 2021).

<sup>56</sup> Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Colorado Springs: Biblica Publishing, 2010), 861.

<sup>57</sup> International Organization for Migration, "World Migration Report 2020".

<sup>58</sup> Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds. *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2021).

<sup>59</sup> Johnson and Zurlo, *World Christian Database*.

eyes to see the world from a global to a glocal perspective, and mobilize diaspora Christians to expand God's Kingdom wherever they go.

### **What Can Church Do to Engage Global Diasporas**

Diaspora missions must be intentional because cross cultural missions is almost always against our human nature. He has given us his Holy Spirit as a powerful resource to help us overcome any obstacles and challenges. By the empowerment of the Spirit, we tear down the barriers of egocentrism of my people, my place, my plan, and my comfort and pleasure to serve the people in our diverse neighborhood with a Kingdom mindset. We need to submit ourselves to the Lord and get down from our Tower of Babel of self-centeredness because the biggest barrier we face is ourselves. When we focus on the Kingdom, the Church becomes less cultural, and missions goes glocal because the world has gone glocal.<sup>60</sup> Once we open our missional eyes and see our diaspora neighbors from God's perspective, we see opportunities. **Our local missions to a diverse community have a rippling effect on global missions. Since the impact of our missions task are glocal, the church needs to have a glocal vision.**

Living in a diverse community, we see people from the mission fields living among us right at our front door. This is a missional opportunity at our doorstep without travel, visas, or shots requirements. Consequently, the Church is an army of missionaries sitting in the pews,<sup>61</sup> particularly when it has a multi-ethnic or ethnic diaspora congregation with culture-crossing experiences. In some ways, the early church was in a similar environment. It was set in a diverse and commercial center context with a dominant language, and they used these as tools for missions.<sup>62</sup> The believers were multi-ethnic diasporas who identified with both homelands and were bi-cultural.

The first- and second- generation diaspora Christians are in a unique position with the skillsets to reach other ethnic diasporas than mono-cultural Christians. Diasporas most likely have families and friends scattered around the world. With real time communication, diasporas connect with family and friends back home on a regular basis. Therefore, as a friend of a diaspora, we could become a family friend locally and globally. The shared migrant experience helps diaspora Christians not only to empathize and understand their diaspora neighbors, but also to help them find their new identity in Christ and the Kingdom. Once diasporas see, hear, and experience the Gospel from Christians here locally, it will be shared within their networks globally. Our Christian witness then, is local and global all at the same time.

To live out the Gospel, the body of Christ needs to actively engage the surrounding culture. The lost needs to have opportunities to see the transforming power of the Gospel and the outflow of God's love in action within their community before they enter a church building. Let

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<sup>60</sup> Roberts, *Glocalization*, 29.

<sup>61</sup> Mark Galli, "Glocal Church Ministry: Bob Roberts has an Idea that may Change American Congregations, if not the World," *Christianity Today* (July 2007), 45.

<sup>62</sup> Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 318.

the Gospel flow naturally along relationship lines while we live out a missional lifestyle to be a good steward of our time, talents, and treasures.<sup>63</sup> The lost needs to meet Jesus in flesh and blood, through us.<sup>64</sup>

Church diaspora missions begins with training and equipping the Kingdom people to live God-glorifying lives in every aspect of their life.<sup>65</sup> We need to develop the ability to understand cultural differences and similarities; otherwise, we may become suspicious and isolated when we do not have the skills to relate to one another, and reach out with confidence to the diverse community people outside our church building. Above all, our motive must be genuine because no one likes to be coerced into making a decision for Jesus, or be treated as a project or a number. Our outreach style and strategy also need to be adaptable and flexible since every context and the people we reach are different.

With people coming from a group cultural background, we reach out to them with a group and relational approach to provide acceptance, a sense of belonging, emotional security, identity, and mutual support. In this, we create groups that have a combination of Christians and non-Christians. We take a cue from the St. Patrick's group approach model in the 5th Century. It is an approach where non-Christians can find a group in which they are accepted and have a sense of belonging, and in that relationship behave and live like a believer in the group, and then in time, affirm their faith and belief in God.<sup>66</sup> The first- and second- generation diaspora Christians witness in such an approach focuses first on their being and then their doing through the common migrant experiences and intercultural skills to build trust and relationships.

It takes time to form cross-cultural relationships, and it cannot be agenda driven.<sup>67</sup> Our mission work is more than learning a national culture and identifying the cultural attributes, but it is to get to know a person within the discourse communities where he lives, works, and worships. It is to build relationships in the local network at a personal and remarkable level where people relate to each other within their communities. This is the focus of mission work from a relational paradigm perspective.<sup>68</sup> As we have limited resources, we can partner with other churches and mission organizations to be a faithful and obedient steward to our King. Furthermore, we pray and trust the Holy Spirit to bear fruits in his time.

### **Lessons Learned from My Multi-ethnic Diaspora Missions**

It is God who created me and has prepared me for the diaspora missions. I came to the U.S. from Taiwan having never heard the Gospel. I met Jesus two years later, was called to full time service, and ever since have been serving him. When I moved back to Taiwan in 2008, God

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<sup>63</sup> Alan and Katherine Carter, "The Gospel and Life Style," in Ashford, 130-1.

<sup>64</sup> Charles A. Davis, *Making Disciples Across Cultures: Missional Principles for a Diverse World*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 102-3.

<sup>65</sup> Jedidiah Coppenger, "The Community of Mission: The Church," in Ashford, 71-3.

<sup>66</sup> Frances S. Adeney and Terry Much, *Christianity Encountering World Religions: The Practice of Mission in the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 94.

<sup>67</sup> Mark DeYmaz and Harry Li, *Ethnic Blends: Mixing Diversity Into Your Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 47.

<sup>68</sup> Enoch Wan and Mark Hedinger, *Relational Missionary Training: Theology, Theory and Practice*, ed. Kendi Howells Douglas and Stephen Burris, (Skyforest: Urban Loft Publishers, 2017), 181-3.



led me to begin my multi-ethnic diaspora missions in the Taipei Prison for the foreign inmate ministry. After relocating back to the Silicon Valley of California in 2009, God led me to get involved in numerous multi-ethnic diaspora missions activities that continue even now as a Chinese diaspora who is involved in missions by and beyond the diaspora.

First and foremost, diaspora missions is about relationship, and it is a holistic missions. It begins with being willing to obey the two greatest commandments of loving God and loving our neighbors with intentionality. This means learning to adapt to cultural differences, in order to love others in a way that they can receive. Relationships and trust are very important to reach group culture diasporas, and the social relationships of the first-generation diaspora are more personal and intimate. I strive to be genuine in loving and caring for the multi-ethnic diaspora within my community, because most people are not looking for a religion but love. I need to take the initiative to befriend them.

It takes time for a diaspora to believe in Jesus. Pre-evangelism is best done through interactions with workers who demonstrate the virtue of Christlikeness with the fruit of the Spirit. A worker's loving and inclusive attitude can break the social-cultural status such as Hindu caste system within the missions group. I have to keep in mind that conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit, and I should not give up on anyone who rejects the Gospel.

God brings diasporas to our community so they would be like me: being away from my family was a way to sanctify me, and to set me apart from my family religion that is deeply rooted in our daily way of life. I am engaging in spiritual warfare and very much in need of the work and protection from the Holy Spirit. The power of Jesus' death and resurrection will set people free from fear, such as fear of not doing enough good works to go to heaven, fear of reincarnation, and fear of possible revenge from the evil spirits and so on. All I need to do is to grab the opportunities God has put in front of me, learn from mistakes, and be a sower, most likely the first sower.

The intercultural seminary trainings I received have helped me to grow my intercultural mind from being ethnocentric to ethnorelative. Thus, being open and flexible helps me learn to handle situations and people different than my cultural background, and makes me willing to reexamine and adapt my personal attitudes and perceptions. I must know how to apply my Scriptural understanding to cultural situations. After all, the most important training is to be the right person as a witness. It is about being transformed by the Holy Spirit through my willingness to grow and change, and through my obedience to Jesus' commands and the Lordship of Jesus.<sup>69</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Is God trying to tell us that glocalization is the time for us to reach the people in our diverse neighborhoods connecting local missions with global missions for his Kingdom and his

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<sup>69</sup> Juno Wang, *Multi-ethnic Outreach in the Silicon Valley: A Chinese Diaspora A Chinese Diaspora Reaches Out to Multi-ethnic Diasporas*, (Silicon Valley: Juno Wang, 2021).

glory? The Church needs to recognize that it is God himself who brings the global diasporas to us (Acts 17:25). Everyone at church needs to understand what God is doing at the global level and involve themselves at the local level. From the Biblical, church, missions, and world histories, we know that nothing, even the pandemic, can stop the mission of our Triune God.

God calls us to love our neighbors who are like or unlike us, and his Kingdom is for all peoples to serve him with total allegiance and obedience. It puts us in need of the power of the Spirit to deliver us from our comfort zone, disobedience, fear, limitations, and all weaknesses. We need to seize the global missions opportunities by mobilizing the congregation, particularly the first- and second-generation diaspora Christians, for the mission task that is in front of us. It is equally important to equip them to live out and share the Gospel in a culturally acceptable way.

Our mission is to invite global diasporas into the present Kingdom, and to enjoy the Messianic banquet with us in the future Kingdom. Missions begins from the Jerusalem church to the diverse diaspora of the Antioch church to the world, and we are in a similar environment as the early church. May we be like the apostle Paul who laid down his life daily, and the early church that was known by its love for missions to, through, by and beyond, and with the diverse diasporas to bring the Gospel back to Jerusalem.

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