

The End

The End

A personal Journey in Missions in Southern Asia

Michael Dissanayeke

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@ Michael Dissanayeke, 2017

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Contents

Foreword 1.		04
Foreword 2.		05
Introduction.		06
Chapter 1	When is the End?	07
Chapter 2	The End Is Not Yet	15
Chapter 3	A New End?	21
Chapter 4	The Real End!	31
Chapter 5	Speed up the End	38
Chapter 6	The End is up to You!	45
Chapter 7	Who will End?	50
Chapter 8	This is the End!	57
Conclusion		59

Foreword 1.

It is a great joy to introduce this book, 'The End,' by Michael Dissanayeke on finishing the Task in Missions. This book will certainly inspire and challenge those who are involved in Missions to accelerate their efforts by focusing on the 'Unreached People Groups Strategy' to bring closure to the task of the Great Commission.

Those living in Southern Asia must be committed to reaching hundreds of 'People Groups' who live in our Region and we must be willing to give them the Gospel by adopting and engaging with them in a strategic manner.

By focusing on the Words of Jesus in Matthew 24:14, every Church should feel the sense of urgency and importance of cooperating and collaborating in the efforts of reaching 'all nations' and hasten the coming of the Lord.

I encourage those who read this book to pray, support and partner together to reach the 'last lost people' on Earth.

Rev. David Mohan
Chairman - Assemblies of God Southern Asia Region.
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Foreword2.

I have known Michael for nearly two decades, and he is a respected national, regional, and world leader. I've appreciated his heart for the church, ministry, and World Missions.

When Michael sent me his book this year I originally intended to read it over several days and on several plane rides. I intended it to be a good distraction from the potential boredom of flying. But once I started reading it, I couldn't put it down. As I turned page after page, I kept thinking, "This is so well expressed. This is really insightful. This is so true!"

I am reminded as well of his clarion call to this generation to not forget the Second Coming of our Lord, and of the mandate to reach the world. As Michael, I remember as a child listening to my pastor talk of Jesus second coming being "any moment." I remember Israel's victory and the re-unification of Jerusalem in 1967 in the six-day war. I remember the "anticipation." And I remember the motivation to reach the world through missions. A new generation needs their own renewed focus to relate the passion and urgency of our call and commission.

Michael's simple yet eloquent challenge to us is timely, prophetic, and urgently needed to remind us of our most important mandate to reach the world for Jesus Christ.

Brad Walz

Chairman

World Assemblies of God Fellowship Missions Commission

Introduction

“The End”

I remember going to movies when I was young and when the words ‘The End’ appear, sometimes there is disappointment. For then the cinema lights come back on and you return to the real world, with people around you talking and moving out, and know it is time to leave.

However, the title of this book ‘**The End**’ does not mean that it is time to leave!

It is intended to switch the metaphorical “lights on,” to highlight a new movement which could initiate fresh passion and vision to complete the Great Commission of Jesus, which I refer to in this book as ‘Missions.’ And this book takes you on a journey in Southern Asia, the ‘last frontier’ of Missions.

If ‘Missions’ was a movie or a TV series, I believe that we are in its most exciting moment climaxing towards ‘The End.’ However, we do not want to finish with an anti-climax with words such as:

“to be continued...”

For, Jesus never intended His Mission to be a never-ending story. In Matthew 24:14, He affirmed that there would be an end.

As you start to read this book, I invite you to join this movement of Missions which will create a vision and a passion to see this ‘End’ happen.

Chapter 1 When Is The End?

“This man began to build, and was not able to finish.” Luke 14:30

Sagrada Familia

My daughter, who visited Spain some time ago, sent me an amazing picture of a cathedral in Barcelona, and insisted that I should visit it.

“What is so special about it?” I asked her.

This is what I discovered:



The beginnings of the Expiatory Temple of the Holy Family, known as the Sagrada Família, commenced on St Joseph’s day in March 1882, with a ceremony presided over by the Bishop of Barcelona. The construction followed the neo-gothic design drawn up by the architect Lozano, the Sagrada Família’s first architect. After a short while, due to disagreements with the promoters, he resigned from the post of chief architect and the job fell to Antoni Gaudí.

With donations received at a steady rate, Gaudí proposed a new and grander design abandoning the previous plan in favor of a

design that was more monumental and innovative. Gaudí's design consisted of a large church, with a floor plan based on a Latin cross, and soaring towers. It was to be immensely symbolic, both architecturally and sculpturally, conveying the teachings of the gospels and the Christian church.



This design calls for a total of eighteen spires, representing in ascending order of height the Twelve Apostles, the Virgin Mary, the four Evangelists and, tallest of all, Jesus Christ. This final central spire of Jesus Christ was to be surmounted by a giant cross; its total height of 170 meters will be one meter less than that of the Montjuïc hill in Barcelona. For Gaudí believed that his creation should not surpass God's. The completion of the spires will make Sagrada Família the tallest church building in the world.

When I first read about the Sagrada, I realized that 'Missions' also resembles the grand plans of the architect Gaudí, similar in objective, symbolism, and enormity, having the same goal of 'Lifting Jesus Higher.'

What is so special?

However, this magnificent cathedral after 134 years of construction is still not complete! At present, it is only about 65% completed.

The current chief architect, Jordi Faulí, who leads a team of 40 construction workers, is the ninth generation of architects to lead the building work. With any luck, he will be the final architect! Today La Sagrada Família church attracts around 3 million visitors a year, whose entrance fees pay for most of the 25 million Euros a year cost for continuing its construction.

After further study of the events and people involved in the history of Sagrada, I reflected about its symbolism in relation to the 'Unfinished Task of Missions' today. For, there is much frustration of the church at the daunting task and enormity of the scope of

Missions, much like this Cathedral having no foreseeable end. The National Geographic (November 2015) reports: “The building is now 70 percent complete and on track to be finished in 2026 ...though some decorative elements could take up to six additional years to complete!”¹

Many Signs of ‘The End’

I grew up in a period when there was a wave of “End Times” teachings, which made me certain that the End was at hand and the rapture was imminent. I remember going to bed almost every night confessing sins I had committed, (and even some I had not) to be sure that I was ready for Christ’s sudden return.

Some of the events gathering momentum signifying Christ’s imminent return were: The 1967 ‘Six-day war in Israel’, the crisis in the Middle East, the ‘fig tree’ symbolism about Israel, probable evidence of Anti-Christ and speculations about ‘666’, nuclear arms race, forming of European Union and the coming ‘One World Government.’ These would lead to the dawn of the new millennium and the Y2K crisis in the year 2000.

But now here I am, in 2017, still asking: “Where is The End?”

My Client is not in a Hurry

While those involved in the construction of Sagrada Cathedral focused on their daily assigned tasks for over 120 years, the architects generally envisioned the big picture and the complete scope - “The End!”



However, on the subject of the extremely long construction period, architect Gaudí is said to have remarked: "My client is not in a hurry", referring to God.

Eventually, he lost everything during the last days of his life. He had no family, no money, and no property, causing him to dedicate his last moments

entirely to the Sagrada Familia. Gaudí also had bad health conditions and on June 7, 1926, a tram knocked him down. Since he had no identity papers, he was mistaken for a beggar and they recognized him only when he was at the hospital, where he died of his wounds at the age of 73. He lived long enough to see only a quarter of his masterwork completed.

Unlike this cathedral, Jesus never intended His Mission on earth to go on forever. The church cannot say, ‘My client is not in a hurry.’

For Jesus said in Matthew 24:14:

*“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the entire world for a witness unto all nations; and **then shall the end come.**”*

The Greek word Jesus used ‘*telios*’ means: “The End” – ‘a termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be, and the last in any succession or series.’

Missions Tourists?

Yet, do you know what is the most visited monument in Spain today? The Sagrada! Despite a century of delay, the builders have found the means for its maintenance through tourism.

While the church worldwide finds no lack of resources to build their own magnificent cathedrals and church buildings, when it comes to funding the Mission of Christ, it is always found wanting. ‘Missions Tourists’ who are foreign to missions are only attracted to it for a brief time, and they return back to business as usual – back in their ‘local church.’ The Sagrada’s temporary attraction of the “unfinished” reflects a lack of a long-term resolution to finish it just as the church lacks commitment to complete the Great Commission.

“Tourists are many, labourers are few.”

The Task and Scope of Missions

Task = a definite piece of work assigned to, falling to, or expected of a person; a duty.

It is not difficult to understand the 'task' of Missions as Jesus has already laid it down as: '*Preach the gospel, make disciples, baptize, teach all things and be my witnesses*' etc.

Scope = *extent or range of view, outlook, effectiveness.*

Jesus' scope was quite conclusive: '*All the World*', '*All Nations*', '*Every Creature*', and '*Ends of the earth*'.

However, during that time, the scope of missions seemed impossible due to their inaccessibility to all nations. However, two thousand years later, it is a much different story.

Christianity in the 1st Century and Now

For two thousand years, what the disciples began as Christ's mission has contributed to what Jesus envisioned in His scope.

Then - 360:1.

In AD 100, there were 360 non-believing people for every believer to reach.

Now - 7:1.

Today there are only 7.3 non-believing people for every believer!

The last two centuries have seen the greatest activity and labor in Missions.



Looking further at the progress in the last 40 years: "In 1980, there were 1,800 known mission agencies and 70,000 missionaries.

Today, there are 250,000 missionaries being sent out to over 200 countries, by more than 4,000 known evangelical mission agencies”².

However, with the population growth, in terms of numbers, the 29% represents a huge 2 billion people!



Who is responsible for the rest of the Task?

You may ask yourself, as wonderful as the statistics look, who is responsible for the completion of this gigantic task?

Every church, irrespective of where it from, what size, culture or style, urban or rural, rich or poor, east or west, is responsible for bringing the task to completion.

Out of the 7.3 billion people in the world today, 2.3 billion are Christian (748 million are Evangelical Christian), 1.7 billion are Muslim, 1.1 billion are Hindu, 488 million are Buddhist, 979 million are Non-Religious and 103 million worships other or unknown deities.

Do you know? Out of 748 million evangelical Christians, 70% have never been told about the 1.6 billion unreached individuals in the world.³

Who is responsible?

“You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and Have appointed you (for this)”. John 15:16

The Last Words

As a teenager, I was playing with my friends one day when I had to rush home because my father was very sick. As I ran into my dad's bedroom he was lying in bed, with my mother standing beside him. My father, knowing his condition was bad, made a dying request. He said, "Son, I am going to die. Look after your mother".

Those words personified my father's love and concern for my mother, and at the same time it laid a heavy responsibility on me at that moment. Thankfully, my father did not die that day, but went on to live a few more years. But still those 'last words' held so much significance and meaning.

'Last Words' are very important!

Jesus began his Mission by saying "It is finished" (John 19:30). However, these were not the Jesus' final words. They were not from the cross, but from a higher mountain.

"When the eleven disciples went away into the mountains of Galilee, Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'"(Matt 28:16, 18-20)

If these last words from the cross (the Gospel) were intended to reach all humanity, then these last words from this 'mount' (The Great Commission) must first reach the church worldwide to obey and fulfill it.

Other Mountains:

Eventually these words were to reach the highest mountains in the world, which was not possible 2000 years ago. Recently while speaking to AG pastors in the city of Pokhara - Nepal, in the ranges

of the Himalaya Mountains, I met leaders who would walk along this rugged terrain for days to reach people, because they took the 'Last Words' of Jesus seriously.

Nepal was a Hindu nation, closed to the gospel for centuries, and the first known protestant Christian was in 1937! Missionaries established the first Nepali underground AG church only in the 1970s. Several of the early believers persisted through severe opposition, even though they were jailed for their faith. But today, there is a vibrant church there with over 1000 AG churches scattered around this mountainous nation, experiencing amazing growth that is unparalleled to any other nation in South Asia. Taking the last words of Jesus seriously can result in having a great impact on a nation!

The End is determined by the Last Words

Jesus' last words were more demanding because it was a commission. It is mentioned at least 5 times in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:14-18, Luke 24:46-49, John 20:21-23, and Acts 1:8.

This Great Commission speaks of *All Nations, All the World, Every Creature, Always*, and concludes with the '*End*' of the age, and the '*Ends*' of the earth. The word 'nations' is not adequate to convey Jesus' phrase '*panta a ethane*' from which we get our term 'ethnic group'⁴. However, the Disciples were more curious about the end than the task, and inquired from Jesus: "And *what* will be the sign of your coming, and of **the End?**" (Matt 24:3)

Chapter 2

The End Is Not Yet

“but the end is not yet...” Matthew 24:7

To be continued...

The Directors of popular TV programs know how to get people completely absorbed and hooked, with “smart characters, plot twists and cliffhangers.” They sometimes create an anticlimax by the words: ‘**to be continued...**’. It is possible to view Missions likewise as a series of continuing episodes.

Let me summarize some of them.

The First Episode: AD 33 – AD 325.

The first 300 years of the church saw some of the greatest missions endeavours in history. The prime actors were Apostles themselves, who were passionately committed to *the Great Commission* and modelled the blueprint and DNA for Missions for those following.

AD 39- Peter - Preaches to Gentiles in Cornelius’ house in Caesarea.

42- Mark - Goes to Alexandria in Egypt.

47- Paul - First missionary journey to Western Anatolia (modern day Turkey via Cyprus).

50- Council of Jerusalem - Admitting Gentiles into the church.

51- Paul - Second missionary journey – to modern day Turkey and Greece.

52- Thomas - To Malabar in India, founds the church that becomes the Syrian Malabar Nasranis.

54- Paul - Begins his third missionary journey.

60- Paul - Sent to Rome under roman guard, evangelizes on Malta after being shipwreck.

66- Thaddeus - Establishes the Christian church of Armenia.

69- Andrew - Crucified in Patras, Greece.

100- 300 Christianity reaches Assyria, Egypt, Algeria, Portugal, Briton, Armenia, Mesopotamia (Iraq), North Africa, France etc.

313- Emperor Constantine issues Edict of Milan, Legalizing Christianity in the Roman Empire.

The Second Episode: AD 400-1000

Key events highlighted in this period are:

410 -The New Testament translated into Armenian.

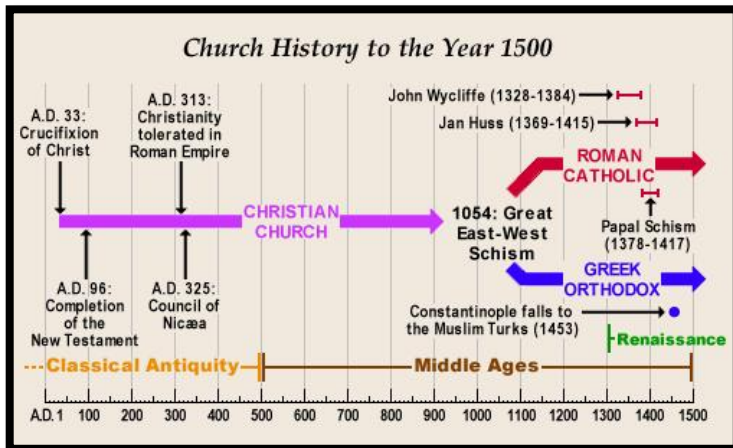
500 - The first Christians reported in North Yemen.

596 - Gregory sends Augustine and a team of missionaries to (what is now) England to reintroduce the Gospel. The missionaries settle in Canterbury, and within a year baptize 10,000 people.

635 - Christian missionaries (Nestorian monks) arrive in China.

680 - First translation of Christian scriptures into Arabic.

The Third Episode: 1100 – 1400

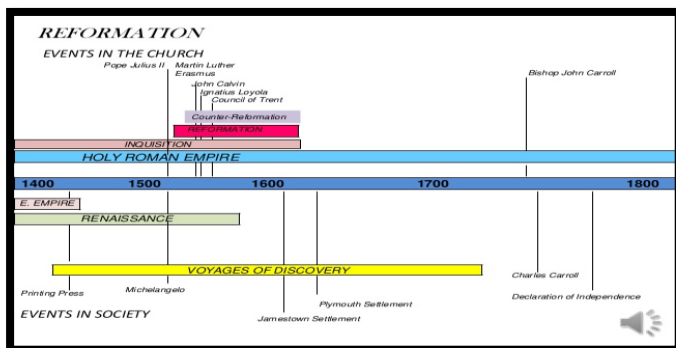


The Roman Catholic Church produced some dedicated missionaries from Franciscan, Dominican and Jesuit orders who ventured out into missions, supported by the maritime powers—Spain, Portugal, and later France. It seems that by 1015, Russia was "*comprehensively*" converted to the Orthodox faith. By 1200, the Bible was available in 22 different languages. By 1266, Mongol leader Khan requests the Pope to send 100 Christian missionaries (only two responded and one died before reaching Mongol territory). In 1382, John Wycliffe translated the Bible from Latin to English.

The Fourth Episode: 1500 -1700

One of the greatest turning points in the history of the church was the Reformation, which began in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses to the door of church in Wittenberg. It is noted that:

“The Reformation, a millennium after the formulation of Christendom’s classical creeds, was a clarion call for a return to biblical sources”⁵.



However, it would take a further 200 years to return to the Biblical mandate of Missions and to produce a Missionary movement among Protestants. They fought wars against Catholics defending their faith instead of proclaiming it to nations. From this period onwards, the exploration and discovery of new lands laid the foundation for the greatest movement of Missions in history for the next two centuries.

The Fifth Episode: 1700-1900

One of the leading events in this period (1727) was the Moravian Community of Herrnhut, (Modern Germany), which commenced a round-the-clock “prayer watch,” and continued non-stop for over a hundred years! Sixty-five years after the commencement of that prayer vigil, this small Moravian community had sent 300 missionaries to the ends of the earth.

The Modern Missionary movement began following William Carey, who challenged the church to “*expect great things from God and*

attempt great things for God". He did so himself by valiantly bringing the gospel to India.

This resulted in the establishment of 26 churches and 126 schools, the translation of scripture into 44 languages, the production of grammars and dictionaries – which were essential in learning the scripture - establishing a seminary, medical missions, agricultural reforms, and savings banks.

The Great Century

In the history of Missions, the 19th Century was called the *Great Century* because for the first time, the gospel was reaching 'all countries and continents'. Missions historian Pierson notes:

"At the time of William Carey, there were probably only a few hundred Protestant missionaries in the world. However, in a century, by 1900, there were 15,000 European and American Protestant missionaries throughout the world. However, the number of missionaries does not measure the magnitude of the modern mission movement. It must be measured by the growth of the church"⁶.

The Great Century would lay hopes for completion of the Great Commission.

The Edinburgh Conference 1910

John Mott, the American Methodist layman leading the YMCA and the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM), had a growing international reputation among Protestant missions. He was convinced that the success of 19th Century Missions could eventually determine the completion of the task. He called for an international gathering of Western and Northern Missions organization leaders to Edinburgh, Scotland in 1910.

Mott generated the grand vision and energy in the preparatory process for Edinburgh 1910, through his publication in 1900 entitled 'The Evangelization of the World in this Generation', which become the watchword for the conference. Some of the significant facts he pointed out were:

- The whole of the inhabited earth is known at last, and is open to receive the Gospel.

- Unprecedented facilities for world travel existed, making it possible to travel around the world five times in a year. (Little did he dream that within a little more than half a century it would be possible to orbit the earth five times in a day!)
- The Christian church had resources in terms of manpower, possessed money, and machinery to achieve the task of world Evangelization.

The criteria for participation at this Conference was that a missionary society or board must have been supporting foreign missionaries. On that basis, 176 missionary societies and boards – 59 from North America, 58 from the Continent, 47 from the United Kingdom, and 12 from South Africa and Australia, sent delegations totalling 1200 delegates. The grand opening of the conference began with messages read from the king of England and the president of the United States; and Theodore Roosevelt in his message states:

“For the first time in four centuries, Christians of every name come together without renouncing their several convictions, or sacrificing their several principles... in an effort to combine the strength of all the Churches in an effort to Christianize humanity”⁷

8 Task Forces of Edinburgh 1910 Conference.

1. Carrying the gospel to all the non-Christian world.
2. The gospel in the mission field.
3. Education in relation to the Christianization of national life.
4. The missionary message in relation to non-Christian religions.
5. The preparation of missionaries.
6. The home base of missions.
7. Missions and governments.
8. Co-operation and the promotion of unity.

Mott, who was born 13 years after Gaudi in 1865, commonly shared their outlook and objectives. Although they were architects of differing fields, their grand designs resembled each other. Mott’s summarized 350-page paper at the Edinburgh Conference, presented a grandiose plan and a sense of urgency to finish the task in a specific period. It is noted that:

“So far as Protestantism is concerned, no event was more definitive for the emerging shape of Christianity in the twentieth

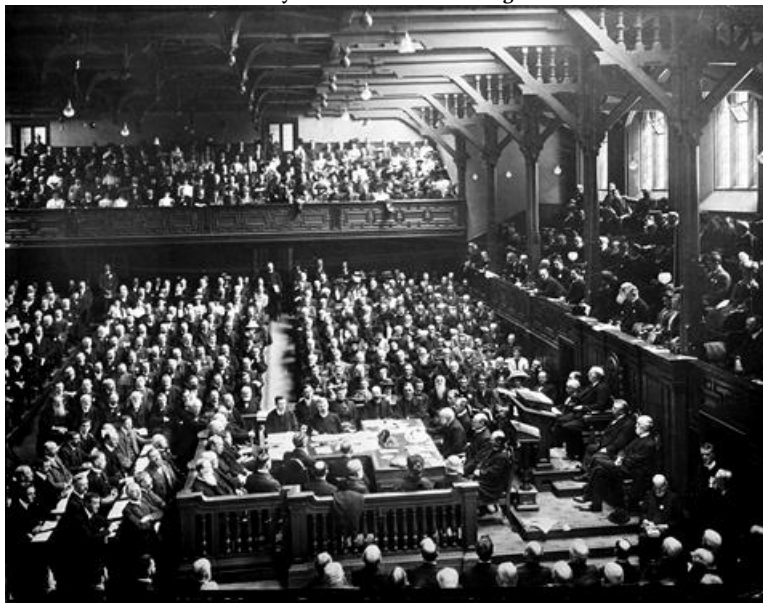
century than Edinburgh 1910. This epoch-making vision of the Church as a truly global missionary community has continued to inspire subsequent generations, making it an enduring point of reference for those who hear Christ's call to a mission that extends to the ends of the earth"⁸.

Mott's convincing passion in influencing key participants of Edinburgh was evident as it is reported that:

"The conference must have been electrified when the Archbishop called for missions to be made central in the plans, policy and prayers of the Church. And went on to say that it may well be that if that come true, there be some standing here tonight who shall not taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God come with power."⁹

The Archbishop too supported Mott's belief that missions should be central to the church and that "The End" can be achieved in their generation.

World Missionary Conference - Edinburgh 1910



Chapter 3

A New End?

“After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?” Gal 3:3

The New Movement

Unknown to Mott and leaders of Edinburgh, God was also doing something different behind the scenes four years before and after Edinburgh. For the Mission that started in the power of Pentecost must be concluded, *“not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord” (Zechariah 4: 6).*

Azusa Street: Four years before Edinburgh

This is an account of what happened four years before Edinburgh:



One of the focal points of another emerging movement was known as the Azusa Street Revival (1906-09) which was an unlikely location for an event that would change the face of Christianity. The Revival erupted in the newly formed congregation, meeting at the small and run-down Apostolic Faith Mission at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California, and a mild-mannered, African-American Holiness preacher, William J. Seymour, preached racial reconciliation and the restoration of Biblical spiritual gifts.

The Revival soon became a local sensation, and attracted thousands of curious seekers and pilgrims from around the world. The revival at Azusa Street catapulted Pentecostalism before a worldwide audience¹⁰, and for the first time, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was poured out on hungry people. Those from Protestant churches were seeking to live and proclaim the power of the Spirit to people near and far.

Hot Springs, Arkansas - Four Years after Edinburgh

Yet, in another location in 1914, the Azusa fires had rapidly spread and there began another movement, which would be the catalyst to fulfilling the Great Commission.



The approximately 300 delegates to the first General Council represented a variety of independent churches and networks of churches, who recognized the need for greater organization and accountability and for taking the gospel to the nations. The founding fathers and mothers of the Assemblies of God met in Hot Springs, Arkansas, USA, on April 2-12, 1914 to promote unity and doctrinal stability and especially to coordinate the mission enterprise to take the gospel to the nations.¹¹

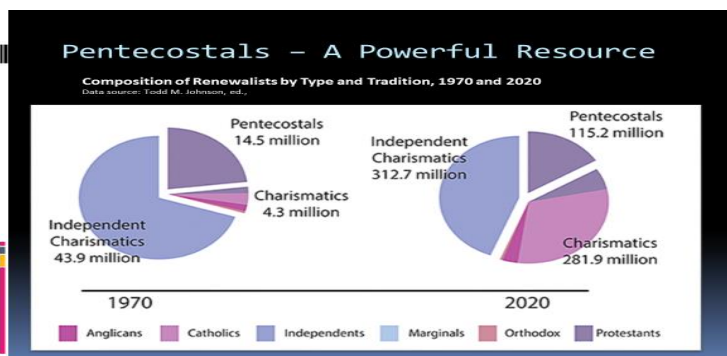
Their simple passion and obedience was evident in how, without any formal training, many missionaries boldly ventured out to the mission fields. Some even believed that speaking in tongues was the empowerment primarily for taking the gospel to people of other languages.

Sending missionaries to foreign nations has been central to the identity of the Assemblies of God, which have resulted in a continuing growth at home and abroad. At the centenary of the US Assemblies of God in 2014, they claimed a constituency of over 3 million adherents, 12,849 churches, 36,884 ministers and 2,847

foreign missionaries. The World Assemblies of God Fellowship, number more than 67 million and 350,000 churches worldwide. However, at this present stage, it is pertinent to evaluate and question whether Assemblies of God was raised up merely to establish the AG denomination and churches around the nations, or to be a missionary movement to ‘finish the task’? Only this will determine whether AG will would play ‘another episode’ in missions or will be the ‘final episode’.

A Third Force

In May 1947, the first Pentecostal World Conference convened in Zurich, Switzerland, when leaders from across the continents met under the theme “By One Spirit We Are All Baptized In to One Body.” This gave birth to the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) and from the outset; there was strong emphasis on fellowship, cooperation, and collaboration in world evangelization. In 1958, the president of Union Seminary, Henry Van Dusen, called Pentecostals the “Third Force in Christendom.”¹²



Affirming that, missions’ statistician David Barrett reported that 601 million people were involved in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement in 2008, that there are 11,000 Pentecostal denominations and three thousand independent Charismatic denominations in the world!

What happened to Edinburgh 1910?

Sadly, the first item of Edinburgh's agenda – 'Carrying the Gospel to all the non-Christian World' – was replaced by the last item, 'Unity and Cooperation'. This deviation resulted in the forming of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948, giving priority to ecumenism who eventually embraced liberal theology and higher criticism. Mott's primary objective of completing the task had '*to be continued...*'

Cosmo-centric, Christo-centric, Church-centric, or Eccentric?

In grappling with the question of priority as to what should come first, the Church or the Mission, various views were adopted by the leaders of the WCC in defining 'Missio Dei' at the Willingen Conference in 1952. *Missio Dei*, being a Latin theological term that can be translated as the "Mission of God" refers to the work of the church as being part of God's work. So, the "church's mission is a subset of a larger whole mission that it is both part of God's mission to the world and not the entirety of God's work in the world"¹³. However, the WCC replaced the centrality of the church in mission with an enlarged perspective, allowing interpretation of world events as determining factors for *Missio Dei*. As a result, two major concepts polarized the Protestant church in the 1950s.

Cosmo-centric:

The first was of the WCC mainline churches' view that God's mission is in the cosmos (Cosmo-centric) and therefore, not confined simply to Christ's work on the cross, the gospel or the church. Dutch missiologist, Hoekendijk, supported this stating that God is at work in the cosmos, the world, and therefore His work includes all activities in the secular world 'over and above the church' including other religions. Therefore, evangelism is not the exclusive means of God's mission. Because of this view, evangelism in the ecumenical churches practically disappeared from their missions' agenda and thus, the *Great Omission*.

Christo-centric:

However, the Evangelical movement, which believed that Christ is the center of God's mission (Christo-centric), affirmed the gospel's vital role in God's mission. Therefore, they came out from the ecumenically aligned World Council of Churches and the missions movements, such as the Lausanne Movement, was born.

Today, the Lausanne Movement for World Evangelization is the largest and most dynamic Christian movement with renewed vision and energy. Kusmic notes that "Lausanne has spawned multitudes of regional and national congresses, cooperative projects, and missionary movements in which Evangelicals and Pentecostals embrace each other in the task of advancing the kingdom of God and accelerating evangelization of the world"¹⁴.

Church-Centric:

However, the evangelical churches eventually became extremely 'church centered' (ecclesia-centrism) assuming that God's mission is always through the church, resulting in church activities and programs taking priority over *Missio Dei*. Evangelical missiologists warned that *Missio Dei* must bring a correction to this view by putting God, not the church or denomination, at the center of missions. "Mission is the originator of the church, not the other way around".

Naturally, the Pentecostals were also influenced by this, and much of their focus and activity revolved around the local church; having missions only as another department of the Church.

However, the AG USA as early as 1977, had published their theology of "the Church and its Missions." This theology of missions did not incarnate effectively in the 'majority world' AG nations. Instead, it was primarily interpreted as 'home missions' activities for evangelism and church planting in their own nation,

and not cross-culturally. It is important to bring a shift in this theology in every church to bring an understanding to the fact that the church finds its purpose of existence in Missions, and not the other way around. It is said that, “The church exists by mission as a fire exists by burning.” Missio dei implied a shift from a church-centered mission to a mission-centered church.

Un-evangelized, Unconverted, Unreached

Most Christians are sadly mistaken presuming that all these 3 words mean the same. Let us define them to make the distinction:

1. Un-evangelized

Those who have not been yet evangelized

Evangelism is:

“to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord, He now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gifts of the Spirit to all who repent and believe.”

Goal of Evangelism:

“By all available means and at the earliest possible time, that every person will have the opportunity to hear, understand, and receive the Good News”.

(Lausanne Congress definitions)

2. Unconverted

Since all evangelized people may not respond to the gospel, it leaves the opportunity to be ‘unconverted.’ Most churches continue to repeatedly reach the unconverted!

‘No one has the right to hear the gospel twice, when there are millions who have not heard it once!’ (Oswald J Smith)

3. Unreached

Unreached people are those that live in regions where there are no churches and have no access to the evangelical gospel in their culture, and will never have opportunity of being evangelized. This is primarily due to the church being ignorant and being uninvolved with them.

(Ralph Winter)

Once Unreached:

Every one of us once belonged to what was called an ‘Unreached People Group’. However, eventually the Gospel was preached to our People Group, the Bible was translated to our language, Bible Schools were established, national ministers were trained and ordained, worship songs and other resources were produced for our nation. The truth is, it was the Protestant missions that laid a foundation for Pentecostals in these nations.


We should not take these for granted, when there are over 3000 People Groups who are nowhere close to where we are.

If you were an Unreached People!



- Not saved.
- Not know God, Christ, Holy Spirit.
- No Bible in your language.
- No Church.
- No discipleship.
- No language.
- No Literature,
- No Worship. No songs in your language.
- No Sunday school, Youth ministries.
- No media, no CDS. No books,
- No Sunday school, Youth ministries.
- No Bible School,
- No Training, No Leadership.
- No vision to reach your people.
- You are surrounded by Christians, Churches, Pastors, evangelists,
- No One Cares for You!

A church or organization must first assess the capacity to reach an UPGs in terms of the resources available.



People Groups without any resources to reach them:

- 986 have no written scriptures
- 1,747 have no oral scriptures
- 1,228 have no Jesus Film
- 2,437 have no faith/evangelistic film
- 2,120 have no radio broadcast available
- 758 have no gospel recordings.

Look at the barriers why people are unreached:

CULTURAL BARRIERS: persecution, closed to change, Christianity viewed as a “foreign” religion.

GEOGRAPHIC BARRIERS: remote, harsh climate, difficult access, or nomadic.

LINGUISTIC BARRIERS: illiteracy, no scripture in their language, unwritten language, terminology confusion.

POLITICAL BARRIERS: restricted access, evangelism forbidden, hostile environment (including war).

RELIGIOUS BARRIERS: restrictive religious climate, no freedom of religion, persecution.

UNRECOGNIZED: believers unaware of the need or the group, small in size, prejudice, isolated from the society in which they live.

Key reason to be unreached:

As salt and light, the church must have proximity and contact to influence these people. The following statistics shows how distant the Church is from the Unreached:

- Only 10% of Muslims in Asia personally know a Christian, 70% of Muslims in North America know a Christian.
- Possibly only 15% of all Muslims worldwide personally know a Christian.
- Asia is the most isolated continent with less than 20% of the more than 4.5 billion people claiming to know a Christian.
- 81% of all Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists do not know a Christian.

Eccentric Missions

The dictionary defines eccentric as: *‘Deviating from the recognized or customary character, practice, etc.; irregular; erratic; peculiar; odd.’* Any Pastor laboring for his flock saying, ‘I will build my Church’ is only usurping Christ’s role and abandoning their Christ-assigned task of Missions in the Great Commission. This confusion of role-play hinders the work of Mission immensely.

The Pentecostal stream which is intended to be the prophetic fulfillment of Ezekiel 47 of becoming a river bringing healing to the Nations (Missions) can be dammed – creating a lake - which provides sufficient entertainment and pleasure for self-seeking believers. Some are comfortable with the lifestyle of worship, fellowship and showmanship, blatantly abandoning the call to Missions.

It will be tragic if this Movement ushered in by Spirit's wind, to drive the 'sail ship' of Missions to cross oceans reaching nations becomes a cruise ship; content, self-sufficient and lost in the sea of complacency.

When the Cruise Ship Costa Concordia with 4000 passengers sank in January 2012, after hitting underwater rocks off the Mediterranean coast, it took almost 2 years to salvage it! Salvaging churches who are off the 'Missions course' will be an even more difficult task.

Missions Prayer

As mentioned earlier, the modern Missionary movement was a direct result of the Moravian Prayer meeting which lasted for 100 years! Because, they believed that prayer was prescribed by Jesus as the primary means to finish the task of Missions:

“Pray therefore to the Lord of the Harvest’ to send laborers for the harvest.” (Matt 9: 37)

However, today's prayer meetings are focused on personal and selfish needs instead of prayer for the Kingdom advancement.

Jesus chastised the Jews when cleansing the Temple by saying: *"Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations (ethne)? But you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN."* (Matt 21:13)

What infuriated Jesus was not the merchandize, but the 'space' they occupied; for it was the court reserved for the Gentiles to pray that was occupied by these robbers. We Pentecostals are quick to emphasize about people robbing God by not tithing (Malachi 3:8),

yet, conveniently allow prayer meetings to be a ‘den of robbers,’ by excluding “Prayer for all Nations” from the prayer agenda.

As noted before, being eccentric is to be ‘deviating and erratic.’ Has the Church deviated from the primary reason for being, which is to Finish the Task of Missions?

Bishop Newbegin states that: “Mission is not just something that the church does; it is something that is done by the Spirit, who is himself the witness, who changes both the world and the church, who always goes before the church on its missionary journey.”¹⁵

Statistics That Reflect Our Attitudes:

- 91% of all Christian outreach/evangelism does not target non-Christians, but targets other Christians.
- There are 430,000 missionaries from all branches of Christendom. Only between 2 and 3% of these missionaries work among unreached peoples.
- Of the 240,000 Protestant missionaries:
 - 74% work among nominal Christians
 - 8% among tribal peoples
 - 6% Muslims
 - 4% Non-religious/atheists
 - 3% among Buddhists
 - 2% Hindus
 - 1% Jews.

The Outcome:

In the last 40 years, over 1 billion people have died who have never heard of Jesus, and around 30 million people this year will perish without hearing the message of salvation.

Chapter 4 The Real End

“...and then the end will come.” Matthew 24: 14

The Discovery

My introduction to ‘The End’ occurred almost at the beginning of my ministry. In 1977, I was travelling in India as a young preacher enthusiastic to preach the Gospel literally to ‘every creature’. In those days, the most common means of ‘fulfilment of the Great Commission’ was distributing tracts to everyone possible, conducting crusades, soul winning by sharing the four spiritual laws etc.

However, during this visit someone told me about a primitive tribal group living in the jungles of Central India and my curiosity was stirred to reach them with the Gospel. After travelling for many days with another Indian brother, I arrived in one of their villages. Here we were exposed to a lifestyle totally foreign to us; semi-naked tribal people who were hunters and gatherers, totally cut off from civilization without any need from the outside world for their existence; except for salt!



My first shock came as I tried to share the Gospel with them, and all my methods and experiences in Evangelism would not work here! However passionate I was, neither of us understood each other except for a few words in sign language. Although I was thrilled that I could at least contact these people, I came away terribly disappointed with my failure to reach them.

These people are called the Gonds, and they belong to a large Unreached People Group numbering over 14 Million people. This visit would haunt me often as I continued my ministry as a pastor and a national leader, preoccupied with ‘eccentric Missions,’ faithfully ‘building my church.’ But this visit would help me later to understand another revolutionary idea about Missions: “The Last Peoples”.

The Real End! The Ethnos

Some years ago, I was in a Missions Conference and the speaker was missiologist Ralph Winter. This was the first time I heard him refer to ‘Unreached People Groups’. I always associated the term “Unreached’ with the un-evangelized because the Great Commission to me was in terms of reaching ‘people’ of ‘all countries’. But I never understood about ‘People Groups’. He also highlighted a very specific point which Jesus used to indicate when the ‘real End’ would be. This shattered my eschatology about the ‘signs of the times’.

*“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and **then the end** will come. (Matthew 24: 14)*

This is not just a sign of the End times. This is ‘The End’!

Three keys in this verse must happen before the End!

- a. This Gospel of the Kingdom **Preached** in all the World. [Greek: kērýssō]
- b. As a **Witness** [Greek: ‘Martyrion’]
- c. To all **Nations** [Greek: ‘Ethnos.’]

According to Winter,

“A close look at the end of this verse (Mat 24: 14) says a lot about what we should watch and work for at the end of the

age. Jesus says that as the missionary task is completed, there will be "a witness to all the nations." By "witness" Jesus was saying that the "Gospel of the kingdom" will be established in open view throughout entire human communities. The Gospel of the kingdom is Christ prevailing over evil, liberating people so that they can live obediently free under His mastery and blessing...What better exhibit of God's kingdom than a community of people who are living under Christ's Kingship? That's why we should aim at church planting movements within every people.¹⁶

When Jesus used the word "Nations" he was not referring to 'Countries' recognized by the UN as we would think today. Instead the wording he chose (the Greek word 'Ethne') points to the ethnicities, languages and the extended families which constitute the peoples of the earth which numbers to be over 16,000 according to some estimates!

I was also shocked to read in Galatians 3: 8 that Missions did not originate with the 4 Gospels, but almost 2000 years previously when God first 'preached the Gospel' to Abraham:

*"And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the **gospel to Abraham** beforehand, saying, 'In you **all the nations** shall be blessed.'"*

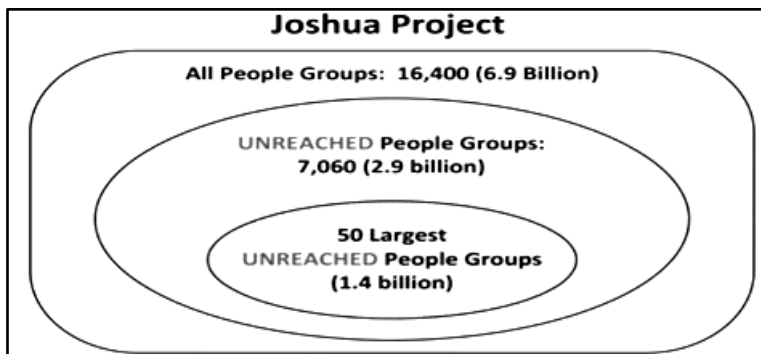
Missions, which dates back over 4,000 years intended to bless the 'nations' is becoming a reality on earth as never before in history.

The Ethne: The People Groups

The Term **People Groups** was introduced in the late 1970's by Winter, who realized that the Great Commission is more than attempting to reach individuals with the Gospel. Later In 1982, mission leaders hammered out a useful definition for a "people group" as: "The largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church-planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance."

Who are these peoples? Although Jesus did not provide a list, it has been possible to research and evaluate them only in the last 100 years. We will know we are finished only when a visible testimony

to the Gospel of the kingdom - a church planting movement - has been established within every people.



Pentecostals and the Unreached

In writing on the above subject, AG Missionary Al Johnson states that: “The first order of business in a discussion of Pentecostal mission and cooperation in taking the gospel to unreached people groups (UPGs) is to clearly define what is meant by “unreached,” “reached,” and “people group.”¹⁷

The following shows distinct definitions for us to understand where our focus should be to finish the task.

A People Group

A significantly large sociological grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity or one another because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation, et cetera, or combinations of these

Unreached People Group.

An unreached people group is defined as a people or people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize the rest of its members without outside (cross-cultural) assistance.

Reached People Group:

Then to be 'reached group' must have "indigenous community of believing Christians that has adequate numbers of resources to evangelize their own group without outside assistance". It is a long-term commitment to sowing seeds to eventually result in a 'church planting movement' within the community to reach their own people.

The Joshua Project defines the unreached/least-reached world as anywhere less than 2 percent Evangelical Christian and less than 5 percent of any form of Christian faith present.

Why Pentecostals are hesitant about adopting the UPG's Strategy

I once gave a presentation on the UPGs in a Pentecostal Missions consultation and it was quickly shot down! Some felt it was a new fad borrowed from the Evangelical Missiology and that church-centric missions were the key to reaching the world. However, living in the Global South surrounded by a large number of these people groups, it is a reality one cannot ignore.

Firstly, our hesitancy results from our desire for instant results due to our belief in the supernatural. However, Jesus noted that this work must be hidden, or 'obscure' devoid of publicity, until its impact is made evident.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." (Matthew 13:33)

Secondly, since Pentecostals believe in signs and wonders, they try to substitute the principle of sowing and reaping with the supernatural. Sowing among people groups requires hard and continuous labour for long periods.

Thirdly, our method of supporting UPG work is not sustainable. Pentecostals generally support a church-planting effort for 3 – 5 years maximum, and wean them to live by faith! Missions does not happen this way. Carey spent 7 years in India before his first convert. Adonarim Judson spent most of his life translating the Bible to the Burmese language. He laboured 6 years to get his first convert and 12 years to get 18! Two centuries later, Myanmar has the 3rd largest number of Baptist believers in the world, after the USA and India!

Rev. David Mohan, the Chairman for the Southern Asia Assemblies of God assigned me the role of mobilizing Missions in our national churches. While he is known by many as a pastor of the largest AG Church in South Asia with a church of over 50,000 in Chennai, India, very few know of his passion for Missions, having sent over 200 missionaries cross-culturally even to UPGs! It is said that a church is not measured by its ‘seating’ capacity but by its ‘sending’ capacity!

However, after several disappointing attempts I almost resigned due to the initial apathetic attitudes of pastors, whose local church vision had blinded them regarding Missions. Rev. Mohan would keep affirming that “Missions is a long-term call” and that I must be patient.

Engagement with the UPGs.

Four elements considered essential in when a UPG is engaged:

1. Apostolic effort in residence. Visionary leadership.
 2. Commitment to work in the local language and culture.
 3. Commitment to long-term ministry.
 4. Sowing in a manner consistent with the goal of seeing a church-planting movement (CPM)
- “A people group is engaged when a church-planting strategy, consistent with Evangelical faith and practice, is under implementation.” - **International Mission Board (IMB)**

Once I inquired from an indigenous Indian Missionary working with an unreached tribe how long it took to pioneer a church planting movement. He said 40 years! His whole Life was given for one tribe? Certainly, he was not Pentecostal, because our denomination would not support an effort for so long.

In 1926, when Sagrada Cathedral's architect Gaudi died, he was buried in that church vault, completing only a quarter of his work. Today Pastors need not be buried alive under the vaults of their churches trying to finish something Jesus never asked them to do anyway; 'building my church'.

Some years back I was assigned a church which had a history of problems. Due to a major split and 2 law suits, most people had left having no pastor, no money and no vision! I realized the key to change was the last issue; vision! From the very inception, I gave them the Missions vision by converting a storeroom into a prayer room, and placing a world map there encouraging prayer for the nations. Then by taking a monthly Missions offering, we adopted and supported a missionary, and eventually sending a team to an 'Unreached People Group.' This was not done because we had money; but because of vision! Today as a Superintendent, I would prescribe any church with problems to be a Missions church!

How Far do you need to go?

200 years ago, Carey overcame the obstacle of the 'distance of the heathen', by taking a 6-month perilous journey at sea endangering his and his family's life. Yet, ignorance and complacency would be an even greater obstacle to overcome today than distance.

Globalization and migration have brought these 'people groups' right to our cities and it is important to identify such individuals and disciple them with a long-term plan to send them to their own people. Crowds are naturally intoxicating to any Pastor – yet, people groups need to be reached!

Chapter 5 Speed up the End

“...looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,” 2 Peter 3:12.

Every marathon runner preserves his energy for the last lap to speed up and win. Missions is no exception!

Pyramids to Churches - Why Haste!

Although the Sagrada Cathedral is quite modern, begun in 1883, it has taken longer to build than the Great Pyramids of Giza, which took only 20 years to build 4000 years ago! The Sagrada will take over 146 years to finish! Yet, Gaudi showed no haste, saying, “My Client is not in a hurry.” In Missions, we too have quoted our Client’s words as an excuse simply to justify the ‘waiting game.’ *“That day and hour no one knows... but My Father only.” (Mat 24: 36)*

Having my energies sapped by excessive activities in the local church, adopting this passive attitude of indefinite waiting seems the safest thing to do. This attitude was confronted by an opposing view presented in 2 Peter 3:9-12, and suddenly, the lights came on in my cinema! Another reality dawned!

“...looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,”

- Why the Delay? *“The Lord ... is longsuffering ... not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance”.*
- What do we do till then? Wait!
- Just waiting? No! We also should be ‘hastening’! *“...looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God”*

‘Hastening’

Hastening is something I had totally missed in my passive waiting. You may be surprised that Gaudi’s statement, “My Client is not in a hurry,” is right from the Bible! Look at Jesus’ warning in *Matthew 24: 46-50:*

“Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him ...”

You find Gaudi’s attitude right here! Jesus warns here of 2 kinds of servants and attitudes in the ‘End Times.’

Doing Servant.

Hastening attitude: “*Master, when he comes, will find so doing.*”

Note that the Master did not come for a ‘waiting’ servant, but for a ‘doing’ one.

Waiting (Evil) Servant.

Waiting attitude: “*My master is delaying his coming...*”

Waiting is related to time (delay); it is waiting instead of being active in ‘finishing the task’.

Why did Jesus call the waiting servant ‘evil’? Simply because he was not interested in partnering with the Master to engage in the Task. Instead he detached himself from it, with a selfish ambition to dominate, abuse, excess, and compromise. Sadly, even today, more damage is done to the church by leaders who merely ‘occupy privileged positions’ and ignore the Task of Missions.

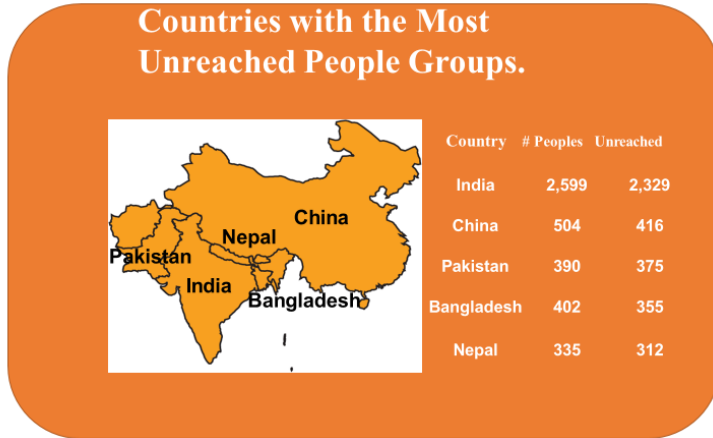
The Churches’ call is to send. Although the words ‘Missions’ or ‘Missionary’ are not mentioned in the Bible, the word ‘*apostello*’ refers to ‘sending’ out to fulfil His Mission just as Jesus ‘sent’ the twelve out.

The church in Antioch responded to the call to ‘send’ which initiated the first missionary journeys in Acts. This church was willing to pray, hear from the Spirit, and send out their best to be involved in Missions!

A Church that does not ‘Send’ - will End!

People Blindness

My zeal for seeking 'End Times Signs' has dwindled now. For, I live in Southern Asia where my unspoken prayer every night is: "Lord Jesus, please don't return tonight." For, if He does, the eternal destiny of almost 90% of 1.5 billion people in my region is at stake!



Joshua Project lists that 4 out of the 5 largest Unreached People Groups in the World are living right here: India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Although for 6 years I have been creating awareness of UPGs among AG Churches, I see this paradox: These churches are surrounded by these very Unreached groups; yet they are totally unaware of what Jesus said about them as Ethne!

Winter calls this 'people blindness.'

"These are precisely the type of groups and situations where existing churches manifest "people blindness," being unable to see past their own cultural walls and prejudices in order to reach out to a group that is different than them."¹⁸

Seeing Men as Trees Walking

To confront this blindness, we published a book titled "People Groups Strategy in South Asia' for AG Churches written by an Indian Missiologist Dr. D. Ponraj. In the foreword, I used the

common English idiom, "You can't see the forest for the trees," to convey the idea of pre-occupation with 'people' and missing the big picture of 'People Groups.' Yet, Jesus presented the unique strategy of discipling "All Ethne" to cause a mass people-movement in to the Kingdom of God to 'hasten' His coming at the end of the age!

Once, when Jesus healed a blind man He inquired whether he could see, and the man said: "*I see men like trees, walking.*" (Mark 8: 24). Since partial healing could only bring a confused vision, Jesus laid hands on him again. My prayer is that we fully see the "forest of Unreached People Groups" clearly.

Do you see clearly?



As one of the mysteries of Sagrada Cathedral, you might see a 4x4 magic square of 15 numbers in the passion façade. Take a moment to add up all numbers horizontally or vertically in any row: what do you get? You are

right, it is 33! The age of Christ when he was crucified and gave us the Great Commission.

Why Gaudi put it there is still a mystery, but it has a clear message for us: In Missions, everything we do must add up to the objectives of the Great Commission and we must follow 'His Strategy' to finish His Task. What if they don't add up?

"...for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is" (1 Cor 3: 13).

Make Disciples of all Nations

Here is another miscalculation in Missions: 'Converting or Discipling?' As I previously highlighted, plans for Global Evangelism are primarily to 'convert' everyone to Christ. However, a clear read of Great Commission in Matt 28 says:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations..."

Is it to make Disciples ‘from’ all Nations (individuals) or ‘of’ all Nations’ (corporate)? Does it mean that we should disciple individuals or disciple a People group? Commenting on the Greek words used here it is noted that:

“Jesus’ primary meaning here is, ‘disciple all the Gentiles’ or ‘disciple all the pagans / heathen / unbelievers’. This would have been an exceptionally radical statement to Jesus’ apostles, and the Book of Acts testifies to their slowness in accepting it.”¹⁹

Equally, it seems radical for today’s church to embrace those outside their cultural and ethnic boundaries to focus on discipling UPGs.

The Missionary Movement

When I first began mobilizing for Missions, someone said, “Missions must become a ‘Movement’ in the AG Southern Asia.” I did not really understand what he meant.

However, I read in Gandhi’s biography about the ‘Salt March,’ which became the testing point for the Indian people’s capacity to become a freedom movement. When the British government imposed a ‘salt tax’ on Indian people, prohibiting production of local salt, Gandhi organized a protest in 1930. He marched with 79 of his disciples from his Ashram (home) in Ahmedabad to the Dandi Beach to mobilize public support! This 24-day march covering 240 miles eventually became a Movement as thousands of people rallied together in support of his cause.

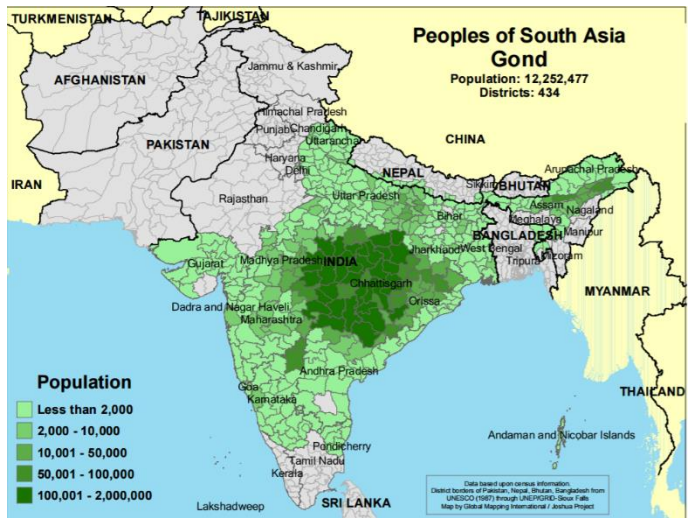
It is possible for a Holy Spirit led ‘missionary movement’ to rise in AG churches as from the valley of ‘dead bones’ in Ezekiel 37. At present, AG India has sent over 400 Cross-cultural missionaries from the south to the north and has planted hundreds of churches among the unreached. In Bangladesh, the 3rd most populous Moslem nation in the world, the AG movement there has planted hundreds of churches among their own, and are sending Missionaries targeting Moslem People groups in neighbouring nations. Nepal has a dynamic missionary potential with churches

passionately praying and sending. Sri Lanka sends Missionaries overseas from AG churches, as well as, through a collective Missions sending agency to South Asia and the Middle East. Bhutan (Buddhist) and Maldives (Moslem) are without an official church, prohibited by the government. They are considered Unreached!

The Surprise! The Gonds

In 2014, we convened a Missions Congress attended by 500 key AG leaders from Southern Asian Nations to strategize how to reach this Region’s unreached. I challenged AG Churches to ‘Adopt’ (see next chapter) at least 100 people groups; to create awareness, prayer, support, and send missionaries from their churches. However, I had my own apprehensions as I was treading an unfamiliar and daunting path.

Here, I shared my own story of disappointment about visiting the Gond’s tribe way back in 1977. But soon after my session, a pastor approached me and to my surprise he said he was working among this people group in Central India! As I mentioned the places I visited in 1977, he responded, “I minister to these very people in the very same area having AG churches among them. If you visit me, I will be glad to take you there.”



A year ago, I visited this Pastor. After almost 40 years I had the joy of seeing Churches among the Gonds people, and even had a pastor's seminar for them! Although they were semi naked and uncivilized 40 years ago, the joy and excitement of seeing these very people; beautifully dressed, worshipping in an AG church, reading their Bibles, singing praises to the Lord - was beyond words. The only reminder of their past now are the tattoo marks still on their faces, yet, radiating God's glory and transformational power.



My apprehension about reaching the UPGs was gone, and I was reminded that my first adventure to the Gonds was not in vain. This experience strengthened my resolve to reach the UPGs in Asia, and I write this book because of my conviction that you who read this will commit yourself to Jesus' Strategy to reach the 'Ethne'. I trust that the AG Councils in the Global South, who are surrounded by Millions of lost people, will respond with fresh vision to fulfil Matthew 24: 14.

Chapter 6

‘The End’ is up to You!

“but he that endures to the end...” Matthews 10:22.

What do we do?

Reviewing from a South Asian perspective at the Centenary of Edinburgh in 2010, Ponraj writes,

“In the Indian context, the dream of Edinburgh 1910 was kept alive by the national Church as it gave birth to church-based voluntary and faith missions...”²⁰

Adding to this Satyavrata notes:

“Emergence of indigenous Pentecostal mission agencies in India is a distinct feature of Pentecostalism in the sub-continent, related to the development and growth of indigenous missions. A study in 1988, revealed that there were 57 Pentecostal-Charismatic mission agencies with 3661 missionaries...”²¹

Following from the Missions Congress in 2014, I convened a consultation for AG Pastors who were committed to adopting UPGs. I approached some of the Evangelical Missions leaders who were involved with UPGs for help because of the limited availability of Pentecostal strategies. We learned from these leaders of indigenous Missions movements about their successful endeavours to reach the unreached. I realized how far behind we are in this effort. I received a most surprising gesture at this meeting. One of the mission leaders offered the AG a group of churches which they had successfully reached - including the congregations and property. When I asked why, he simply said: “Our goal is to reach people groups who are unreached - your (AG) goal is to plant and grow churches!” This important distinction challenged me.

The 2 Nets and Networking

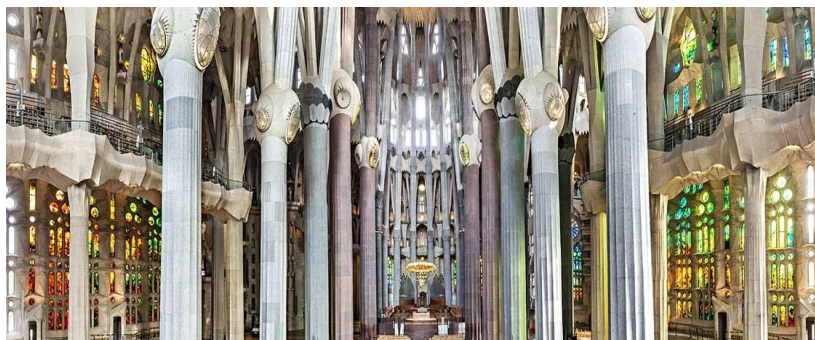
Jesus called His Disciples who were working on nets, because He knew ‘networking’ was vital for His Mission. I live by the sea where I watch fishing boats come in with their catch. I have observed that different kinds of fish are caught in different types of nets. The AG as a successful Evangelizing and Church Planting movement

generally uses a 'broad net' to attract every type of fish, if they can be converted to fill the seats in their growing churches.

However, these Mission agencies use a specific net, intended to reach the unreached ethnic groups. Therefore, the use of multiple nets from collaborative organizations is vital to demonstrate the Gospel of the Kingdom to every 'Ethne.'

To question whether the Mission of AG is primarily to plant AG churches, or to reach every 'Ethne' is vital at this time. For a limited net can break when drawing a miraculous catch!

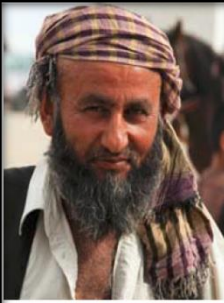
One of the unique features of Gaudi's architecture in the Sagrada was that it had no straight lines. According to Gaudí, straight lines did not exist in nature and therefore the temple – which reflects the nature, life and death - should not be constructed with straight lines. As a symbol of Nature, the columns of the Sagrada Familia are built in a tree-shape to support the whole monument.²²



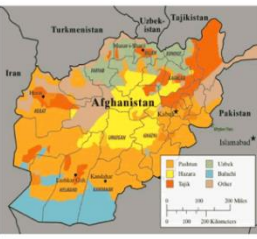
Christ's Mission cannot be achieved solely by a single organization's plan which is straight and fixed. Mission is not a program; it is Christ's life flowing to humanity through human agents requiring openness, flexibility, cooperation and humility.


A Bitter Lesson

I was once a 'straight-line' mission's leader, who thought I knew it all. About 15 years ago, in a Missions Conference in the Philippines; I met some of the first (may be the only) Pentecostal advocate for UPGs. They passionately appealed to those present to 'Adopt the Pashtun People Group.' I laughed to myself as I did not take it seriously, although I politely accepted their material which I never read. However, looking back I now realize that at that point, it was not the Pashtuns but I who was 'unreachable!'



Pashtun, Northern of Afghanistan





People Name	Pashtun, Northern
Country	Afghanistan
10/40 Window	Yes
Population	12,485,000
World Population	47,089,000
Language	Pashto, Northern
Religion	Islam
Bible	Complete
Online Audio NT	No
Jesus Film	Yes
Audio Recordings	Yes
Christ Followers	Less than 2 %
Status	Unreached
Progress Level	1.1

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"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

It took me almost another 10 years to see the valuable fruit of their efforts. I was in Peshawar, Pakistan - bordering Afghanistan-sharing about UGP's in an AG conference. I was humbled by the Lord when I met Pastors who were themselves 'Pashtuns,' wanting to reach the Pashtun people of Afghanistan! Never underestimate the value of passion!

Stages of Reaching an UPG:

The first step in reaching UPGs involves a multi-stage process of 'adopting' them. Your church or nation could 'Adopt' such People Groups in partnership with others committed to the same objective.

Stage 1	“Reported”	The people group is brought to the attention of a Church/Agency
Stage 2	“Selected”	A denomination or a church accepts responsibility to mobilize churches and Christians to adopt this people group.
Stage 3	“Adopted”	One, or several churches or fellowship groups (Youth, Women’s group, Sunday School class, etc.) has made the establishment of a strong church among the unreached people group a priority and supports them with prayers and finances.
Stage 4	“Engaged”	The work has begun and cross-cultural workers are “on site” with the goal of establishing a “viable, indigenous church-planting movement.
Stage 5	“Reached”	A strong, indigenous church-planting movement is established that is capable of evangelizing the rest of the group without outside help.

Adoption on a People Group is one of the best ways for churches to be personally and effectively engage in reaching them.

The following results shows how this becomes very effective:

ADOPTION RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An informed and motivated Congregations. (As opposed to one Missionary trying to motivate Churches) ✓ Increased corporate prayer for Missions. (Pre – coordinated Prayer as opposed to post- sending prayer) ✓ Greater commitment in support and care. (as opposed to few interested people) ✓ Increased financial giving overall. ✓ The greater participation in ‘Sending’ ✓ People raised up as missionaries from your congregation.

What if every AG church chose to adopt the balance 3000 un-engaged people groups? With 350,000 churches around the World, with over 65 Million members we can make 'The End' happen!

"IF ONLY..."

If only 10%:

1) If only 10% of the 300,000 AG churches worldwide (30,000 Churches) plan to Adopt a UPG:

The ratio is 10: 1. - 10 AG churches can adopt 1 UPG.

2) If 10 churches partner together, they can send 1 missionary to every Unreached People Group!

If only 1%

If only 1% of the AG Churches (3000) send 1 Missionary to UPGs, we have 3000 Missionaries working among UPGs.

Chapter 7 Who Will End?

“for the things concerning me have an end.” Luke 22:37.

The WAGF

The WAGF (World Assemblies of God Fellowship) was organized on August 15, 1989 as the World Pentecostal Assemblies of God Fellowship (the name changed in 1993) and crafted a relational organizational structure which preserved the autonomy of the various national churches. Rev. George Wood, the present chairman of the (WAGF) writes:

The foundations for WAGF was laid when international delegates of the 1988 Conference signed a covenant statement called the “Declaration of a Decade of Harvest,” whereby they consecrated and devoted themselves “to work and to pray until we witness the total evangelization of the world,” in light of both the “unprecedented move of the Spirit of God in the world today” and the return of Jesus Christ.²³

The WAGF has experienced explosive growth around the world as the chart below indicates.

Growth of WAGF

1929 – 2009	1989	2009	2020 (Goal)
Total Adherents	16 Million	63 Million	100 Million
Churches	117,450	357,727	500,000
Ministers & Missionaries.	109,645	357,727	

At the World Congress in Chennai, India, in February 2011, the national bodies presented their prayer goals, which they trust will exceed 500,000 churches and 100 million adherents in 2020.

Western vs. Non-Western:

- In 2009, 1.8 million Assemblies of God adherents lived in Europe, and 3.2 million lived in the United States and Canada
- Worldwide, 92 percent of Assemblies of God adherents lived in what has been termed the “Majority World”

The Missions Commission

In 2009, the WAGF Executive Council created a Missions Commission to:

“Serve as a forum to share information and to form strategic partnerships among existing and emerging missions’ networks, in order to encourage and enable Assemblies of God churches to bring the gospel to unreached people groups.”²⁴

The Missions Commission (MC) is led by Rev. Brad Walz, Missionary to Argentina, who is passionate about WAGF members becoming ‘Missionary Sending Councils.’ Tracing back to the roots of AG’s objectives, in his article in the Centenary of the AG USA, he writes:

The Assemblies of God USA is birthed in 1914, with just 300 leaders, wanting to “impact the entire world with the gospel.” Their vision has been fulfilled. From 300 to 67 million! Missions is one of the main reasons the US Assemblies of God was formed! Assemblies of God is birthed in great part to send missionaries, and the A/G had a Missions sending department 8 years before starting their first Bible School in Springfield!²⁵

Brad’s passion is for the WAGF is to have:

- 100 Councils to have a Missions Sending Department.
- Raise up 5 Million Intercessors to Pray for Missions.
- To raise millions of dollars from AG churches around the world for ‘Finishing the Task’.

This 2017 World Congress in Singapore is yet another opportunity to return to the roots of AG's Vision for Missions.

Finding Closure:

Although the Missions Commission (MC) was established in 2009, the forerunner for the MC was the 'International Consultation on World Wide Mission' held in Baguio, Philippines in 2001. This was my first AG global forum on Missions where Missional leaders from different regions of the world gathered.

Here, Al Johnson presented a paper titled: "A Pentecostal Approach to Ministry among Unreached Peoples: Finishing the Mission."²⁶ He passionately appealed for all to recognize the need for a 'Frontier Mission Movement' for the following reasons:

- Missiological reality changes over time.
- Changing missiological reality demands a change in the missionary role.
- Changing missiological reality brings the **hope of closure**.

It was his final point that got my attention much later, when I focused on UPGs; the hope of closure! Al further noted:

"Evangelical missiology also believes in closure, but the optimistic belief in the possibility of actually finishing the task is diminished by the way in which they define the task in terms of reaching lost people everywhere." Thus, changing Missiological reality, which now becomes measurable through the "reaching" of people groups, fuels the hope of closure, completing the task of the Great Commission and fulfilling the condition of Matthew 24: 14 so that the end of this age can come.²⁷

This is why I call Al's paper 'Prophetic!' Sixteen years later the Pentecostals are yet grappling with the realities of his call for 'closure.'


AG Capacity for reaching them

Serving in the MC and having seen the capacity of AG National Councils to become potential Missionary movements, I am more than convinced that closure is possible. It is not the manpower or

the resources which are lacking – It is the lack of vision, a awareness and courage to say, ‘it can be done.’

Reflection

If 300 leaders, who were humble, poor, not well trained, and had relatively small churches, could have a vision to touch the world, and in 100 years reach over 67 million people from almost every nation.



**Then what would happen if the 67 million people get a vision to touch and impact the world with the gospel!?!
Could we reach 1 billion people for the gospel?**

All WAGF member councils are uniquely and strategically placed around the globe. The majority of the UPGs are living within the proximity of AG Churches, and those capable of partnering to reach them are also a part of this same network. This is a unique divine positioning to make ‘The End’ possible.

Potential Number of Missionaries If Every 10 churches Sent One

Africa	4,777
Asia Pacific and Oceania	3,225
Asia Southern	768
Europe	2,081
Latin America	14,886
North America (actual)	3,030

The End is possible!

The last World Missions Congress organized by the MC was in 2015 in Bangkok Thailand, with an attendance of 700 delegates from 70 countries. Brad notes: A total of 94 countries now have a mission’s leader or department of some kind, and our goal was 100 by 2017 which seemed an impossible dream in 2007 at our first World Missions Congress in Buenos Aires”

Brad recognizes distinctly the difference between the ‘call to go’ and the ‘mandate to send’ in the following way:

Call to Go: It’s personal and between God and a person

Call/Mandate to Send: It’s cooperate, intentional and results from discipleship. Rom 10: 14-15.

Therefore, in a collaborative manner, every church can take ownership to Adopt and Engage with the UPGs.

Lack of funding:

La Sagrada Familia received the name of ‘Expiatory temple’ because its construction is not supported by any government or church funds. Today donations to the Sagrada Familia are still made but most of the money collected comes from the entrance tickets of tourists.

The Challenge

As noted by Brad, one of the immediate resistances to Missions from the ‘Majority World’ churches have been the issue of finance.

Finances

Writing from his challenges in turning the Church in Argentina’s turnaround from being a receiving nation to a sending one, Brad addresses the key point of contention: Money in Missions. The Pastors often had a vision of “no se pied” and a “poverty mentality.” (We are too poor to send missionaries.) They had great resistance to missions. A hint of “selfishness” would also enter their theology and teaching on giving. Pastors would preach on generosity when it came to people tithing to “them” (because the pastors would benefit from the tithe) but then not practice the same thing when they could sow in others. So, Pastors were QUICK to teach people to tithe but SLOW to teach the same people to give to missions.

Churches in Southern Asia for many years were ‘receiving churches,’ (thanks to the generosity of Western Churches) and dependence has almost become a part of their Ecclesiology. Having pastored churches which had some of the poorest in society, I have found that dependency is a sin; equal to any other addiction which brings people into bondage. The power of the Gospel has a liberating effect leading people to a place of financial independence; not for selfish indulgence, but to be generous for Missions. John Wesley once said: “Earn as much as you can, save as much as you can, and give as much as you can”. The Spirit of Generosity is the foundation of Missions.

If every believer in India (600,000) would give the value of a cup of Tea:
Per Month: 36,000,000 rupees or 600,000 US Dollars
Per Week: 156,000,000 rupees or 2,600,000 US Dollars
Per Day: 1,095,000,000 (over a billion) rupees or 18,250,000 US Dollars.

Brad’s proposal to the Indian Church

Our Missions offerings should not be ‘occasional tourist collections.’ Every Church must take the responsibility for regularly funding Missions; regardless of which country they are in, how poor or small they are. It is an obligation for every Christian. Paul commended the generosity of the poor and suffering churches in Macedonia and noted that those dependent on ‘gifts’ from others - will never have ‘fruit’ in their account! *“Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account” (Philippians 4: 17).*

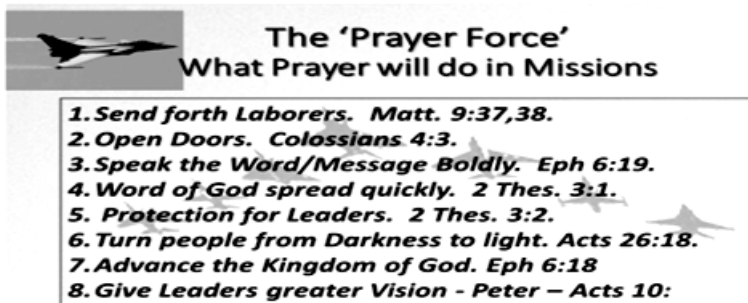
Wider Pentecostal Collaboration

Representing the historical Pentecostal Body of ‘Pentecostal World Fellowship,’ Dr. Arto Hamalainen, the Chairman of its World Missions Commission serves in the MC with a passion to create partnerships and collaboration among Pentecostals for Missions. Arto, a senior Finnish Missionary leader notably has been

instrumental in bringing together various Missions organization in Europe. He addresses the historical ‘fragmentation of the Pentecostal Movement’ which is evident in Barrett’s observation that there are 11,000 Pentecostal denominations. In “Together in One Mission” Arto notes that: “What may be unnoticed or unappreciated, even sometimes among Pentecostal churches and movements, are the indications that global Pentecostalism operates with integral, integrated missions partnerships within the movement itself and together with the broader evangelical ‘Great Commission community’ in the global cooperative effort toward world evangelization.”²⁸

Hence, the Missions potential in the Global Pentecostal movement is enormous! To coordinate a Prayer Network for the MC to mobilize “Pentecostal Prayer Power” I realize it’s importance as in similar role of the Air force in modern warfare. ‘Air power’ is critical for the ‘ground level’ operations of Missions in nations - giving the ability to strike first; clearing the ground, causing maximum damage to targets and reducing ground level casualties in the mission field. Therefore, such Prayer focus is capable of opening doors among UPGs. Brad’s dream to raise 5 Million Intercessors for Missions is a possible reality!

*But **the end** of all things is at hand; therefore, be serious and watchful in your prayers. 1 Peter 4:7*



**The ‘Prayer Force’
What Prayer will do in Missions**

- 1. Send forth Laborers. Matt. 9:37,38.**
- 2. Open Doors. Colossians 4:3.**
- 3. Speak the Word/Message Boldly. Eph 6:19.**
- 4. Word of God spread quickly. 2 Thes. 3:1.**
- 5. Protection for Leaders. 2 Thes. 3:2.**
- 6. Turn people from Darkness to light. Acts 26:18.**
- 7. Advance the Kingdom of God. Eph 6:18**
- 8. Give Leaders greater Vision - Peter – Acts 10:**

Chapter 8

This is the End!

“...the harvest is the end of the world.” Matthew 13:39.

To summarize our journey towards ‘The End.’ The Great Commission was given as the means of finishing the Mission of Jesus on the earth. It was birthed in the soil of the Roman Empire and it eventually conquered it and then spread to subsequent civilizations, kingdoms and empires.

However, as time went on, due to inward focus and ambition to establish religious/ political kingdoms in Europe, the Church lost its focus on Missions. God however raised up Protestant Missionary movements in 18-19th Century, and after that the Evangelicals and Pentecostals to rejuvenate the Mission with the Power of the Spirit to evangelize the world.

The church however has blindly focused on Global Evangelism by targeting individuals with the Gospel instead of community transformation and corporate manifestation of the Kingdom in every Ethne or Nation. This is due to the lack of understanding and obedience to Jesus’ strategy regarding ‘Ethne’ (People Groups), given in Matthew 24:14.

Therefore, what is required now to bring about the End is:

- Correct Biblical understanding of the Great Commission and the means of fulfilling it.
- Creating awareness of the Unfinished Task, mobilizing every church to be involved in it.
- Collaborative efforts of all AG Councils, Global Pentecostals and Evangelicals to partner in the task of Missions.
- Resolve and determination to take ownership of ‘The End’

To Continue or Complete?

Missions shouldn't be continued indefinitely. Jesus' strategy demands that the 'Whole Church must reach the Whole Ethne.'

I grew up in a commercial city and had no exposure to agricultural rural life, although rice was my staple diet. Later I pastored churches in cities which were surrounded by agricultural rural areas.

There, people would bring agricultural produce to Church as tithes, first-fruit offerings and place them in a large box during worship. Having this happen with livestock is quite fascinating sometimes chickens would join in worship!

However, at a certain time of the year, churches in this area would be half empty. This was during the harvest season where 'all the labourers' are required from the city to the fields. Young and old, skilled or unskilled, drawing every possible family member and many others because:

- The harvest is a 'multiplied quantity' from what was sown. It cannot be harvested by a few, but requires a multiplied labour force.
- The harvest must be reaped without delay. The sense of urgency prevails requiring an entire labour force.

It is no wonder that Jesus said that, '*The labourers are few,*' in relation to the Harvest! The season of harvest is not intended '**to be continued...**'

Only the 'entire force' can bring the harvest to 'The End'!

Conclusion

It is left for us to decide the hastening of the End, or delay it. For Gaudi said:

“There is no reason to regret that I cannot finish the church. I will grow old but others will come after me. What must always be conserved is the spirit of the work, but its life has to depend on the generations it is handed down to and with whom it lives and is incarnated.”



Jesus commanded us to finish the Task. Therefore, I appeal that the ‘Spirit of the Work’ of the Great Commission will prevail and take precedence over any plans for ‘continuation.’

“For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth.” Romans 9:28.

It is your responsibility and mine to finish the Missions task. It should not be handed down to unknown generations - indefinitely **‘to be continued...It must END’**.



The End!

End notes

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⁴ Rayan Shaw, *'Spiritual Equipping for Mission: Thriving as God's Message Bearers'* (Inter Varsity Press, 2014), p. 15.

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⁹ Harold H. Rowden, *"Edinburgh 1910, Evangelicals and the Ecumenical Movement,"* (Vox Evangelical 1967) p.58.

¹⁰ Assemblies of God USA.

<http://ag.org/top/About/History/index.cfm>

¹¹ Ibid.

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¹⁴Peter Kuzmic, *Pentecostals in the Evangelical Family: A Historical and Theological Reflection*, in *Together in One Mission: Pentecostal Cooperation in World Evangelization* Editors Arto Hämmäläinen and Grant McClung (Pathway Press 2012) p.40.

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¹⁶Ralph D. Winter, Bruce A. Koch, *Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge*, (2000)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/finishing-the-task>

¹⁷Alan R. Johnson, *Pentecostals and the Unreached: Reaching Them Together*, in *Together in One Mission: Pentecostal Cooperation in World Evangelization* Editors Arto Hämmäläinen and Grant McClung (Pathway Press 2012) p.79.

¹⁸ Ibid. p.83.

¹⁹ Notes by Simon Fuller on Greek explanation of text in Matthew.

²⁰ Devasahayam S. Ponraj. *Christian Mission among other Faiths* – A paper presented at Edinburgh 2010 reviewing the impact of Edinburgh 1910.

²¹ Ivan M. Satyavarta, *Contextual Perspectives on Pentecostalism as a Global Culture: A South Asian View*, in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*. Editors, Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, Douglas D. Peterson, (Regnum, 1999) p. 207

²² Sagrada Familia

<http://www.sagradafamilia.org/en/>

²³ George O. Wood, *The World Assemblies of God Fellowship: Uniting to Finish the Task*, in *Together in One Mission: Pentecostal Cooperation in World Evangelization* Editors Arto Hämmäläinen and Grant McClung (Pathway Press 2012) p.125.

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²⁵ Brad Walz, *Leaders with a Sending Vision - The challenge of Changing form a "Receiving Mentality to Sending one"*. Presented to Southern Asia Congress (2014), p. 2.

²⁶ Alan R. Johnson - *A Pentecostal Approach to Ministry Among Unreached Peoples: Finishing the Mission*

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²⁷ Ibid. p. 8.

²⁸ Arto Hämmäläinen, in *Together in One Mission: Pentecostal Cooperation in World Evangelization* Editors: Arto Hämmäläinen and Grant McClung (Pathway Press 2012) p.40.

The Great Commission.
Director - Jesus of Nazareth.

Cast

Apostle 1 - Simon Peter.
Apostle 2 - James Alphaeus.
Apostle 3 - John the Beloved.
Missionary 1 - Saul of Tarsus.

Location.

Episode 1 - Roman Empire.
Episode 2 - Europe, North Africa.
Episode 3 - Europe, Asia, Africa.
Episode 4 - All the Nations.
Episode 5 - Uttermost Parts of the Earth.

Final Episode

Unreached People Groups.
No known Christians.
No witness.
No Church.
Prayer.
Adoption.
Sending Missionary.
Resident witness.
Converts.
Discipleship.
Planting a Church.
Translation of Scriptures.
Training Leaders.
Church Planting Movement.
Visible manifestations of Kingdom.
Reached People Group.
'All Ethne'.

*And This Gospel
Of The
Kingdom Shall
Be Preached to
All the Nations
As A Witness,
Then Shall
Come

THE END